

Risk Management Status Update

Audit Committee

Date: 22nd September 2009

Author: Head of Performance and Risk

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

- To present Audit Committee with a summary report on Risk Management activity within Swindon Borough Council

Recommendation

- It is recommended that the contents of this report be noted
- It is recommended that Audit Committee discuss the Corporate Risk Register

1. Reasons

- 1.1 Audit Committee provides independent assurance to the Council on the effectiveness of the Council's Risk Management, Internal Control and its overall assurance framework.

2. Detail

2.1 Risk Management Strategy

- 2.1.1 The Risk Management Strategy has been refreshed and reviewed and is attached as Appendix 1. Feedback to date has been extremely positive.
- 2.1.2 The Corporate Risk Management Group has met a number of times during 2009 and is fulfilling a more strategic role in the embedding and dissemination of risk management across the Council. Two key deliverables from the Group have been a detailed analysis of the Corporate Risk Register with recommendations presented to Corporate Board and approval for the setting up of an Information Security Forum to help the Council address the risks around this area in a more joined up manner.
- 2.1.3 Risk management training has been carried out with Audit Committee, new Cabinet members and the Customer Services and Housing Directorate Management Teams. A series of Lunch and Learn training sessions for project personnel are also being run in conjunction with the Project Management Office with the next session to take on place on 23rd September already at capacity.

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- 2.1.4 A Brief Guide to Risk Management at Swindon Borough Council has been produced. This is included in the Induction packs discussed at the corporate Induction days and is also given out at all training courses. The format and usability of the Guide has been very well received.
- 2.1.5 The Risk Management Intranet pages are in the process of being updated to ensure that clear and consistent information is available to all officers and members. A Risk Management Sharepoint site has also been developed and we will be working with Groups over the coming months to ensure this is populated with all relevant risk registers.

2.2 Risk Registers

- 2.2.1 The Corporate Risk Register has continued to be regularly updated both formally through the Performance Framework and on other occasions as circumstances have changed and the need arisen.
- 2.2.2 Corporate Board considers the Corporate Risk Register formally at each Quarterly Business Review, the most recent of which took place at the end of July 2009. The Register is also discussed at meetings of the Corporate Risk Management Group and recommendations for improvement put forward to Corporate Board. Each review looks at whether mitigating actions are appropriate and robust and these are monitored and updated to ensure that risks are being responded to as effectively as possible. The Register is also updated when the need arises, for example with the onset on the swine flu pandemic a risk was added to the Register to reflect this.
- 2.2.3 The current Corporate Risk Register was endorsed by Cabinet on 9th September 2009 and reflects the key strategic risks currently seen to be facing Swindon Borough Council. The Register is attached at Appendix 2.
- 2.2.4 Group Directorates, Service Areas and Projects continue to update Risk Registers in line with the Council's risk management strategy. The Head of Performance and Risk has advised key strategic projects on their risks including Single Status, Benefits, Wichelstowe and the Transformation Programme including New Ways of Working.
- 2.2.5 Joint working has been carried out with the PCT to compile a joint risk register for the Integration Board. The relationships built through this process have been used to improve risk registers in the joint service areas and this work is ongoing.
- 2.2.6 On all risk registers focus has continued on improving the action planning that comes out of risk identification.

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2.3 Insurance

- 2.3.1 Overall the number of claims has continued to reduce in comparison to previous years. A 5-year claims summary is shown below.

Year	Number of Claims	Cost of Claims
2005	395	£1,148,865
2006	440	£2,334,658
2007	377	£1,625,599
2008	369	£1,778,279
2009 (Jan – Jun)	131	£300,032

- 2.3.2 The number of Property claims has reduced over the last year without a repeat of the floods that happened in 2006 and 2007.
- 2.3.3 The numbers of Employers Liability, Public Liability and Motor claims have remained fairly constant. We are able to defend many claims however, there are instances when claims identify issues with adherence to procedures. When this is identified these are investigated, the relevant teams are informed and risk management assistance offered. Adherence to procedures forms the main part of any defence.
- 2.3.4 SCS are due to move to an Arms Length Organisation from 1st January 2010 and they will be insured independently from that date. Arrangements for this transition are being put in place. Over the last five years, over half of the claims made against the Council relate to SCS so it is likely that the move to ALMO will have a positive impact on the Council's own claims experience.
- 2.3.5 The Insurance Manager and Claims Officer now attend the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Board which takes place quarterly. They present detailed claims information to attendees to enable discussion and analysis of required and/or desirable risk management improvements identified by the information.

2.4 Business Continuity Management

- 2.4.1 As a result of the severe weather in early February 2009, the Business Continuity Plans were invoked on 3rd February 2009, and the Business Continuity Team met daily until 12th February 2009. Teleconferencing facilities were used and allowed efficient working especially at the weekends.
- 2.4.2 The H1N1 Pandemic Influenza has also triggered the activation of the Business Continuity Team, with the meetings initially being held weekly

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and now decreasing to fortnightly. Weekly updates are given to Corporate Board and to the Leaders Advisory Group.

- 2.4.3 A specific Pandemic Influenza data gather was carried out in December 2008 and January 2009 to identify where resource might be required and from where it might be supplied during the pandemic. To increase resilience further, data has been collected and collated from Swindon Borough Council, including SCS and Capita that allowed a prioritised list of functions during a pandemic to be agreed. Swindon Borough Council has assisted Swindon Primary Care Trust in carrying out a similar exercise and they have now also agreed their prioritisation of functions. A mass immunisation programme will commence in October 2009, and this will involve giving two H1N1 vaccinations to each person in the country. Planning for this, together with the expected second wave of the pandemic is ongoing.
- 2.4.4 The PCT have agreed that a joint Business Continuity Policy and Strategy with Swindon Borough Council be developed in line with the British Standard for Business Continuity BS25999.
- 2.4.5 In line with our training and exercising schedule Business Continuity Exercises have been held with Children Services, SCS and Housing in the period February to early May 2009. Capita also held a Business Continuity Exercise in August 2009. Corporate Board held a Business Continuity Pandemic Exercise in July 2009.

2.5 Civil Contingencies

- 2.5.1 The risk of a Flu Pandemic occurring triggered Swindon Borough Council to produce a Pandemic Influenza Interim Framework Guide in September 2008. The validation exercise was held on the 21st November 2008 followed by a strategic level 'Exercise Gold Standard' on the 29th January 2009. The Civil Contingencies Secretariat conducted exercise Gold Standard which was the first of its kind to be held in the South West. The debrief report praised all Local Resilience Forum partners for their good planning and preparation.
- 2.5.2 An Excess Deaths Guide together with an Operational Guide for a Body Holding Area is currently being worked on. This work has involved close co-operation and partnership working with the Swindon Primary Care Trust, Swindon Borough Council partners and the agencies involved in the Local Resilience Forum. The Civil Protection Unit together with the Business Continuity Manager have worked to ensure that the solutions provided are both dignified and effective whilst utilising business continuity planning to minimize potential expenditure

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- 2.5.3 In line with our training and exercising schedule a planned recruitment drive, for local authority incident officers and staff for the emergency operations centre, has been successfully carried out. This was followed up by a training programme for the additional volunteers between March and June 2009.
- 2.5.4 During the severe weather in early February this year the Council's Extreme Weather Guide was invoked. The Civil Protection Unit liaised and worked closely with its LRF partners and the Business Continuity Team throughout this time.
- 2.5.5 Since January 2009 there have been several specific requests for comment on government guidance and reviews to which we have responded. Included in these are the latest Emergency Response and Recovery Guidance on which Swindon Borough Council has been noted and thanked as a contributor. DEFRA has been actively dealing with the issues raised by flooding and Swindon Borough Council has contributed to the debate. As a result Swindon Borough Council has received a funding grant to help deal with surface water management plans.

Alternative Options

- Not Applicable

Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

The Risk Management Budget will support funding for delivering the Risk Management Strategy. General Risk Management related costs to be absorbed by existing budgets.

Legal / Human Rights Implications

As part of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2006 it is a statutory requirement that the Council maintains a robust, adequate and effective system of Risk Management in the management of its risks in delivery of its core services.

The Civil Contingencies Act 2005 imposes duties on the council to meet its responsibilities as a Category 1 Responder, which as a public sector organisation has a key role to play in the response to and management of an emergency.

Links to Corporate Plans and Policies (in particular to Swindon 2010 Promises)

The Risk Management Strategy, the Corporate Risk Register, Risk Management and Performance monitoring are management processes that will help underpin the success of the Corporate Plan, Annual Delivery Plan, Policies and Swindon 2010 Promises.

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Consultees

- The Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) and the Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted on all reports.
- Head of Internal Audit
- Insurance Manager
- Business Continuity Manager
- Head of Civil Contingencies

Background Papers and Appendices

- Appendix 1 – The Risk Management Strategy
- Appendix 2 – Corporate Risk Register August 2009