

**RISK MANAGEMENT STEERING GROUP held at COUNCIL OFFICES
LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 6.15 pm on 25 SEPTEMBER 2007**

Present:- Councillor R Sherer – Chairman and Councillor R Clover.

Officers in attendance:- R Auty, S Bronson, J Dear, R Millership,
M T Purkiss and G Smith.

RM10 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from H Lock, M Leong, J Mitchell,
P O'Dell, J Patel and M Perry.

RM11 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2007 were approved as a correct
record and signed by the Chairman.

RM12 BUSINESS ARISING

**(i) Minute RM5 - Review of Composition of Steering Group and
Terms of Reference**

Action: Copies of terms of reference to be circulated to all new
Members of the Group.

(ii) Minute RM6 - Risk Management Strategy

It was noted that the strategy was now included on the Intranet.

(iii) Minute RM8 - Business Continuity

The Emergency Planning Officer reported that work was continuing on the
Business Continuity template which would be trialled shortly and then rolled
out by early November 2007.

RM13 RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE

The Acting Audit Manager reported that following on from the agreement of
Corporate Priorities 2007/08, the Strategic Management Board would be
asked to consider the assignment of risk ownership at directorate level for
each of the Corporate Priorities 2007/08. It was noted that a meeting with the
Board had been delayed due to other priorities concerning the Council's
financial situation.

When the Corporate Risk Register had been created, it would be held on
Covalent and, training in-house would be provided in reviewing and updating
the registers.

Action: Acting Audit Manager to liaise with Councillors Sherer and Clover to view the Covalent system in the Emergency Centre.

RM14

SIGNIFICANT PARTNERSHIP REPORT

Further to RM7, the Acting Audit Manager submitted a report explaining how the Council aimed to establish a register of all significant partnerships between the Council and outside bodies and establish a standardised risk assessment process for them.

It was noted that due to the diversity of partnership and partnership working between the Council and outside bodies, it had been difficult to establish an inclusive definition for a partnership. In order to do this, consultation had been carried out with other local authorities and with the Strategic Partnership Team and the following definition had been put forward.

A partnership is a joint working arrangement where the partners:

- *are otherwise independent bodies;*
- *agree to co-operate to achieve a common goal;*
- *create a new organisational structure or process to achieve this goal, separate from their own organisations;*
- *plan and implement a jointly agreed programme, often with joint staff or resources;*
- *share relevant information; or*
- *pool risks and rewards.*

Officers considered that it adequately reflected the varied types of partnerships currently in operation throughout the Council on which some level of risk assessment should be carried out.

Heads of Division had been asked for details of all partnership and partnership working in their divisions from which a Partnership's Register would be drawn up. Once the register was in place, consideration could be given to the level and method of risk assessment appropriate for each identified partnership. Draft Partnership Risk Assessment Guidance produced by Three Rivers District Council was currently being studied to establish if its format and content could be adopted for use by this Council.

Members considered that, whilst the above definition of a partnership was generally appropriate, it should be reviewed in the light of partnerships which were identified by Heads of Division and examination of those partnerships which had been identified by Three Rivers District Council.

Action: Acting Audit Manager to report to next meeting with a definitive list of partnerships and the Steering Group to review the definition of a partnership at that meeting.

RM15 WORKPLAN FOR 2007/08 TO 2008/09

The Steering Group considered the workplan for the remainder of 2007/08 and for 2008/09. The Steering Group agreed the workplan subject to the review of corporate insurance being moved from March 2008 to December 2007. Members also asked for a report to the next meeting on the Council's relationship with its current insurers.

Action: Members of the Steering Group to note the proposed workplan as amended and the Acting Audit Manager to report to the next meeting on the insurance issue.

RM16 BUSINESS CONTINUITY

The Emergency Planning Officer explained that during a human flu pandemic, there would be huge business continuity implications. The Human Resources and Emergency Planning Sections had therefore worked together to produce an emergency staff leaflet to be used during an emergency where large numbers of staff were away from work on sick leave.

The leaflet had two purposes. The first was to provide employees with two telephone hotlines; one was for general information and the second for sickness reporting. The second part of the leaflet was a self certification sickness leave form.

It was explained that if human pandemic flu struck, GP surgeries would be inundated with patients and they would not have the time or resources to sign sick leave certificates. With this in mind, the leaflet would allow employees to self certify their sick leave without requiring a certificate from a doctor. The National Employers Association (Local Government) and Bedford Borough Council Payroll Department had confirmed that a self certification system could be used during an emergency or pandemic flu.

The leaflet would now be submitted to the Strategic Management Board for approval. The Steering Group supported the concept of the leaflet and asked that clarification be sought that the suggested hotline could deal with the potentially high number of calls which could be made and Members also suggested that Unison should be consulted on the issue.

RM17 NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held at 6.15 pm on 4 December 2007.

The meeting ended at 7.20 pm.