Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee

Corporate Risk Register and Risk Strategy 2010/11

22 March 2010

Report of Chief Executive

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To present the proposed Corporate Risk Register and the Risk Strategy for 2010/11 for consideration and comment by the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee in advance of their consideration by the Council's Executive.

This report is public

Recommendations

The Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee is recommended to:

(1)   Agree the principles of risk management set out in this report.

(2)   Agree the Corporate Risk Register for 2010/11.

(3)   Agree the Risk Strategy 2010/11.

(4)   Agree the arrangements for reporting on risk management to the Executive and the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee.

(5)   Agree the views of the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee are reported to the Executive when they consider this item.

Executive Summary

Introduction

1.1   Every year we update the Council's Risk Register and Risk Strategy in the light of changing circumstances and priorities. In advance of 2010/11 we have carried out a more thorough review than in previous years. The main driver of this has been the move to integrate risk management and performance management which has given us the opportunity to consider the underlying principles of our overall

approach to managing risk.

1.2   The proposals in this report build on the already strong performance of the Council on risk management. Under the national Use of Resources inspection the Audit Commission rates our performance as three out of four (and they have told us this is a strong three). We have established a comprehensive risk register through which performance is regularly monitored and there is effective oversight by members through the Executive and the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee. We will build on this strong base by having a clearer focus on the risks to the Council achieving its strategic objectives and completing the integration of risk management and performance management (from 1/4/2010 our performance on managing risks will be reported through P+, the Council's corporate performance management).

1.3   The report sets out the following:

- The principles by which we will manage risk in the Council.

- A revised Corporate Risk Register for 2010/11

- An update of the Council's Risk Strategy.

- The arrangements for reporting on risk management to the Executive and the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee.

        Proposals

1.4   **Underlying Principles.** It is proposed that the following principles are adopted for the management of risk:

       Core Risks. There will be a core of risks that have organisation wide significance. These will comprise the Corporate Risk Register and will be monitored and reported through the corporate Performance Management Framework. The core risks will be the strategic and corporate risks (see definitions below). We have also included some partnership risks, although they are operational risks, in the Corporate Risk Register because of the high priority we give to improving partnership working.

       Operational Risks. In addition to the core risks individual managers will have the discretion to manage locally any operational risks they believe could affect the delivery of services in their area. These may be stored on Performance Plus and monitored locally but will not be monitored corporately through the Performance Management Framework. As with local performance indicators any issues arising from these operational risks may be escalated up the Performance Management Framework to the Corporate Management Team and the Executive.

Net Risk. This is a measure of impact x likelihood after the proposed mitigating actions have been taken into account. This is given a score which can range from 1 to 25. In the proposed risk register the range is from 4 to 15. The entry point to a medium to high rated risk is 10. This level of risk involves having 'contingency plans' and 'active management'. Below the 10 threshold the action required is 'good housekeeping' and 'no mitigating actions but periodic review'. Risks below the 10 threshold would not generally be included in a corporate risk register. We propose to do so in 2010/11 because the risks reflect corporate priorities and concerns (and we may want to review these scores). After 2010/11 we propose only risks rated 10 and above should be included on the Corporate Risk Register.

1.5 **Types of Risk.** Questions have been raised about the difference between Strategic, Corporate, Operational and Partnership risks. In practice there will always be areas of overlap between them. Our definitions are as follows:

Strategic. These are risks that are significant in size and duration and will impact on the reputation and performance of the Council as a whole and in particular on its ability to deliver its four strategic priorities.

Corporate. These are risks to corporate systems or processes that underpin the organisation's overall operation and ability to deliver services.

Operational. These are risks to the delivery of individual services.

Partnership. These are the risks to a partnership delivering services or meeting other objectives.

1.6 **Risk Register 2009/10.** There are currently 171 risks on the corporate risk register, 6 strategic, 28 corporate and 137 operational, with 16 risks linked to partnership working included in the latter. In practice this number of risks has had the effect of diluting the focus on what are the most significant risks to the organisation and individual services and made the routine management of risk more onerous than it should be.

1.7 **Reviewing the Risks.** Every year we review the contents of the Risk Register to ensure its contents reflect current priorities and circumstances. The review this year involved extensive consultation with managers to review the strategic, corporate, operational, and partnership risks. This process included a workshop, facilitated by Price Waterhouse Cooper, for the Portfolio Holder for Performance Management and Improvement and the Extended Management Team to agree the Council's strategic risks.

An outcome of this is the reduction in the overall number of risks. As a result we have achieved a better focus on the most significant risks to the organisation delivering its strategic objectives in 2010/11 and on

the most significant external risks, particularly the consequences of the current economic recession on service delivery and the Council's finances. We also took the opportunity to remove risks that had a low risk rating from the Corporate Risk Register, although service managers may continue to use them locally.

1.8 **Risk Register 2010/11.** The proposed Risk register for 2010/11 is attached as Appendix One. The most immediate difference is that the number of risks on the Corporate Risk Register has been reduced to 19. The key changes are set out below:

Strategic Risks. The number of these risks will increase from 6 to 8. This includes a new risk related to delivering A Safe and Healthy Cherwell for which there are currently no risks identified. The content of the risks have changed to reflect the changes to our priorities and operational circumstances.

Corporate Risks. The proposal is to reduce the number of corporate risks from 28 to 7. This allows for a very clear focus on the risks that could affect the ability of the Council to function effectively as an organisation.

Partnership Risks. The risks associated with partnership working were included in the risk register for the first time in 2009/10. Although the risks are operational we are including 4 of them in the Corporate Risk Register to reflect the growing importance of this way of working to the Council. All other risks related to partnership working will be managed at the service level.

To allow comparison the strategic, corporate and partnership risks for 2009/10 are shown in Appendix Two.

1.9 **Risk Register 2010/11 – Mitigating Actions.** To arrive at the net scores for the risks in the proposed Corporate Risk Register officers have made an initial judgement about what mitigating actions they can task to reduce the impact of the risks. Work is currently underway to develop these in more detail so they can be used as a tool for monitoring performance. These will be circulated to the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee as soon as they are available.

1.10 **Operational Risks.** The operational risks are not included on the corporate risk register; instead they will be managed locally. The number and type of risks and the monitoring and reporting arrangements will be decided by the service manager. These should be confirmed by the Directorate Management Team to ensure a consistent application of standards and procedures. The performance of the operational risks will not be reported through the corporate performance management system unless there are exceptional issues to report. This is the same practice we have adopted for managing and reporting the delivery of service plans and non-corporate performance

targets.

1.11   **Risk Strategy 2010/11.** The Risk Strategy sets out the overall approach to managing risk in the Council. This is reviewed at the end of each year and updated, if necessary, to reflect changing priorities and circumstances. We believe the current Risk Strategy is fit for purpose and propose it is retained for 2010/11. This is attached as Appendix Three.

1.12   **Reporting Arrangements**. For 2010/11 the reporting of the Corporate Risk Register will be integrated into the quarterly performance report to the Executive. The current performance report includes a section on the status of the strategic risks. Under the new arrangements this will be extended to all the items in the Corporate Risk Register. A key aspect of these new arrangements is to improve the accountability to members. It is proposed that the performance of all the risks on the Corporate Risk Register is reported to the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee each quarter.

Conclusion

1.13   For 2010/11 we are introducing a number of significant changes to the way we manage risk in the Council. These changes build on an already strong performance that has been recognised by the Audit Commission. By integrating risk and performance management, by having a clearer understanding of the risks to the council achieving its strategic objectives and improving the accountability to members we are taking the management of risk to a next stage of development.

Background Information

2.1   From 1 April 2010 the Council will use PerformancePlus to monitor the Council's risks. This move will allow an integrated approach to managing risk and organisational performance and rationalise the administration involved.

In advance of that we have reviewed the Council's risks to ensure they reflect current circumstances. As part of this we have rationalised the overall number of risks so there is a clear focus on the most significant risks to the organisation and individual services and in turn this will reduce the administration involved in managing risks.

This process has involved extensive consultation with managers to review the corporate, operational, and partnership risks. This included a workshop, facilitated by Price Waterhouse Cooper, for the Extended Management Team to agree the Council's strategic risks.

Key Issues for Consideration/Reasons for Decision and Options

3.1 To agree an overall approach to risk management that builds on current practice to provide a clear focus on the risks to the Council delivering its strategic objectives.

The following options have been identified. The approach in the recommendations is believed to be the best way forward

Option One	To accept the proposals in this report.
Option Two	To propose amendments to the proposals in this report.
Option Three	To propose an alternative approach to risk management.

Implications

Financial:	The Council has identified the possible impact of the current economic climate on the Council's ability to deliver its corporate priorities as a Strategic Risk. There is also a Corporate Risk arising from the Council's ability to fund its activities because of a reduction in investment income or income from other capital assets such as buildings.
	Comments checked by Karen Curtin, Senior Accountant, 01295 221551
Legal:	There are no direct legal implications arising from this report but the Council has to ensure it is aware of any risks to its delivering what is required by law.
	Comments checked by Liz Howlett, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, 01295 221686
Risk Management:	The Risk and Insurance Manager is an author of this report.
	Comments checked by Rosemary Watts, Risk Management & Insurance Officer , 01295 221566

Wards Affected

All

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Corporate Risk Register 2010/11
Appendix 2	Strategic, Corporate and Partnership Risks 2009/10

Appendix 3	Risk Strategy 2010/11
Background Papers	
None	
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CORPORATE RISK REGISTER 2010/11

Strategic Risks

Risk	New / Existing	Owner	Net Risk Severity x Likelihood
A District of Opportunity			
1. Local Development Framework The risks are that the Local Development Framework is not prepared adequately, in time, or is found unsound at public examination. Such outcomes would result in further risks arising from speculative planning applications, undesirable major developments and / or expense for the Council in contesting planning appeals. An unsound plan would mean that the Council would have to repeat 2 to 3 years work at high cost.	Existing	**Phillip Clarke** Head of Planning & Affordable Housing	5 x 3 = 15 High Medium
2. Economic and Social Changes The risk is that the Council does not identify and respond to general economic and social changes and as a result would not fulfil its role as a community leader and a provider of top quality services driven by a clear understanding of community and individual needs.	Existing	**John Hoad** Strategic Director Planning Housing & Economy	3 x 4 = 12 High Medium

3. Deprivation and Inequalities The risk in not breaking the cycle of deprivation and addressing inequalities across the District is that the life opportunities of residents in the greatest need will not be improved and as a result the reputation of the Council will suffer. The risk is particularly acute in areas such as the Neithrop, Ruscote and Grimsbury wards in Banbury where there is a high level of deprivation as measured by the Government's indices of multiple deprivation.	New	**Ian Davies** Strategic Director Environment &Community	2 x 5 = 10 High Medium
4. Eco Town The risks are that national and local policy support and resources will be inadequate to support the development of the NW Bicester Eco-Town. As a result the Council may fail to fully exploit the Eco-Town as an opportunity to develop a centre of excellence in terms of sustainable living.	New	**John Hoad** Strategic Director Planning Housing & Economy	3 x 3 = 9 Medium
A Safe and Healthy Cherwell			
5. Horton Hospital The risks to maintaining the Horton Hospital as a facility that meets community aspirations for local health provision are the deliverability and affordability of a revised consultant delivered service model for paediatrics and obstetrics. Failure of either will jeopardise current service provision and could result in a service reduction from the Horton.	New	**Ian Davies** Strategic Director Environment &Community	4 x 3 = 12 High Medium

A Cleaner Greener Cherwell

6. The Natural Environment The risk is that the Council does not take the necessary actions to meet its obligation, as set by National Government, to ensure its own operations and that of its District's residents and businesses reduce their carbon footprints.	New	**Ed Potter** Head of Environmental Services	2 x 3 = 6 Low

An Accessible Value for Money Council

7. Managing Change The risk is that the Council does not adequately manage the impact of major change programmes on organisational performance and individual morale.	New	**Mary Harpley** Chief Executive	3 x 3 = 9 Medium
8. Financial Resources The risk is that in an uncertain economic and financial climate the Council will not have the resources to deliver its corporate priorities. Poor economic conditions also tend to produce increased demand on services. As the Council's income from capital reduces our dependency on interest to support revenue expenditure must also reduce and capital assets will need to be rebuilt to fund future infrastructure investments. Failure to do either will result in budgetary shortfall, service reductions, above inflation increases to council tax and lack of capital to fund future community schemes.	Existing	**Karen Curtin** Head of Finance	3 x 3 = 9 Medium

Corporate Risks

Risk	New / Existing	Owner	Net Risk Severity x Likelihood
1. Health and Safety The risk is that a failure to comply with health and safety and welfare legislation and policies could lead to injuries and death, high sickness absence and claims and litigation against the Council.	Existing	**Anne-Marie Scott** Head of People & Improvement	5 x 3 = 15 High Medium
2. Capital Investments The risk is to the Council's ability to fund its activities because of a reduction in investment income or income from other capital assets such as buildings.	Existing	**Karen Curtin** Head of Finance	4 x 3 = 12 High Medium
3. ICT Systems The risk is that the loss of ICT disaster recovery capability; a back-up and recovery failure leading to loss or corruption of data; and system failure because of ageing infrastructure, will have a significant negative impact on service delivery and cause exceptional costs to the Council.	Existing	**Pat Simpson** Head of Customer Services & Information Systems	4 x 3 = 12 High Medium
4. Equalities Legislation The risk is the Council may be open to litigation and loss of reputation if it is not compliant with equalities legislation.	Existing	**Anne-Marie Scott** Head of People and Improvement	3 x 3 = 9 Medium

5. Job evaluation The risk is the impact of a significant number of appeals arising from the Job Evaluation scheme on the resources of the Council and Human Resources in particular. Also there is a risk that Job Evaluation may encourage staff to pursue equal pay claims due to greater awareness.	Existing	**Anne-Marie Scott** Head of People & Improvement	3 x 3 = 9 Medium
6. Civil Emergencies The risk is that Civil Emergency arrangements are not adequate, leading to loss of property, personal injury or death, civil unrest and loss of confidence in local authority leadership.	Existing	**Paul Marston-Weston** Head of Recreation & Health	5 x 1 = 5 Low
7. Data Quality The risk is that unreliable data sources are used to support decision and policy making putting the Council at risk of making poor decisions. Decisions are made on the basis of information about the population and the nature of the district. If data is out of date, incomplete or inaccurate, those decisions may turn out to be inappropriate.	Existing	**Claire Taylor** Corporate Strategy & Performance Manager	2 x 2 = 4 Low

Partnership Risks

Risk	New / Existing	Owner	Net Risk Severity x Likelihood
1. Local Area Agreement The risk is the failure to deliver the Council's elements of the Local Area Agreement having a negative impact on service delivery to the public, the Council's reputation with other local authorities and this being reflected in national inspection regimes.	Existing	**Claire Taylor** Corporate Strategy & Performance Manager	3 x 3 = 9 Medium
2. Local Strategic Partnership The risk is the failure of the Local Strategic Partnership to deliver its objectives having a negative impact on service delivery to the public, the Council's reputation with other local agencies and this being reflected in national inspection regimes.	New	**Claire Taylor** Corporate Strategy & Performance Manager	3 x 3 = 9 Medium
3. Community Safety Partnership The risk is the failure of the Community Safety Partnership to deliver a continuous reduction in crime and the fear of crime.	Existing	**Chris Rothwell** Head of Urban & Rural Services	3 x 3 = 9 Low Medium
4. Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership The risk is the failure of the Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership to establish itself as an effective body locally and in relations with National	New	**John Hoad** Strategic Director Planning Housing & Economy	3 x 3 = 9 Low Medium

Government. The consequences are reduced funding for the local area and failure to fully exploit development and infrastructure provision opportunities.			

STRATEGIC, CORPORATE AND PARTNERSHIP RISKS 2009/10

Risk	Net Risk Severity x Likelihood
STRATEGIC RISKS	
Failure to have robust resources in place to deliver the Council's Strategic Agenda	3 x 3 = 9 Medium
Failure to demonstrate continuous improvement / meet public expectations for a cleaner District	4 x 2 = 8 Medium
Failure to adapt to economic and social issues in the District	3 x 2 = 6 Medium
Failure to adapt to social issues and pressures in the District	3 x 2 = 6 Medium
Failure to deliver fair and equitable access to services to everyone	3 x 2 = 6 Medium
Failure to deliver the Council's community leadership role	3 x 2 = 6 Medium

CORPORATE RISKS	
Failure to comply with health and safety and welfare legislation.	5 x 3 = 15 High Medium
Loss of income from investments and property	4 x 3 = 12 High Medium
Impact of the influenza pandemic	4 x 3 = 12 High Medium
The credit crunch may affect delivery of affordable housing	4 x 3 = 12 High Medium
Inadequate project management	4 x 3 = 12 High Medium
Council is not payment card industry compliant to version 1.2	4 x 3 = 12 High Medium
Work Related Road Safety	4 x 3 = 12 High Medium
Inability to recruit and retain staff	4 x 3 = 12 High Medium
The Council does not maximise the provision of affordable housing through the planning process	5 x 2 = 10 High Medium
Failing to deliver the Council's elements of the Local Area Agreement	3 x 3 = 9 Medium

Non- compliance with equalities legislation	3 x 3 = 9 Medium
Poor relationship with some members of the media	3 x 3 = 9 Medium
Inadequate risk management arrangements	3 x 3 = 9 Medium
Failure to communicate effectively with stakeholders	3 x 3 = 9 Medium
Failure to manage brand and brand management	3 x 3 = 9 Medium
Failure to produce a balanced budget	4 x 2 = 8 Low Medium
Ultra Vires	4 x 2 = 8 Low Medium
Loss of data via portable storage devices	4 x 2 = 8 Medium
Key re-development in Bicester Town centre does not take place	3 x 2 = 6 Low
Non-compliance with Freedom of Information Act	3 X 2 = 6 Low Medium
Failure to demonstrate effective implementation of the VfM Improvement Plan	3 x 2 = 6 Low Medium

Chris 21 e-recruitment – failure of contractor to deliver contract	2 x 3 = 6 Low Medium
Failure to make temp / permanent appointment of S151 Officer	5 x 1 = 5 Low
Failure to arrange adequate insurance cover	5 x 1 = 5 Low
Civil Emergency arrangements are not adequate	5 x 1 = 5 Low
Unreliable data sources are used to support decision and policy making, putting the Council at risk of making poor decisions	2 x 2 = 4 Low
Failure to effectively undertake and deliver service & financial planning	4 x 1 = 4 Low
Partner & Voluntary organisation scandal implicates the Council	1 x 2 = 2 Low
PARTNERSHIP RISKS	
Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership. Failure to deliver objectives.	4 x3 = 12 High Medium
Failure to adapt to the economic issues and pressures in the District	4 x3 = 12 High Medium

Lack of Affordable Housing Provision. Insufficient bids for affordable housing being made by the Registered Social Landlords (RSL) partnership.	3 x 3 = 9 Low Medium
Failure of the Community Safety Partnership to deliver a continuous reduction in crime and the fear of crime.	3 x 3 = 9 Low Medium
Reduction or withdrawal of 'Supporting People' Funding.	3 x 3 = 9 Low Medium
Integrated transport and land use strategies are not implemented in the urban areas.	4 x 2 = 8 Low Medium
Failure to establish effective working relations with the Primary Care Trust.	3 x 2 =6 Low
Failure to establish effective working relationships with the Oxfordshire Children's and Young People's Partnership.	3 x 2 =6 Low
Failure to comply with the Oxfordshire Waste Strategy.	3 x 2 =6 Low
Failure of the Oxfordshire Housing Partnership.	3 x 2 =6 Low
Failure of 'Supporting People' Partnership.	3 x 2 =6 Low

Bicester Vision. The risk for the Council if it fails to engage with Vision, or if Vision fails we would lose the opportunity to work with partners on this agenda.	3 x 2 =6 Low
Partnerships with other town centre stakeholders. A number of partnerships which are maintained by the ED&E service are identified as key partnerships for the Council. These comprise the Banbury Town Centre Partnership, the Kidlington Village Centre Management Board, and the Cherwell M40 Investment Partnership. These partnerships are liaison groups which enable dialogue between local authorities and other stakeholders. If the partnerships do not meet regularly, and if the Council is not represented on them, then they will not meet their objectives.	3 x 2 = 6 Low
Failure to deliver community strategy objectives and capitalise on the opportunities. Failure to consult, commission, agree and deliver shared objectives to address the vision for Cherwell. Failure to understand the relationships between community strategy and the LDF. Failure to build effective partnership relationship for Cherwell Cherwell Community Planning Partnership.	2 x 2 = 4 Low
Failure of Homelessness Strategy Partnership to deliver Cherwell's Homeless Strategy.	2 x 2 = 4 Low
Oxfordshire Economic Partnership. Failure to deliver objectives.	2 x 2 = 4 Low

Risk Strategy 2010/11

1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to outline an overall approach to risk management that addresses the risks facing the Council in achieving its objectives, and which will facilitate the effective recognition and management of such risks.

Risk management will be embedded within the daily operations of the Council, from strategy and policy formulation through to business planning and general management processes. It will also be applied where the Council works in partnership with other organisations, to ensure that partnership risks are identified and managed appropriately.

Through understanding risks, decision-makers will be better able to evaluate the impact of a particular decision or action on the achievement of the Council's objectives.

Risk management will not focus upon risk avoidance, but on the identification and management of an acceptable level of risk. It is the Council's aim to proactively identify, understand and manage the risks inherent in our services and associated with our plans, policies and strategies, so as to support responsible, informed risk taking and as a consequence, aim to improve value for money. The Council will not support reckless risk taking.

Risk management is increasingly recognised as being concerned with both the positive and negative aspects of risk; that is to say opportunities as well as threats.

This strategy therefore applies to risk from both perspectives.

2. Objectives of the Strategy

- To maintain a risk register that identifies and ranks all significant risks facing the Council, which will assist the Council achieve its objectives through pro-active risk management,
- To rank all risks in terms of likelihood of occurrence and potential impact upon the Council,
- To allocate clear roles, responsibilities and accountability for risk management,
- To facilitate compliance with best practice in corporate governance, which will support the Annual Governance Statement which will be issued with the annual statement of accounts,
- To raise awareness of the principles and benefits involved in the risk management process, and to obtain staff and Member commitment to the principles of risk management and control.

3. Assessment and Review

This will involve consideration of all potential risks facing the Council, with risks broken down into strategic risks which could impact on the achievement of the Council's objectives, corporate risks which could impact across more than one

service, and service risks which could impact upon the ability of service units to deliver their services or to achieve their service objectives.

All risks will be clearly defined together with the controls that currently exist to manage them. Consideration of the adequacy of the present control system will avoid duplication of resources as several of the identified risks may already prove to be effectively controlled.

It is important that the internal systems and procedures in place are adequate to manage the identified risk. Where control weaknesses are identified, these should be noted so that action can be taken to remedy such weaknesses.

The risk register will be reviewed and updated at least on a quarterly basis.

The Internal Audit section will focus audit work on significant risks, as identified by management, and will audit the risk management process across the whole Council to provide assurance on its effectiveness.

The Council will seek to learn from other organisations where appropriate, and to keep up to date with best practice in risk management.

4. Risk Ranking

All risks will be rated for the likelihood that they may occur and their potential impact. This will allow for risks to be ranked and prioritised, as not all risks represent equal significance to the Council.

5. Action Plan

Once risks have been identified and ranked, the next step is to control and manage them. This will involve the consideration of cost-effective action, which will be judged against risk rankings. The proposed action to be taken will then be mapped against the specified risk together with an implementation date, and a named person will be designated as responsible for 'owning' the risk.

6. Risk Appetite

The Council will use risk management to add value. It will aim to achieve a balance between under-managing risks (i.e. being unaware of risks and therefore having little or no control over them), and over-managing them (i.e. an obsessive level of management and control which could stifle innovation and creativity).

Appropriately managed and controlled risk-taking and innovation will be encouraged where it is in furtherance of the Council's objectives.

7. Managing Risk & Opportunity Handbook

The Council has established and will regularly update the Managing Risk & Opportunity handbook which sets out its detailed approach to risk management, and the processes and procedures to be followed.

8. Benefits of Risk Management

- Awareness of significant risks with priority ranking assisting in the efficient control of the risks,

- Recognition of responsibility and accountability for risks and associated existing controls and any actions required to improve controls,
- An aid to strategic and business planning,
- Identification of new opportunities,
- Action plan for the effective management of significant risks,
- An aid in effective partnership working.

9. Accountability

There will be clear accountability for risks. This will be achieved through an annual public statement on risk management, an Annual Governance Statement signed by the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council, and by making the Council's risks and risk management process open to regular Internal Audit and external inspection (e.g. by the Audit Commission as the Council's external auditors).

The Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee will be responsible for monitoring the Council's risk management arrangements, for undertaking an annual review of this Strategy to ensure it remains current and up to date and reflects current best practice in risk management, and for making recommendations to the Executive if it is considered that any improvements or amendments are required.

Members of the Executive will be briefed regularly to ensure they are aware of significant risks affecting their portfolios and any improvements in controls which are proposed.

A Risk Management Improvement Group and Risk Management Working Group will meet regularly to ensure that risk management processes are being applied consistently, to promote risk management throughout all departments and to ensure continuous improvement in risk and opportunity management.