

Meeting: **Audit Committee**

Portfolio Area: Resources

Date: **27th September 2007**

STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

(Corporate Support)

KEY DECISION

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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To note the latest Strategic Risk Register for Stevenage Borough Council.
- 1.2 To note the current review and development of the risk management arrangements within Stevenage Borough Council

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the attached Strategic Risk Register be noted (Appendix A).
- 2.2 That the planned programme of initiatives to embed risk management within Stevenage borough Council be noted.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 While risk management is fundamentally concerned with Corporate Governance, its role has broadened, so that it is increasingly seen as a tool integral to planning and change management: Risk based decision-making. The Audit Committee standards are now much more demanding in this area. The Use of Resources inspection requires risk management to be ‘embedded’ at all levels of the Council’s activities. In practical terms this would mean for example, better linking risk management to the service planning process
- 3.2 To help the Council continue to make progress in developing and embedding risk management processes we have commissioned a programme of consultancy from our insurers Zurich Municipal. Over the coming months we will work with Zurich on the following areas:

3.21 Risk Management ‘Healthcheck’

To review our risk management processes against statutory requirements and recognised best practice. This will involve both a review of documentation and

structured interviews with key Heads of Service. The outcome will be a report and recommendations for improvements as appropriate. This process is now underway.

3.22 Training for Service Heads and other designated managers

To increase awareness and understanding of risk management and ensure a consistent approach across the Council. The aim is to provide practical tools and templates for identifying, prioritising and managing risks.

3.23 Training for Members

To provide an overview of risk management and to highlight the contribution it makes to effective governance. Also to identify Members' roles and responsibilities within the process and to provide an opportunity to look at relevant case studies and examples.

3.24 Partnership Working

To develop a governance framework for partnership working which includes risk management. This will involve several elements that lead to the development of a partnership protocol:

- Review of the way the Council identifies key partnerships
- Development of a partnership register
- 'Outside looking in' workshops for the most significant partnerships in order to identify and prioritise risks together with mitigation actions to manage the risks.

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

Members to note the latest Strategic Risk Register together with the planned initiatives to embed risk management and to raise any questions or comments as appropriate.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

An effective approach to risk management, in line with best practice, will further strengthen the Council's sound base of strong financial management and internal control and should assist in ensuring that, where possible, potential financial implications associated with individual risks can be successfully mitigated.

5.2 Legal Implications

There are no legal implications identified at this time.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- The Risk Management Strategy can be viewed in the Members library

APPENDICES

- A – 2007/08 Q2 STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER