

**RISK MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 6.15 pm on 13 JULY 2009**

Present: Councillors R Sherer (Chairman) and R Clover.

Officers present: Sheila Bronson (Audit Manager), Roz Millership (Head of Housing Services), Stephen Joyce (Chief Finance Officer), Michael Perry (Assistant Chief Executive), Cathy Roberts (Democratic Services Officer) and Geoff Smith (Head of Environmental Health).

RM1 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Richard Auty, Steve Daly and Lisa Lipscombe.

RM2 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 April 2009 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RM3 **MATTERS ARISING**

**(i) Minute RM65 – Corporate Risk Register**

The Audit Manager said that the Corporate Risk Register had been updated to reflect the new Corporate Plan and as a result there was no need for a report on the draft 2007-09 Corporate Risk Register.

**(ii) Minute RM66 – Operational Risk Register**

In the absence of the Head of Community Engagement, the Assistant Chief Executive explained that preparation of the report to be brought to the Working Group on valuation and insurance of the Museum collections was probably awaiting completion of the valuations.

**(iii) Minute RM67 – Review of Corporate Insurance**

The Chief Finance Officer informed the Working Group that the report on the contract or tender options for insurance would be brought to the September meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee.

**(iv) Minute RM68 – Business Continuity Update**

It was noted that recently there had been a further electricity failure at the Saffron Walden Council Offices.

RM4

**WORK PLAN 2009/10**

The Audit Manager submitted a suggested Work Plan for 2009/10.

Members noted that the Review of Risk Management Strategy was an annual undertaking.

The Chief Finance Officer said that the workplan should include consideration of the external auditor's findings arising from the 2008/9 Use of Resources inspection, as the auditor had informally indicated that Risk Management had been assessed to be inadequate.

In answer to a question whether there was an annual need for review of the Group membership, the Assistant Chief Executive explained that the officers who attended did so by virtue of their job title so no further review was necessary.

AGREED that the Work Plan be accepted for 2009/10.

RM5

**REVIEW OF CORPORATE RISK REGISTER 2009/12 AND MONITORING PROGRAMME**

The Group considered the report of the Audit Manager which included the Corporate Risk Register for 2009-12 (based on the objectives of the new Corporate Plan and the monitoring programme for the Corporate Risk Register). She explained that review had taken place annually but that she now proposed to review the Register more frequently on a regular basis. In answer to questions she explained the risk appetite meaning of the coloured risk indicators and confirmed that at the present time of year it was expected that the red indicators of risk would form the highest percentage of the risk indicators.

The Chief Finance Officer explained in detail the serious risk still posed to the Council by the Landsbanki situation and the steps he was taking to try to lessen the impact this could have on the Council's General Fund, by building a contingency fund, lobbying for the authority to be permitted to spread the weight of the bad debt over all Council funds (not just the General Fund), and investigating the market for selling such debt. He added that the recession was causing increase in the Council's costs and decrease in income from various sources.

Councillor Clover asked for a column in future reports indicating improvement or otherwise compared with the previous period and the Audit Manager agreed to bring information on the rate of improvement.

The Assistant Chief Executive cautioned that it must be appreciated that some indicators would not reach their target

AGREED that the Risk Management Steering Group agrees the draft Corporate Risk Register and the proposed programme for the monitoring of the Register during 2009/10 .

**RM6 OPERATIONAL RISK REGISTER**

The Group considered the update report of the Audit Manager said on the operational risk register review for 2009-12 which was circulated at the meeting. The Audit Manager said she awaited replies from risk managers who had been asked to review which risks should be still maintained on the register.

The Chief Finance Officer explained the risks which he felt should be highlighted, particularly the need for expertise in procurement, and for corporate documentation and planned management of Council assets.

Members noted that some risks could not be reduced and that later in the year others would have vanished.

The Audit Manager said she would prepare a further update of red risks to incorporate the risks yet to be reviewed. She was hoping that the review would result in a shorter risk list.

AGREED that an updated report to be brought to the next meeting of the Risk Management Steering Group.

**RM7 REVIEW OF CORPORATE INSURANCE UPDATE**

The Chief Finance Officer gave a further update on the position regarding corporate insurance.

Terms for renewal were in the process of being agreed. Re-tendering would take place for next year. The Chief Finance Officer anticipated engaging an insurance broker to work for the Council in September.

A tentative approach had been made to Harlow District Council about joint management of insurance; such arrangements were usually carried out by groups of three councils so a third participant would be needed.

**RM8 BUSINESS CONTINUITY UPDATE**

In the absence of the ECC Emergency Planning Support Officer a written report supplied by him was considered by the Group. Members asked whether the deadlines would be met and whether the Officer would be attending the next meeting.

The Audit Manager confirmed that Mr Daly would be attending the next meeting. She also gave a brief report on the state of officers' awareness of swine flu incidents.

**RM9 HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE**

The Head of Environmental Health gave an update on progress made by the Health and Safety Officer in areas which included control of substances hazardous to health, lone working, and VDU assessments for display screen working.

In answer to a question he confirmed that there was a Health and Safety Working Group but that it had no Member representation, being purely operational.

The Chairman asked that a report be given in writing and expressed interest in the action plan and minutes of the Health and Safety Working Group suggested in this context by the Head of Environmental Health.

**RM10 MEETINGS FOR 2009/10**

Meeting dates for the remainder of the year were confirmed as follows

26 October 2009  
11 January 2010  
12 April 2010

The meeting ended at 7.43 pm.