

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **AUDIT COMMITTEE**

DATE: **WEDNESDAY, 30 JANUARY 2013**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

SUBJECT: **RISK MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To provide Members with assurance on the systems for the corporate management of risk and business continuity.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 Audit Committee is responsible for assessing the effectiveness of the Council's Risk Management processes and systems.

2.02 Previous risk management update reports have covered the processes within an effective risk management framework. This report provides assurance on the actions that are taken to mitigate risk.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 Risk Management

The Council has identified, assessed and evaluated its strategic risks and these are incorporated into the Strategic Assessment of Risks and Challenges document (SARC). The SARC is a live resource that is updated every six months (quarterly via quarterly performance reports) which takes into account:

- Progress against mitigating actions
- RAG Status
- Predictive (amber or green) date of Risk Reduction
- Emerging new risks
- External threats and opportunities
- Changing circumstances

The SARC itself is a live management resource, assisting Managers to update and mitigate risks as part of their operational activities and embedded within their work programmes.

- 3.02 An example to show this is CD38 Welfare Reform. The Welfare Reform risks are being managed through the activities of the Welfare Reform Programme Board. This “live” and current issue and its implications are continuously changing, resulting in risks needing to be updated and consideration of mitigating actions developed at a rapid rate. One such example is the response needed to react to the changes in legislation as they are enacted.

A Welfare Reform Strategy is being developed comprising of four high-level projects that collectively aim, as far as practical, to mitigate the full negative impacts of the welfare reforms upon our local communities and the Council. The four strands are:

- Council Tax Benefit Replacement Scheme
- Implementation of Universal Credit
- Mitigating Homelessness
- Social Fund Replacement – Local Assistance Scheme

There is continued involvement with WLGA and Welsh Local Authorities to develop joint solutions wherever possible to the delivery of services and the mitigation of risk.

The impacts from the Welfare Reforms cross over many different services and officers from these services are working well together to look at the whole picture rather than “just their part of things”

- 3.03 A further example would be CD26 Disabled Facilities Grants. (DFG’s) The risks and challenges presented to reduce waiting times from assessment to adaptation installation involve both social care and housing teams for both process and budgetary requirements. To mitigate these risks and provide improvements, senior representatives from Social Services for Adults, Social Services for Children and Housing Renewal continue to meet on a monthly basis to ensure that performance is closely monitored and a whole system approach is applied to performance improvement. A Lean Review has been completed and process improvements are being implemented in Housing Renewal.

The terms of reference for the Specialised Housing Group have been expanded so that a more robust process of person and property matching can take place throughout the social stock. This function will become part of the Single Access Routes to Housing (SARTH) accessible homes register in 2014/15.

- 3.04 Another example is Data Protection CG23. Responsibility for compliance with the Data Protection Act rests with all Managers and staff dealing with personal information. For service areas that

regularly process personal information Data Protection has been identified as an operational risk. Heads of Service are identifying staff that require training and an external specialist provider will be delivering these courses. Regular news items are published on the Infonet to keep staff aware of their responsibilities.

3.05 Work is ongoing with directorates to improve risk mitigation in service areas where risk management needs further support.

3.06 Business Continuity

Winter Maintenance – Assurance should be taken from the work carried out by the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This has led to an “early warning system” to keep the appropriate staff informed of inclement weather conditions so that the appropriate actions can be taken in a timely manner. The budget has also been protected to ensure that the service can be delivered effectively.

3.07 There have been many lessons learned following the flash flooding during the last 12 months. One of the reasons for the flooding was that the saturated earth could not take further downpours of heavy rain and the water ran off the fields. This water could not be taken by the gully and therefore ran onto roads causing flooding. Gully cleansing and general maintenance regimes have been reviewed, particularly in areas with known flooding problems. This will help mitigate the likelihood of flooding recurring at these locations.

3.08 Assurance should also be taken from the recent flooding events in Denbighshire which were dealt with by the Joint Emergency Planning Unit for Denbighshire and Flintshire.

3.09 Arrangements are in place with the Environment Agency Wales to enable flood alerts and warnings for both rivers and the coast of Flintshire to be received by key officers of the Council. On receipt of these warnings officers take the necessary action as laid out within the appropriate plans and protocols for their service.

3.10 The above Risk Management and Business Continuity examples are topical and give a cross reference of where Risk Management and Business Continuity make a difference.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 Members to gain assurance from the systems for the corporate management of risk and business continuity.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 None as a direct result of this report.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 None as a direct result of this report.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 None as a direct result of this report.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 None as a direct result of this report.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 None as a direct result of this report

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 Corporate Management Team, Audit Committee, Scrutiny Committee

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 Corporate Management Team, Audit Committee, Scrutiny Committee

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 None

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Strategic Assessment of Risks and Challenges

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