

CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL

ACCOUNTS, AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE (RESERVE)

17 DECEMBER 2008

REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR - CUSTOMER SERVICE & RESOURCES AND THE HEAD OF EXCHEQUER

THE COUNCIL'S RISK MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP (RMWG)

1 Introduction and Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update the Committee on the progress being made by the Risk Management Working Group (RMWG).

2 Wards Effected

- 2.1 All wards.

3 Effect on Policy

- 3.1 None.

4 Contact Officer(s)

- 4.1 Rosemary Watts (extension 1566)

5 Background Information

- 5.1 Until April 2008, the Risk Management & Improvement Group (RMIG) was Chaired and led by a single Strategic Director, with the remainder of the group being in the main, Heads of Service.

- 5.2 As the Council strives to continuously improve, it recognises that within our dynamic environment more effective risk management requires a reporting and review structure that ensures that risks are effectively identified and assessed and that appropriate controls and responses are put in place quickly.

- 5.3 The Corporate Management Team (CMT) has responsibility for determining the strategic direction of the Council and for creating the environment and the structures for risk management to operate effectively. In April 2008, CMT proposed to lead RMIG itself in order to embed risk management further across the whole of the Council. This was endorsed by the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee on 28 May 2008.

- 5.4 CMT further proposed that a Risk Management Working Group (RMWG) should be formed to assist them with the continued embedding process. This again was endorsed by the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee on 28 May 2008. The Risk Management & Insurance Officer is required to report to CMT on a quarterly basis.
- 5.5 Chaired by the Risk Management & Insurance Officer, RMWG is made up of officers below Head of Service level and from a wide range of business units:

Rosemary Watts (Chair)	Risk Management & Insurance Officer
Dave Bennett	Corporate Health & Safety Manager
Liam Didcock	Senior Recreation Facilities Officer
Tim Green	Landscape Officer
Jaqui Hurd	Customer Services Manager
Barrie Smith	Health & Safety Manager, Thorpe Lane Depot
Ros Holloway	Payroll & Performance Manager
David Hanger	Principal Engineer
Gillian Butterworth	Communications Administrator
Pauline McCreadie	Local Transport Co-ordinator
Sean Currell	Caretaker
Sarah Woodman	Assistant Building Surveyor
Liz Maule	Management Support Officer Finance/Exchequer
Steve Davis	Vehicle Parks & Town Warden
David Wade	Corporate Facilities Manager
James Burge	Loader, Thorpe Lane Depot

6 Risk Management Working Group (RMWG)

- 6.1 RMWG members are maintaining a communications network that facilitates free flow of information and promotes risk awareness amongst the business units. It is envisaged that a robust risk aware culture will be successfully and firmly established by encouraging staff at all levels across the organisation to participate in the risk management process.
- 6.2 The enthusiasm of group members continues to be very encouraging. They are aware that Members and CMT need them to assist with the risk management embedding process, which must be established across the Council and at all levels.
- 6.2 The RMWG met again on 11 November 2008. The notes of that meeting are attached (Annex 1). They are also available on the Council's intranet. Jerry Fox, Risk & Insurance Consultant at Zurich Municipal, attended the meeting to offer advice and support and with renewals in mind, to ascertain how well the Council is progressing with the risk management embedding process. I am pleased to report that he was impressed with progress to date, which will hopefully reflect in the £% rates applied to sums insured on 1 April 2009.

The Group watched a 20 minutes training video ('Risk Maker – Risk Taker') which highlighted real events where risks had not been identified or had been managed inappropriately - tourist couple lost at sea; enquiry launched in patient deaths; shoppers injured in stampede; lives lost in a refinery explosion; demolition goes badly wrong; Concorde grounded after disaster.

- 6.4 In September 2009, the Risk Management & Insurance Officer gave group members individual training on the use of Magique (the Council's Risk Register) and the risk management process as a whole. They were asked to discuss departmental risks with

colleagues, line managers and Heads of Service. Risks identified on Magique were the starting point for this ongoing exercise.

- 6.5 Group members have asked their Heads of Service to include risk management as an agenda item at team meetings, perhaps using brain storming sessions as a means of identifying potential areas of concern. Part of the embedding process is to listen to staff concerns and so issues raised by staff, however minor, need to be addressed by management.
- 6.6 The Risk Management & Insurance Officer has already been invited to attend some team meetings to assist RMWG members promote risk awareness amongst colleagues. Both she and the Health & Safety Officer continue to offer support to group members and officers.
- 6.7 Health & Safety is part of the risk management process and is an agenda item at every RMWG meeting. The Corporate Health & Safety Manager arranged a health & safety training workshop for group members on 26 September 2008, covering the structure of the Council, Health & Safety awareness in general, induction procedures, work station assessments, workplace inspection sheets, RIDDOR and the reporting of accidents. A similar workshop will follow in January 2009 to cover those group members who were unable to attend the September session.

7 Future Risk Management Working Group Meetings

- 7.1 Future RMWG meetings are arranged for 10 February 09 and 12 May 09. Meetings will include further risk management and health & safety training, and will provide a forum for open and frank discussion on risk management issues and concerns raised by staff. The main agenda item for 10 February 2009 will be a presentation on Corporate Fraud.

Risk Assessment, Financial Effects and Contributions to Efficiency Savings

The following details approved by Karen Curtin (Ext 1551) (Financial) and Rosemary Watts (Extension 1566) (Risk).

Risk assessment

There are no direct risks associated with this report. However, if risk management is not embedded throughout the Council there is a danger of the Council not achieving its corporate objectives and receiving a poor Use of Resources assessment.

Financial effects

None resulting directly from this report.

Efficiency savings

None resulting directly from this report.

Recommendation

The Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee is **RECOMMENDED TO:** consider and approve the report relating to the embedding work of the Risk Management Working Group, reporting any concerns arising to the Executive.