

Report to: Audit Committee
Date of meeting: 14th January 2009
Report of: Director of Finance
Title: Risk Management - Progress Report

1.0 **SUMMARY**
This report reviews progress made in strengthening risk management arrangements.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 The contents of the report are noted.

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3.0 **DETAILED PROPOSALS**

- 3.1 Following the retirement of the previous Health and Safety Officer, it took longer than expected to recruit a replacement. However, the post has now been filled and the new officer has already identified a number of improvements to be made. It is planned to resume regular reports to this Committee as from March.
- 3.2 Progress has been slow in the appointment of a new Risk Manager in our joint arrangement with Hertsmere Borough Council. As a result an interim appointment has been made (2 days at Watford, 3 days at Hertsmere) and a programme of work for her has been agreed by the RMG. This includes providing training for managers new to the Council, reviewing Service Business Continuity Plans and from them analysing and clarifying priorities. Once clarified, consideration can then be given to issues such as accommodation requirements should the Town Hall facilities be unavailable.
- 3.3 A new Information Security Policy has been approved by CMB. This is divided into 3 manuals, one setting out the overarching policy, one covering the technical issues which are the responsibility of BIS and the third covering compliance issues which relate to the work of Internal Audit and the Head of Legal and Property Services. A simplified User's Guide has been distributed to all staff. The interim Risk Manager has also been tasked with leading a working group set up by the RMG to begin implementation of the policy.
- 3.4 The Performance and Partnerships team are preparing a best practice framework providing guidance for partnership working. This will include a section on risk management – how to assess the risks associated with entering into a partnership and how to identify and share management of risks amongst the partners once the partnership is set up. The Risk Manager is assisting in this.
- 3.5 The membership of the Risk Management Group (RMG) is being enlarged to ensure a more comprehensive approach to risk management by including the Council's Facilities officer who leads on emergency Planning and our shared Civil Contingencies Officer from Herts CC.
- 3.6 A half-day desktop Emergency Planning workshop took place in September, involving most of the senior staff. This was felt to be a valuable exercise and a range of learning points were identified. The county is planning some workshops in 2009, at which the council will be represented.
- 3.7 It is hoped that the insurance claim for the water damage to the Town Hall caused by the burst pipe back in 2006 will be finalised soon. All of the costs are now known and a detailed analysis of this is being undertaken in conjunction with the loss adjuster.

4.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 **Financial**

- 4.1.1 The Director of Finance comments that there are no direct financial implications in this report.

4.2 **Legal Issues** (Monitoring Officer)

4.2.1 The Head of Legal and Property Services comments that there are no legal issues in the report.

4.3 **Potential Risks**

Potential Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Score
Failure to identify risks to the achievement of corporate objectives and failure to take action to remove/mitigate them.	1	4	4

Background Papers

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report. If you wish to inspect or take copies of the background papers, please contact the officer named on the front page of the report.

Risk Management Group papers

File Reference

None.