

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT

1. Introduction

The risk management strategy of Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council is to adopt best practices in the identification, evaluation, and cost-effective control of risks. This is intended to ensure that risks are eliminated or reduced to an acceptable level, thereby safeguarding the Council's assets, employees and customers and the delivery of services to the local community.

One of the Council's aims is to:

"Maintain the Council's high standards of financial management and probity".

The Council endeavours to pursue a forward-looking and dynamic approach to delivering services to the local community and will not be averse to taking a degree of commercial risk. However, it will always exercise a prudential approach to risk taking and decisions will be made within the parameters of the Council's internal control arrangements i.e. Constitution, Procedural Rules etc. These arrangements will serve to ensure that the Council does not expose itself to risks above an acceptable level.

Risks relating specifically to Health & Safety matters will be covered within the Council Health & Safety Policy and supporting guidance notes issued by the Director of Health and Housing.

2. Objectives

The risk management objectives of the Council are to:

- embed risk management into the culture of the Council;
- manage risk in accordance with best practice;
- be responsive to changing social, environmental and legislative requirements whilst effectively managing the related risks and opportunities;
- prevent injury, damage and loss and reduce the cost of risk;
- raise awareness of the need for risk management.

These objectives will be achieved by:

- defining the roles and responsibilities, in relation to risk management, of Officers and Members within the organisation;
- providing relevant training on risk management to employees and Members of the authority;

- actively participating in inter-authority internal audit and insurance groups thereby developing and sharing best practice in risk management;
- encouraging officers participating in other professional discipline groups to secure the inclusion of risk management as an agenda topic;
- disseminating to officers as appropriate published risk management information received from insurers and other related sources;
- maintaining a risk management framework that will secure the consideration and review on a rolling basis of the strategic and operational risks confronted by the Council – this framework will provide for:
 - ∇ the outcome/results of reviews to be reported to members
 - ∇ appropriate incident recording to facilitate the analysis of risk data
 - ∇ committee reports proposing new initiatives to include a section on the risk management issues to be taken into account;
- the annual review of the risk management framework.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

a) Leader

The Leader of the Council will sign of the Risk Management Strategy on an annual basis to endorse Members commitment to it.

b) Members

The Cabinet will review the Risk Management Strategy on an annual basis and recommend endorsement by full Council. All Members of the Council will receive a Risk Management Training session during a four year term in office.

The Audit Committee will consider the Risk Management process as part of the assurance evidence in support of the Corporate Governance Statement. The Audit Committee will consider the Risk Management Strategy before it is endorsed by the Council, receive annual reports on the completion of Risk Registers and receive regular updates on Insurance claims history with details of preventative action arising from those claims. In addition the Audit Committee will be informed of any significant changes in Risk Management practices.

An assessment of risks will be included as part of the Committee Reporting Template in order to ensure that Members are aware of the risk management process that has taken place as part of the reporting process.

c) Risk Champions

The Chairman of the Audit Committee and the Chief Internal Auditor are named as Risk Champions. Their role is to ensure that awareness of Risk Management matters is promoted throughout the organisation and will bring any developments relating to Risk Management to the attention of the Audit Committee.

d) Management Team

Management are responsible for the identification and management of risks.

Management Team will consider strategic risk and if necessary will formulate an action plan to address the risk. Strategic risk reviews will be undertaken where new situations arise or as considered necessary by the Management Team.

Chief Officers will ensure that an operational risk review of all of their sections is undertaken on an annual basis. Chief Officers will take steps to ensure that their staff are fully aware of the Council's Risk Management Strategy and how to raise concerns relating to risk.

e) Section Managers

Section Managers in conjunction with members of their teams (as appropriate) and other parties / partners (where applicable) will lead reviews of the operational risks relating to their sections, and will reflect the outcomes of these reviews in their own Operational Risk Registers. These operational risk reviews will be undertaken annually, and at conception where new situations arise.

Appropriate staff will be asked to review the risk registers and their scoring on an annual basis.

Where risks are identified as being in the red zone of the risk matrix they will be reported to Management Team. Where a manager identifies that a risk is moving significantly towards the red zone he should monitor the situation and alert his Chief Officer to the fact.

f) Partners

Where the Council enters into a partnership arrangement, the officer responsible for monitoring the partnership must ensure that the partner has an adequate risk management strategy and sufficient insurance cover to protect the interests of the Council.

g) Employees Generally

The concept of risk management will be conveyed to all employees.

Understanding of the Strategy will be confirmed annually and staff will be asked to sign a confirmation document that they are aware of the Risk Management Strategy and where they can find it.

A copy of this document will be held on the Council's Intranet site. Employees will be expected in the first instance, to refer risk management concerns to their line managers. Should such concerns remain un-addressed, employees can refer their concerns elsewhere as prescribed in the Council's Confidential Reporting Code.

Staff identified as being appropriate by their Manager will be asked to review the content and scoring of the Operational Risk registers for their section. This review should assist the Manager in completing the Risk Register.

All staff also have a duty to consider safe working practices and owe a duty of care to the safety of others. Any concerns relating to Health & Safety matters should be raised with line management, who, as part of their response, should seek guidance as necessary from the Director of Health and Housing.

h) Director of Health & Housing

The Director of Health & Housing shall be responsible for:

- monitoring and reviewing arrangements for the proper management of work place health and safety;
- preparing and updating the Council's Health & Safety Policy;
- overseeing the issue of Health & Safety Guidance to assist service managers and staff comply with the Council's Health and Safety Policy; and
- assessing compliance with Health & Safety legislation.

In the execution of these responsibilities the Director of Health and Housing will:

- consult with service managers in preparing an annual health and safety work programme which will include undertaking audits of work place activities and related risk assessments;
- assist service managers identify emerging health and safety risks and measures to address them including appropriate training;
- assist services managers prepare and review health and safety risk assessments; and
- submit an annual report on health and safety management in the work place.

i) Financial Services

The Director of Finance in consultation with the Insurance & Risk Manager will:

- regularly review and advise upon the Council's insurance requirements and arrangements
- advise Officers and Members on insurance covers available and / or in place
- regularly advise Members of the Audit Committee on claims history and preventative action arising
- arrange insurance cover as necessary
- advise Officers on claims procedures, and process claims arising
- assist in the development and provision of claims data to aid future risk control
- disseminate published risk management information received

Internal Audit Section will take account of Risk Management provision when formulating the annual audit plan. Although the provision of adequate and effective risk management is Management responsibility each Internal Audit review will include a provision to ascertain if an up to date and adequate risk register is in place.

This Risk Management Strategy Statement will be reviewed annually and updated as appropriate.

Signed

Leader of the Council

Signed

Chief Executive

Draft April 2008