

WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

RISK MANAGEMENT
STRATEGY

January 2014

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Risk Management Strategy

1. PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

- 1.1 Watford Borough Council recognises that all aspects of the business risk must be managed. The purpose of this strategy is to provide a framework for the effective management of risk within the authority. By improving the management of risk, the council will be better able to achieve its objectives and ensure best value in the services it provides.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Risk management is essentially about good management practice and effective decision-making.
- 2.2 Risk management is now firmly embedded within both the authority's project management and value for money processes and financial risk analysis has become an important part of the council's decision taking and budget-setting processes.
- 2.3 This strategy shows how the authority will continue to develop its risk management practices as part of its overall aim to demonstrate effective corporate governance and sound corporate management.

3. RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 By definition, risk management is:

'the identification, analysis and control of those risks which can impact on the council's ability to deliver its priorities and objectives.'

- 3.2 The objectives of Watford Borough Council's risk management strategy are to:

- Integrate risk management into the culture of the council.
- Manage risks in accordance with best practice.
- Anticipate and respond to changing social, environmental, economic and legislative requirements.
- Prevent injury, damage and losses and reduce the cost of risk.
- Raise awareness of the need for risk management by all those connected with the council's delivery services. This awareness to be recognised by all the council's partner organisations.

and to enable the council to achieve its key aims, strategic and organisation priorities which are:

Our Vision

A successful town in which people are proud to live, work, study and visit

Our Priorities

- Making Watford a better place to live in.

Appendix 1

- To provide the strategic lead for Watford's sustainable economic growth.
- Promoting an active, cohesive and well informed town.
- Operating the council efficiently and effectively.

3.3 Good risk management is the key to the council achieving all of its objectives, however it is particularly important in ensuring the authority meets its organisational priority of operating the council efficiently and effectively.

3.4 The objectives of the Risk Management Strategy will be achieved by:

- Establishing clear roles, responsibilities and reporting lines within the council for risk management.
- Enabling managers to demonstrate that risk assessment and management is taking place.
- Providing opportunities for shared learning on risk management across the council.
- Providing a means for identifying and prioritising risk areas.
- Reinforcing the importance of effective risk management as part of the everyday work of employees.
- Incorporating risk management considerations into reviews.
- Incorporating risk management into the council's corporate, financial and service planning processes.
- Reinforcing the importance of risk management as part of the council's project management, performance management and procurement processes.
- Monitoring arrangements on an ongoing basis.

4. **STAGES FOR MANAGING RISK**

The cycle of risk management involves a number of key stages which are outlined below. The scoring and recording of risk is shown in more detail in Appendices A and B attached.

Stage 1: Identify the Risks

Identification of the risks or barriers to achieving the objectives through:

- Specifying the strategic risks to which the authority is exposed in meeting its corporate objectives
- Creation and maintenance of a corporate risk register, including a list of key strategic risks to the organisation
- Operational risks being identified and recorded in service plans
- Project and partnership risks are identified and recorded within appropriate documentation.
- Risks affecting the achievement of objectives to be included in the risk management section of all committee reports.

Stage 2: Assess and Score the Risks

Original Score

Having identified areas of potential risk, these are then analysed with the use of a risk matrix (Appendix A), to give an assessment of impact and likelihood

and an overall score for the risk without any mitigating controls, i.e. the inherent risk score.

Current Score

Having evaluated the risk without controls in place, list the key controls/actions that will reduce the risk of non achievement and re-evaluate using the risk matrix in Appendix A, to arrive at the 'residual' risk score.

Mitigated Risk Score

If the risk, after putting in place control/actions, is still too high then further controls will need to be identified so that the score is revised to an acceptable level. In essence, this entails reducing the likelihood of non achievement by the implementation of further risk mitigation controls.

This whole risk process records the controls that are required to be put in place, including time scales, in order to reduce the likelihood of the risk occurring and the impact upon council objectives and will include such actions as:

- Avoiding the risk through pre-planning or risk transfer
- Limiting or reducing the risk
- Accepting the risk and managing it
- Covering the risk through measures such as insurance
- Defer or stop if the risk is too great

Once all controls have been identified, the risk is recalculated using the table in Appendix A, to arrive at the mitigated risk.

Stage 3: Recording the Risks

Each risk needs to be allocated an accountable risk owner to take responsibility for managing the risk, ensuring controls remain effective and actions are taken.

Appendix B shows how the risks are recorded, including:

- The nature of the risk
- The causes of the risk
- The categories of risk and the inherent risk score
- Control measures in place and the residual risk score
- The consequences of the risk
- Further controls required and the mitigated risk score
- The risk owner

Stage 4: Monitoring and Reporting

Risks are dynamic and subject to change and therefore need close monitoring to ensure that the controls remain in place and are effective.

New risks can be added to the risk register and those that are no longer a risk can be removed.

All changes must be recorded and reported appropriately although as a minimum this review exercise should be undertaken quarterly.

5. TYPES OF RISK

Whilst the display of the risk register is a standard format, as shown in Appendix B, there are different types of risk and include the following:

Strategic Level

Strategic risk may affect the achievement of the council's corporate objectives and are detailed in the Risk Register.

Risk owners are at Leadership Team level and all risks are reviewed every two months at the Risk Management and Business Continuity Steering Group and this will result in the Leadership Team receiving an 'exception' report on a quarterly basis. Leadership Team and the Audit Committee will also consider a full review on an annual basis.

Such risks may be classed as:

Category	Definition
Political:	Those associated with failure to deliver either central Government policy or meet the administration's manifesto commitments
Economic / Financial:	Those affecting the organisation's ability to meet financial commitments. For example, internal budgetary pressures, the failure to purchase adequate insurance cover, external economic changes or the consequences of proposed investment decisions. Monitoring of financial planning and control and internal funds.
Social:	Those related to the effects of changes in demographic, residential or socio-economic trends on the organisation's ability to deliver its objectives.
Technological	Those associated with the capacity of the organisation to deal with the pace / scale of technological change or its ability to use technology to address changing demands.

	They may also include the consequences of internal technological failures affecting the organisation's ability to deliver its objectives. (e.g. IT systems, equipment or machinery).
Legislative / Legal:	Those associated with current or potential changes in national or European Law (e.g. the appliance or non-appliance of TUPE Regulations, Human Rights Act, Data Protection Act, Equality Act, etc.). Risk related to possible breaches of legislation.
Environmental:	Those related to the environmental consequences of progressing the organisation's strategic objectives (e.g. in terms of energy efficiency, pollution, recycling, landfill requirements, emissions, etc.). Those related to pollution, noise or energy efficiency of ongoing service operations.
Reputational:	Those related to the organisation's reputation and the public perception of the organisation's efficiency and effectiveness.
Competitive:	Those affecting the competitiveness of the service (in terms of cost or quality) and / or its ability to deliver value for money.
Customer / Citizen:	Those associated with failure to meet the current and changing needs and expectations of our customers and citizens.
Professional:	Those associated with the particular nature of each profession.
Physical:	Those related to fire, security, accident prevention and health and safety (e.g. hazards / risks associated with buildings, vehicles, plant and equipment, etc.)
Contractual:	Those associated with the failure of contractors to deliver services or products to the agreed cost and specification.

Whilst driven by the Leadership Team, it is the responsibility of the Audit Committee to review the Corporate Risk Register annually and require improvement where necessary.

Operational Level

Each service area should establish a risk register, using the Corporate Format which links to their service objectives. These should be revised on a regular basis and used to influence decision-making.

Examples could include:

- Failure to deliver service
- Not meeting statutory requirements

Appendix 1

- Implications of loss of key staff
- Reputational damage
- Failure to comply with EU directives
- Loss of assets or financial loss
- Over-reliance on key suppliers
- Budget overspend

Specific Projects

Projects within the authority should run in accordance with the principles of the Prince 2 methodology. Risks must be identified, managed and reported to the appropriate Project Board.

Risks attached to projects should be fed into the Corporate Risk register where appropriate and should certainly feature within Service Risk Registers.

Partnerships

Risks are required to be identified for all partnerships in which the authority is involved. These could be risks for the council itself and/or the partnership.

Managing risks in partnerships should be undertaken in accordance with the Best Practice principles outlined in the HM Treasury document 'Managing Risks with Delivery Partners'. Such principles will be agreed between the council and its partner and will include:

- Common understanding of the objectives of the partnership
- Common understanding of the risks and how they can be managed
- Agreed standards for assessing the severity of the risk so that mitigating action can be prioritised
- Preparation of a joint risk register which is shared
- Joint risk reviews are undertaken
- Use of same risk language
- Review of the partner's business continuity plan
- Clarifying requirement for monitoring information and who has access
- Clarity on who owns risk
- Ensure perceptions of risk are shared and consider logging different perspectives

Identification of Risks within Committee Reports

Appendix 1

Decisions should be recorded by the author of the report in the section “Potential Risks” as follows:

e.g.

Potential Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Score
Lack of staff	4	3	12
Budget Overspend	4	4	16

Those risks scoring 9 or above are considered significant and will need specific attention in project management. They will also be added to the Service’s Risk Register.

If there are no risks or little risk, then the author of the report should indicate this to demonstrate that this has at least been considered. A suggested wording is “There is little or no risk to the authority connected with the recommendations on this report”.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 The roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the risk management process can be summarised as follows:

	Role
Managing Director / Elected Mayor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leads on the wider corporate governance agenda, of which risk management is a part. Signs off the annual Governance and Assurance Statements. Ensures that risks are fully considered in all strategic decision making and that the risk management strategy helps the Council to achieve its objectives and protection of its assets.
Head of Democracy & Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead Officer for Risk Management. Owner of Risk Management Strategy. Chairs Corporate Risk Management and Business Continuity Steering Group.
Leadership Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure the council manages risk effectively through the development of a comprehensive risk management strategy. To monitor progress against strategic and cross-cutting risk action plans. To attend risk management training as

	appropriate.
<p>Risk Management and Business Continuity Steering Group</p>	<p>The purpose of the group is to ensure the implementation of our Risk Management Strategy as a key element of our Corporate Strategy with particular attention to ensuring there is in place an up to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate risk register • Operational risk registers • Project risk registers • Resilience plans • Monitoring and reporting procedures • Review and updating procedures • Specification of standards • Provision of appropriate training • Protection of core information systems and infrastructure • Managing risk in partnerships
<p>Audit Committee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To consider and approve the council's corporate Risk Management Strategy • To review annually the council's Corporate Risk Register • To attend risk management training as appropriate • Have a collective responsibility to understand the strategic risks that the authority faces and to oversee the effective management of these risks by officers • Monitor the effectiveness of the authority's risk management arrangements • Seek assurances that action is being taken on risk related issues identified by auditors and inspectors • Be satisfied that the authority's Annual Governance Statement including the assurance

	statement properly reflect the risk environment and any actions required to improve it.
All Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a responsibility to understand the strategic risks that the authority faces, to oversee the effective management of these risks by officers • Ensure that all identified risks have been considered in decision-making • Seek clarification from Portfolio Holders if risks are not specifically shown in report • Use the Corporate Risk Register to help select items for Scrutiny reviews
Service Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure the council manages risk effectively in each service within the agreed corporate strategy • To attend risk management training as appropriate • To cascade the principles of good risk management to their sections, report potential strategic risks to their management team and manage all the risks associated with their service • To ensure that risks are fully considered in the decision making process • To ensure that risks are reviewed on a regular basis but quarterly as a minimum • To ensure that risks are managed appropriately in any projects and partnerships that they are responsible for or are involved with • To ensure that any policies or procedures for which they are responsible make the appropriate linkages to risk management
Insurance Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day to day management of the insurance function, including administration of claims. • To monitor claims experience and provide relevant data to service managers in order to reduce risk and ensure that claims experience levels are minimised
Project managers and managers of Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To use the corporate risk management methodology to identify and manage their risks. • To report their risks to the appropriate partnership/project board on a regular basis.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that their risks are included in the appropriate risk register.
Employees and volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To manage risk effectively in their job. To attend risk management training as appropriate.

7. BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNING

Business Continuity Planning is integral to Risk Management and is a process to ensure continuity of service delivery following an unplanned disruption to normal working. To ensure that the organization is prepared, a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) is prepared.

A BCP will include the following elements:

- Identification of business critical systems, e.g. payment of benefits, housing the homeless.
- Details of alternative arrangements for short-term, medium and long-term continuity of service.
- Details of key contacts.
- Details of alternative accommodation and offsite ICT arrangements.

Information on Business Continuity Planning is contained on the Intranet under The Risk Management section.

Business Continuity Plans should be tested periodically and a simulated exercise to test awareness should be held annually.

8. FURTHER ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

Further advice on risk management can be obtained from:

- Any member of the Risk Management and Business Continuity Steering Group, details of which are contained in Appendix B.
- By attendance at risk management training sessions (contact Learning and Development to express your interest).
- By reference to the risk management e-learning training module on the intranet under "Management competencies".

This document was originally prepared by Claire Coghlan, Risk Management Adviser to the Council in 2011

It was approved by the Risk Management Group, 21st February 2011: Leadership Team, 22nd February 2011: and the Audit Committee 16th March 2011.

Amended by Carol Chen Head of Democracy & Governance, 26th November 2013. Approved by Leadership Team 10 December 2013.

Appendix A

Scoring Risk

The impact and likelihood of any risk is evaluated on a scale of 1 – 4, with the produce of the two representing the risk score.

Cata- strophic ----- ----- ----- ▼ Minor	Impact	Low 4	High 8	Very High 12	Unacceptable 16
	-----	Low 3	Medium 6	High 9	Very High 12
	-----	Low 2	Low 4	Medium 6	High 8
	-----	Low 1	Low 2	Low 3	Low 4
	-----	Likelihood Very Unlikely	-----	-----▶	Very Likely

The interpretation of the scores is as follows:

Impact: Rated 1 – 4

1. Low Negligible Impact e.g.
 - Minor service disruption/short term inconvenience
 - Financial loss under £25,000
 - Isolated service user complaints
 - Failure to achieve full objective is of minor consequence
2. Medium Impact e.g.

Appendix 1

- Service disruption
 - Minimal risk of injury to providers/customers
 - Financial loss between £25,000 and £100,000
 - Adverse local media coverage/lots of service user complaints
 - Failure to achieve full objective is significant
3. High Impact e.g.
- Significant service disruption
 - Major injury or ill health epidemic
 - Financial loss in excess of £100,000
 - Adverse national media coverage
 - Failure to achieve objective is unacceptable
4. Extreme/Catastrophic Impact e.g.
- Total service loss for a significant period
 - Fatality to customers/employees or any other person
 - Financial loss in excess of £500,000
 - Adverse local media coverage/lots of service user complaints
 - Objective has unanticipated catastrophic consequences

Likelihood: Rated 1 – 4

1. Unlikely/rarely happens
2. Moderate chance/could happen
3. Likely.
4. Almost certain.

Appendix 1

Overall Risk Score

The overall risk score can be interpreted as follows:

Overall Risk Score	
16	Unacceptable – if risk cannot be mitigated, consider stopping project
12	Very High – risk must be reduced through planned actions
8 – 9	High risk – take further action to manage the risk and reduce its impact and likelihood
6	Medium risk – consider further action
1 – 4	Low risk – monitor to ensure it remains low

Appendix 1

Appendix B

Recording of Risk

The standard template for the recording of risks at all levels i.e. strategic, operational, specific projects and for assessing risks in decision-making is detailed on the following page.

The key elements of the registers will be:

- The nature of the risk
- The original risk score without any controls
- The current controls in place
- The current score with existing controls in place
- Further mitigation actions, if required, with timescale, to reduce the current risk score
- Re-assessment of the mitigated risk score with the further mitigating controls in place
- The name of the risk owner
- The date of assessment
- A date for review

Appendix 1

Appendix C

Risk Management and Business Continuity Steering Group

Purpose of Risk Management

The purpose of the group is to ensure the implementation of our Risk Management Strategy as a key element of our Corporate Strategy with particular attention to ensuring there is in place an up to date:

- Corporate risk register
- Operational risk registers
- Project risk registers
- Resilience plans
- Monitoring and reporting procedures
- Review and updating procedures
- Specification of standards
- Provision of appropriate training
- Protection of core information systems and infrastructure
- Managing risk in partnerships

The aim is to identify, evaluate and quantify the risk exposure in relation to all functions that threaten the achievement of the corporate strategy.

Reporting

The group will report back to Leadership quarterly (by exception) and a full review on an annual basis.

Group Composition

The group will meet two monthly, will be chaired by the Head of Democracy and Governance and consist of 'risk champions' drawn from staff across the council whose job it will be to disseminate information to their service units and act as first point of contact for risk management advice.

The core group is as follows:

Appendix 1

Portfolio / Service Area	Risk Champion
Democracy & Governance	Carol Chen (Chair)
Customer Services	Danielle Negrello
Regeneration & Development	Jane Custance
Community & Customer Services	Alan Gough
Corporate Strategy & Client Services	Lesley Palumbo
Finance & Asset Management	Alan Power & Veronica Griffin
Revenues & Benefits	Jane Walker
Facilities Management & Resilience	Clive Goodchild
Human Resources	Cathy Watson
ICT	Emma Tiernan/Alan Caton
Emergency Planning Adviser (HCC)	Philip Legrove
Corporate Risk Co-ordinator	Chrissie Cassidy-Wilms

Appendix B

DATE:	NAME:	WATFORD BC
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STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER: ASSESSMENT MATRIX

CORPORATE VISION: To be a successful town in which people are proud to live, work, study and visit

The strategic risk register seeks to ensure the

Risk has been assessed in Four Blocks: Major Investment / Service Delivery/ Reputational/ Functional

RISK TYPE: ALL STRATEGIC

CODE	OBJECTIVE	Value of investment £	RISK	CAUSES	ASSESSMENT OF RISK (no controls in place for first assessment and controls in place thereafter)			ASSESSMENT OF RISK (With controls in place – Residual Risk Rating)			CONSEQUENCES	FURTHER CONTROLS REQUIRED	SEVERITY	LIKELIHOOD	MITIGATED RISK RATING	REVIEW FREQUENCY (A, Q, M)	DATE OF NEXT REVIEW	OWNER
					Categories of risk (Please see appendix 1 for categories of risk)	SEVERITY	LIKELIHOOD	RISK RATING	Control measures in place? (Please see Treatment Plan for more detail)	SEVERITY								

MAJOR INVESTMENT

1																		
2																		
3																		
4																		
5																		

Appendix B

DATE:	NAME:	WATFORD BC
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STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER: ASSESSMENT MATRIX

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					Categories of risk (Please see appendix 1 for categories of risk)	SEVERITY	LIKELIHOOD	RISK RATING	Control measures in place? (Please see Treatment Plan for more detail)	SEVERITY								

SERVICE DELIVERY

6																		
7																		
8																		
9																		
10																		

DATE:	NAME:	WATFORD BC
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STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER: ASSESSMENT MATRIX

CORPORATE VISION: To be a successful town in which people are proud to live, work, study and visit

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					Categories of risk <small>(Please see appendix 1 for categories of risk)</small>	SEVERITY	LIKELIHOOD	RISK RATING	Control measures in place? <small>(Please see Treatment Plan for more detail)</small>	SEVERITY								
11																		
12																		
REPUTATIONAL																		
13																		
14																		
15																		

DATE:	NAME:	WATFORD BC
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STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER: ASSESSMENT MATRIX

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					Categories of risk (Please see appendix 1 for categories of risk)	SEVERITY	LIKELIHOOD	RISK RATING	Control measures in place? (Please see Treatment Plan for more detail)	SEVERITY								
16																		
17																		
18																		
19																		
20																		

FUNCTIONAL

GUIDANCE ON COMPLETING THE RISK ASSESSMENT MATRIX

DATE: <i>when evaluation completed</i>	NAME: <i>of person completing assessment; may vary from risk</i>	POST: <i>of person completing assessment</i>	DEPT/ UNIT: <i>Risk</i>
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RISK ASSESSMENT MATRIX v 1.6

RISK ASSESSMENT NUMBER: *consecutively from 1 (the 1st assessment) this allows for accurate version control and provides an audit trail of treatment/controls etc*

BUSINESS OBJECTIVE: *External Relations: Please state your departmental objective here - as risks to achieving this objective should be considered*

RISK TYPE: *STRATEGIC, OPERATIONAL or BOTH (delete as necessary) strategic type would affect the 3-5 year planning process, operational type would affect day-to-day activities & both is an operational risk with a strategic impact*

CODE	RISK	CAUSES	ASSESSMENT OF RISK (no controls in place for first assessment and controls in place thereafter)			ASSESSMENT OF RISK (With controls in place – Residual Risk Rating)			CONSEQUENCES	FURTHER CONTROLS REQUIRED	REVIEW FREQUENCY (A, Q, M) annually, quarterly or monthly	DATE OF NEXT REVIEW	OWNER
			Categories of risk	SEVERITY LIKELIHOOD	RISK RATING	Control measures in place?	SEVERITY LIKELIHOOD	RESIDUAL RISK RATING					
sequential numbering of risks - see appendix 2. If risk is no longer relevant number must NOT be reused.	A risk is the threat that an event or action will affect the Council's ability to achieve its objectives and to successfully execute strategies. To help identify risks one can think of political, environmental, social technological, economical and legal threats. In addition to this please consider the risks that can occur which may prevent your area from achieving objectives as set in the Corporate/Community Plan; impact on Use of Resources and also CPA/CAA etc	these are the events, circumstances and/or situations that give rise to the risk being created	see Appendix 1 - Categories, you can include 1 or more categories depending on the risk	scored on a scale of 1 - 4; 1 being the lowest and 4 the highest; before controls in place	automatically calculated and formatted	these are controls currently in place which have currently reduced the likelihood of the risk materialising; these are usually in the form of internal controls systems, policies and procedures, regular meetings etc	scored on a scale of 1 - 4; with controls in place	automatically calculated and formatted	this is the result of the risk if and when it occurs and can include loss of business, negative/bad reputation, breakdown or partnership working, financial loss (please state financial loss in monetary terms where possible)	further controls are needed where a residual risk rating is shown as amber or red i.e. medium or high. These risks will be shown on the treatment plan.	this will depend on the risk rating, how effective controls are, cost implications of controls etc	this should be a realistic date when the next review of the risk including adequacy if the controls should be completed, this must be matched to the review frequency	the person responsible for implementing and reviewing control measures

Note

Severity can be viewed in four categories/ matched to scores

- | | | |
|----|-------------|--|
| 1. | Minor | Any annoyance that does not disrupt service provision or has only a localised impact contained within the council/service affected. No media or public knowledge of incident |
| 2. | Significant | Short -term partial failure, no media interest, limited financial losses or disruption to service provision. |
| 3. | Serious | Short-term total service failure or prolonged partial failure, possible local media interest, possible financial losses or injuries |
| 4. | Major | Total service failure, high financial losses, possible national media criticism, local media interest or possible fatalities/severe injuries |

Likelihood can be viewed in four categories/matched to scores:

- | | | |
|----|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. | Remote | Little or no likelihood of occurring |
| 2. | Unlikely | Some likelihood of occurring |
| 3. | Likely | Significant likelihood of occurring |
| 4. | Very likely | Near certainty of occurring |