

# Public Document Pack



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## **AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**DATE: FRIDAY 21 JANUARY 2011**

**TIME: 10 AM**

**PLACE: COUNCIL HOUSE, PLYMOUTH (NEXT TO THE CIVIC CENTRE)**

### **Members –**

Councillor Berrow, Chair.

Councillor Evans, Vice-Chair.

Councillors Murphy, Stark and Thompson.

### **Independent Members –**

Mr. Clarke and Mr. Stewart.

One vacancy.

PLEASE FIND ATTACHED A COPY OF THE FULL AND FINAL REPORT FOR CONSIDERATION UNDER AGENDA ITEM NO. 7.

**BARRY KEEL**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

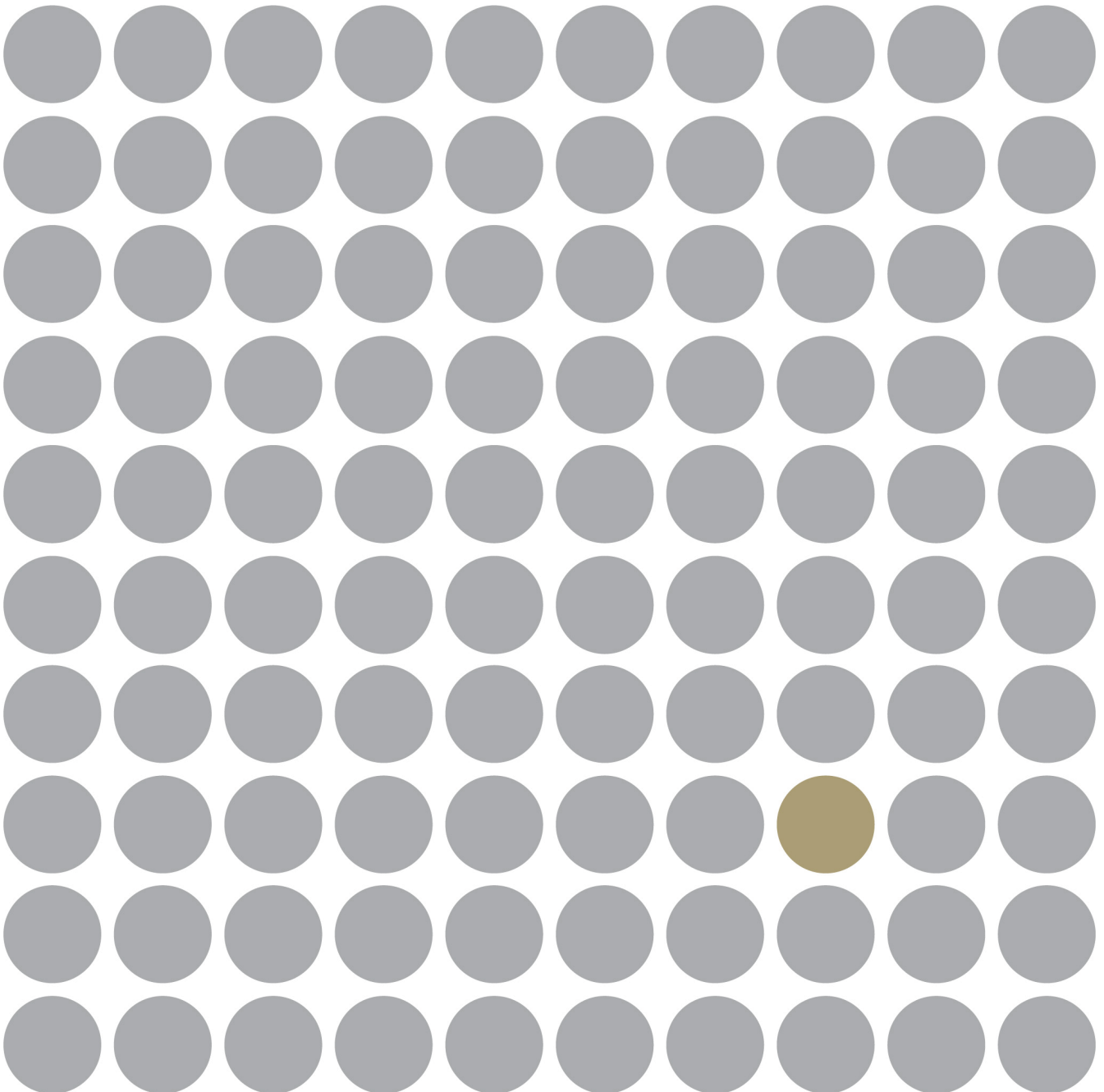
## **AUDIT COMMITTEE**

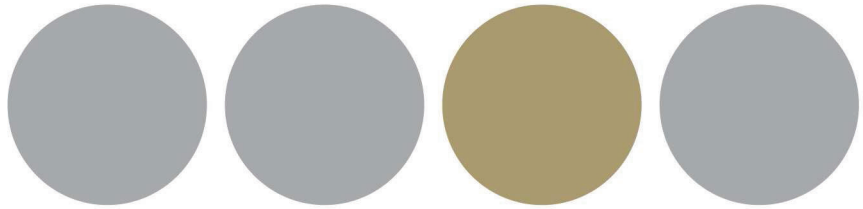
### **7. INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S RISK MANAGEMENT MATURITY - SUMMARY** **(Pages 1 - 22)**

The Committee will receive for its information a summary of Heath Lambert's key findings arising from the review of the Council's Risk Management Maturity. A copy of the full report will be circulated to Members as soon as it is available.

## Independent Review of the Council's Risk Management Maturity

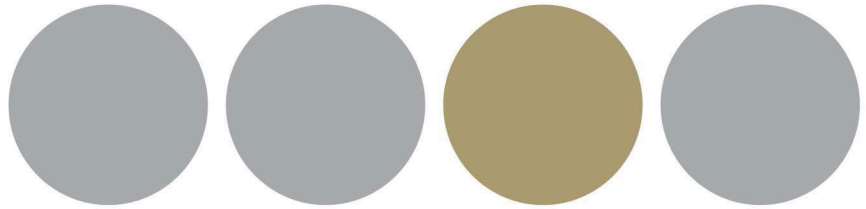
Final Report  
January 2011





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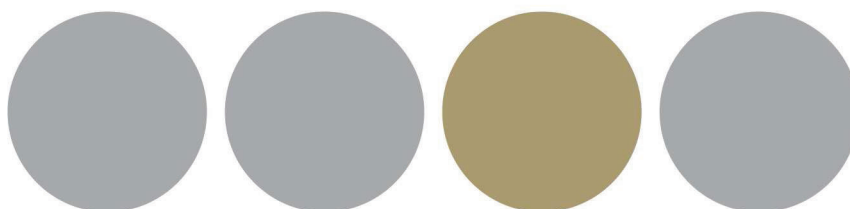
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## 1 Introduction, Scope and Objectives

### Introduction

Heath Lambert was appointed risk management and insurance adviser to the Council on 1 October 2010. One of our first tasks on appointment was to commence an independent review of the framework for risk management (RM). This document sets out the key findings arising from that review.

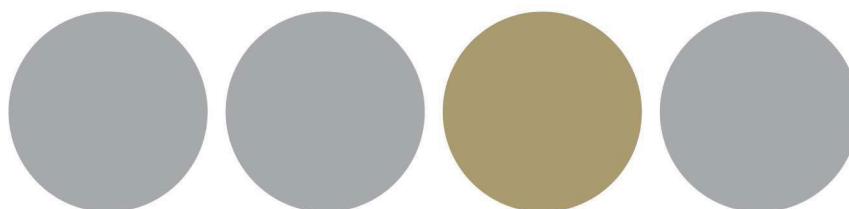
### Scope and objectives of the review

The review has been carried out by Judy Jones, Head of Public Sector Risk Consulting at Heath Lambert. It provides an independent assessment of the Council's risk management maturity based upon the principles of best practice in risk management as defined by: the International Standard ISO 31000; the British Standard BS31100: 2008; HM Treasury and ALARM, the Public Risk Management Association.

The scope has encompassed the following aspects of the risk management process, as defined by HM Treasury in the Treasury Risk Management Assessment Framework (July 2009) and adapted by ALARM in the National Performance Model for Risk Management in the Public Sector:

- leadership and management
- strategy & policy
- people
- partnerships, shared risks and resources
- processes
- risk handling & assurance
- outcomes and delivery.

Our main objective has been to assess the current level of risk management maturity across the Council.



## 2 Approach to the Review

### Introduction

Our approach has been based on a comprehensive review of documentation together with a series of interviews.

### Initial desktop review

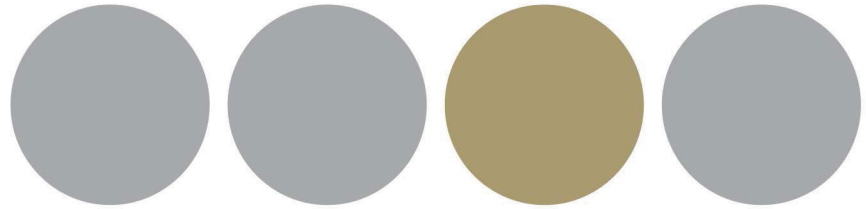
Our initial desktop review of key documentation included the following (please note that this is not an exhaustive list of documents reviewed):

- the current RM Policy and Strategy and related guidance / procedure notes
- guidance relating to governance and RM arrangements in respect of significant partnerships and other forms of collaborative arrangements (including strategic delivery partnerships and outsourced services such as Highways)
- guidance relating to RM arrangements in respect of key projects and programmes (such as the joint PFI Waste Procurement and the new £45m leisure facility)
- details of RM training provided to all stakeholders
- current examples of strategic and operational risk registers (including risk assessments), action-planning and reporting (including examples from significant partnerships and key projects/programmes)
- Terms of Reference, agendas and minutes of key groups and committees involved in risk management
- examples of risk reporting to members and officers
- reports arising from the most recent reviews, audits (internal and external) or inspections of risk management at the Council, and
- evidence of integration of RM with other relevant processes (such as business planning, internal audit, governance, performance management etc).

Where appropriate (and sometimes following the interviews referred to below) we also requested additional information.

### Interviews with key personnel

We also held a series of meetings with individuals who make a significant contribution to the risk



management framework. These are listed below:

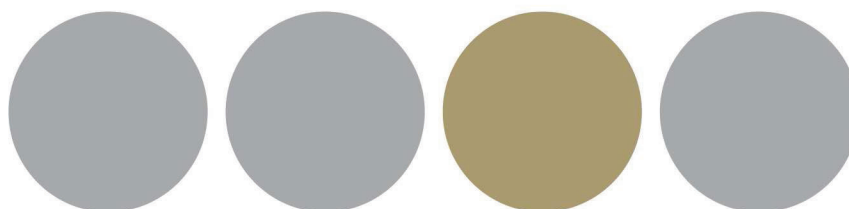
- Mike Hocking, the Council's Head of Corporate Risk and Insurance
- Adam Broome, Director for Corporate Support
- Cllr Ian Bowyer, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property, People and Governance
- Angie McSweeney, Finance Risk Champion
- Louise Clapton, Devon Audit Services
- Giles Perritt, Head of Policy, Performance and Partnerships
- Candice Sainsbury, Risk Champion for Children & Young People's Services
- Lynn Clark, Risk Champion for Community Services Directorate
- Tony Hopwood, Project Director for the Life Centre
- Mark Turner, Waste PFI Project Manager
- Tim Howes, Assistant Director for Democracy and Governance and Monitoring Officer
- Dave Shepperd, Head of Legal Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer
- Malcolm Coe, Assistant Director for Finance, Assets and Efficiencies
- Peter Honeywell, 2020 Partnership Programme Manager
- John London, Programme Support Officer, and
- Joan Chilcott, Capital Programme & Projects Manager.

## Reporting and next steps

Our conclusions and recommendations are summarised in section 3 of this report. These recommendations provide a roadmap for future improvements. In effect, they create an action-plan designed to further enhance and embed risk management across the Council.

In subsequent years we will review progress made in implementing these recommendations, and liaise with you to ensure that the Council's RM framework remains at the forefront of best practice.





### 3 Summary of Key Findings and Recommendations

#### Key findings

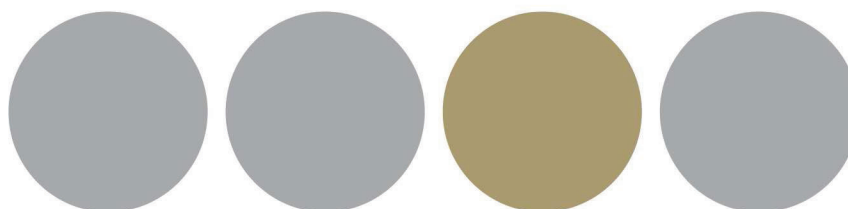
##### Examples of good risk management practice

During the review we have found many examples of very good, even exemplary, risk management practice. These include:

- Clear and effective sponsorship of risk management by senior management and elected members (as evidenced by the proactive roles of the officer and member risk management champions)
- A well defined and current risk management strategy supported by clearly defined roles and responsibilities
- The provision of supplementary guidance to key stakeholders including elected members, risk champions and those involved in partnerships
- Engagement with professional bodies such as ALARM (the Public Risk Management Association) and also with national initiatives such as the ALARM/CIPFA National Benchmarking Club 2010
- Ongoing efforts to integrate risk management with other key systems such as: business planning; procurement; the core competencies framework; the governance and management of partnerships; and the Project Management System (though we recognise that this is yet to be rolled out across the Council)
- Regular and well attended meetings of the Operational Risk Management Group and the active participation of the Risk Champions' network
- Effective use of a Risk Management Fund, accessed by a well-developed bid process
- Regular monitoring and reporting of risk management performance which clearly establishes the value added by risk management to corporate performance
- Positive results arising from historical inspections under the Comprehensive Area Assessment (achieving a score of 3 at the final inspection, reflecting continuing improvement)
- Ongoing development of communication about risk management, including use of the Council's intranet
- A willingness to seek external commentary and act upon constructive suggestions resulting from external reviews, where appropriate.

##### Conclusions in relation to individual assessment criteria

Our overall conclusion is based on a series of assessments in the seven areas defined in the ALARM National Risk Management Performance Model. On the basis of the evidence obtained we have



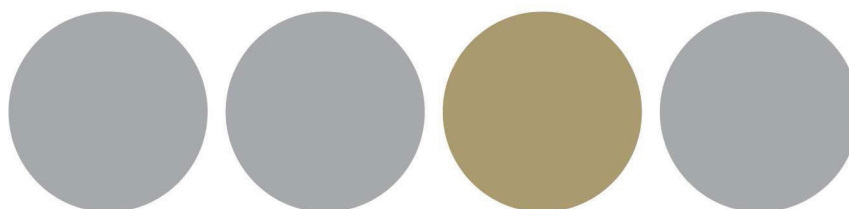
concluded as follows:

Assessment criteria	Conclusion
Leadership and management	Risk management is supported and promoted effectively by senior management and also by elected members. It is recognised as a key driver for corporate success.
Strategy & policy	Strategies and policies for risk management are clearly defined and subject to ongoing review, development and refinement.
People	Risk management is recognised within the Council’s Competency Framework and training is ongoing to ensure that staff are equipped and supported to manage risks well. We have, however, identified scope for further improvement in this key area and have made a number of recommendations.
Partnerships, shared risks and resources	We recognise that the various recommendations arising from both internal and external audit reports relating to governance and risk management of partnerships are subject to ongoing management action. We also understand the need for a proportionate approach that is appropriate in the context of the Council’s Corporate Plan 2011-14 and the Plymouth Report/Plymouth 2020. In the current circumstances, however, this remains an area of relative weakness and <b>potential</b> risk exposure to the Council.
Processes	The management of risk and uncertainty is increasingly integrated with key business processes.
Risk handling & assurance	The usefulness, benefits of and value added by risk management are broadly recognised.
Outcomes and delivery	Risk management is becoming increasingly linked to business plans and planning cycles, and is recognised as making a contribution to the successful delivery of improved outcomes.

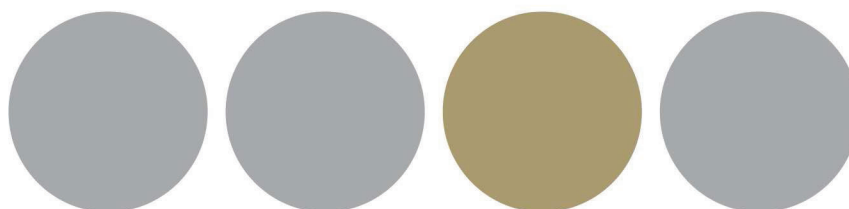
### Overall conclusion and recommendations

These lead us to the overall conclusion that the Council’s RM framework is relatively mature. We have identified a number of areas where further development is possible. Our recommendations are as follows:

Ref.	Details of recommendation
1	Risk management training needs across the Council should be formally identified and a training matrix developed to support a systematic approach to “educating to embed”. The provision of project risk management training as part of the roll-out of the Project Management System is, in our view, a relatively high priority in view of the potential financial and reputational risks associated with projects.



Ref.	Details of recommendation
2	Greater emphasis should be placed on facilitated risk workshops in the context of business planning and performance management at all levels (strategic, operational, programme/project, partnership). These could be facilitated by the appropriate Risk Champion. Such events could also address specific risks emerging within the Council or in the wider sector, such as Information Governance risks or those associated with the development of shared services. <b>[Note:</b> these could also incorporate a training element. This recommendation should be considered, therefore, in conjunction with recommendation 1 above.]
3	Guidance provided to Risk Champions should be refreshed, expanded upon and incorporated within a formally approved process map that will be applied consistently across the Council.
4	Update/refresher training should be provided for Risk Champions to support their ongoing development. This should focus on building comprehensive understanding of their role in the context of the wider risk management framework, and also encouraging consistency in approach across all Directorates. It should also provide the basis for exchange of good practice and an ongoing support network for Risk Champions across the Council.
5	Heath Lambert should be invited to comment on the draft documents entitled “Managing Partnerships: A Guide to Good Practice” and “Risk Management in Partnerships: a Simple Guide”.
6	<p>The value added by risk management should be demonstrated through the use of facilitated risk workshops in the context of the Plymouth 2020 Partnership. These workshops should address the two main ways to view a partnership, that is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• from the perspective of the Council (particularly as Accountable Body); and</li> <li>• from the perspective of the partnership as a whole.</li> </ul>
7	Consideration should be given to the production of an expanded quarterly “risk report” which builds on the current monitoring report and incorporates additional information relating to: horizon scanning for new and emerging issues; the strategic risk register; the status of operational risk registers; the status of business continuity plans and summary of incidents; emergency planning; health & safety; insurance; and information governance. This report should be presented to the CMT/Strategic Risk Management Group and onwards to the Audit Committee.



## 4 Detailed Findings Arising from our Review

### Leadership and management

#### Scope

This criterion addresses the extent to which the senior management team:

- understand the key risks facing the Council
- encourage innovation through well-managed risk taking and
- demonstrate a high level of commitment to embedding a risk aware culture.

#### Findings

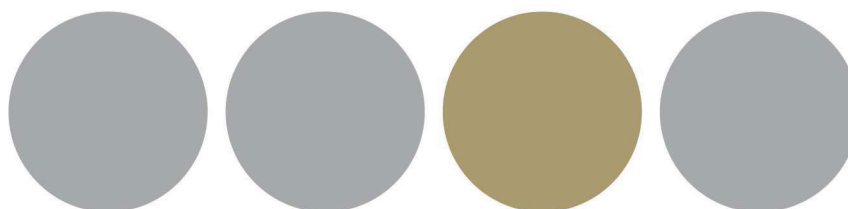
It is apparent that the CMT engages very proactively in discussing strategic (corporate) risks and also operational risks affecting their individual Directorates. The CMT acts as the Council's Corporate RM Group and receives reports from the Council's Head of Corporate Risk & Insurance relating to the Strategic Risk Register, and also updates on Operational Risk Management. This provides an opportunity for full and frank discussion and a broad perspective of current threats and opportunities. It also provides an opportunity for challenge in respect of risk analysis and assessment.

We have seen no evidence of a risk averse attitude. At CMT level it is recognised that risk cannot be totally eliminated, and that there is a need to focus scarce resources on highest priority risks. The use of a Red/Amber/Green RAG rating within Risk Registers is an essential tool in this regard.

We were particularly impressed by the highly proactive approach used by the Council's Project Services Team, who have integrated risk management within the Project Management Process. This is an important example of how risk management can be used to support innovative projects and programmes, by increasing awareness of risks and also delivering assurance that risks are being managed appropriately.

High level commitment to embedding a risk aware culture is clearly evidenced by a range of factors. In addition to the obvious sponsorship of the CMT we note, for example, the following:

- the prominent endorsement of the Council's 2010-2012 RM Strategy by the Chief Executive, Leader



of the Council and Director of Corporate Support

- the proactive engagement of Cllr Ian Bowyer (Cabinet Member for Finance, Property, People and Governance) and also the Council’s Audit Committee
- the status of, and extent of engagement with, the Council’s Head of Corporate Risk & Insurance
- an ongoing willingness to subject the Council’s risk management framework to independent review and assessment (including use of national benchmarking exercises)
- a willingness to modify the Council’s risk management framework where possibilities exist to support further integration and embedding.

**Conclusion**

Assessment criteria	Conclusion
Leadership and management	Risk management is supported and promoted effectively by senior management and also by elected members. It is recognised as a key driver for corporate success.

**Strategy & policy**

**Scope**

This criterion addresses the extent to which the Council has developed:

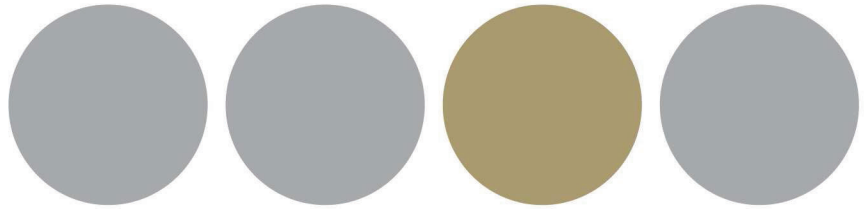
- a risk management policy that conforms to a recognised and acceptable standard (including specifying the risk appetite), and
- a comprehensive framework for managing risk.

**Findings**

The RM Strategy 2010-2012 is a comprehensive document which includes prominent reference to the Council’s shared objectives, “Healthy, Wealthy, Wise and Safe” and corporate vision. We take the view that it is consistent with current best practice and creates a robust platform from which to promote integration and embedding of risk management across the Council.

We note that the Strategy incorporates a RM Policy Statement as Appendix A which includes a specific section entitled “Risk Appetite and Tolerance”. We also note that the Strategy is subject to regular review, development and refinement.

This document also describes the overall framework for risk management which is usefully illustrated in Appendix C and is supported by clear descriptions of roles and responsibilities. In addition, however,



supplementary guidance has been developed for key stakeholders including elected members, risk champions and those involved in partnerships. The relevant documents are readily available on the Council’s intranet.

**Conclusion**

Assessment criteria	Conclusion
Strategy & policy	Strategies and policies for risk management are clearly defined and subject to ongoing review, development and refinement.

**People**

**Scope**

This criterion addresses the extent to which people are equipped and supported to manage risks in accordance with their defined role and responsibilities. It examines aspects of:

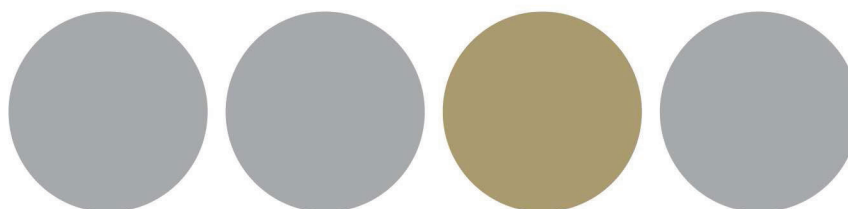
- risk management culture, and also
- training and guidance provided to officers, elected members and other stakeholders.

**Findings**

We consider that the inclusion of risk management within the Competency Framework is potentially a significant contributor to the creation of a risk management “no blame” culture. Training has been provided to various stakeholders, including elected members, on an ad hoc basis, and this has been well received. To date, however, a comprehensive RM Training Strategy has not been developed.

We have been extremely impressed by the workings of the Operational Risk Management Group and proactive engagement of Risk Champions. As is to be expected, however, we have observed varying degrees of confidence amongst the Risk Champions network. It is inevitable that, for a variety of reasons, some are more effective in their role than others. In our experience this is an area where enhanced approaches to training can add significant value. For example, the role of Risk Champions includes a requirement to...

*“Promote, maintain and monitor risk registers in line with risk management/business planning guidance.” (Appendix B of the RM Strategy refers.)*



Specific training can be provided for Risk Champions to equip them to facilitate risk workshops within their own Directorate and meet this requirement.

We have also observed some minor variations in practices. In part this seems to have arisen due to a lack of hand-over from one Champion to another, as personnel have changed. An opportunity exists, therefore, to refresh the guidance currently available to Risk Champions to support a consistent approach taking into account local “variations” that may add value – such as the use of a process map. Once formally approved, this guidance should form the basis for a training module specific to Risk Champions, and provision of ongoing support/refresher training for the network.

**Conclusion**

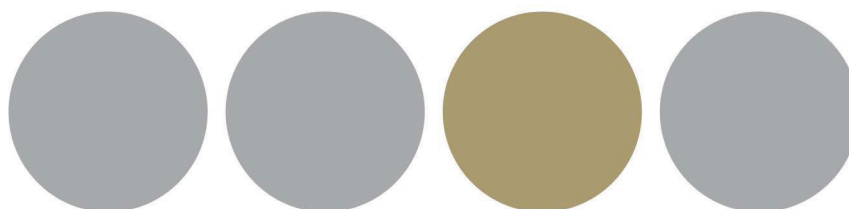
Assessment criteria	Conclusion
People	Risk management is recognised within the Council’s Competency Framework and training is ongoing to ensure that staff are equipped and supported to manage risks well. We have, however, identified scope for further improvement in this key area and have made a number of recommendations.

**Recommendations**

**R1:** Risk management training needs across the Council should be formally identified and a training matrix developed to support a systematic approach to “educating to embed”. The provision of project risk management training as part of the roll-out of the Project Management System is, in our view, a relatively high priority in view of the potential financial and reputational risks associated with projects.

[**Note:** this should be co-ordinated with the identification of development needs arising from the Competency Framework. The matrix, and training modules developed from it, should be designed to ensure that all stakeholders are equipped to fulfil their stated roles and responsibilities for risk management effectively. It should address training needs of new staff, newly elected members and, where appropriate, external stakeholders such as partner organisations. ]

**R2:** Greater emphasis should be placed on facilitated risk workshops in the context of business planning and performance management at all levels (strategic, operational, programme/project, partnership). These could be facilitated by the appropriate Risk Champion. Such events could also address specific risks emerging within the Council or in the wider sector, such as Information Governance risks or those associated with the development of shared services. [**Note:** these could also incorporate a



training element. This recommendation should be considered, therefore, in conjunction with recommendation 1 above.]

**R3:** Guidance provided to Risk Champions should be refreshed, expanded upon and incorporated within a formally approved process map that will be applied consistently across the Council.

**R4:** Update/refresher training should be provided for Risk Champions to support their ongoing development. This should focus on building comprehensive understanding of their role in the context of the wider risk management framework, and also encouraging consistency in approach across all Directorates. It should also provide the basis for exchange of good practice and an ongoing support network for Risk Champions across the Council.

## **Partnerships, shared risks and resources**

### **Scope**

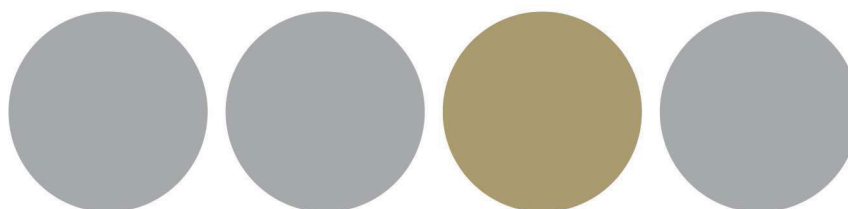
This criterion addresses the arrangements in place to manage risks with collaborative partners and how effective they might be. We have specifically considered how the Council ensures that its partnership work is undertaken with appropriate consideration for risk, and reviewed the guidance available in respect of governance and risk management of partnerships.

### **Findings**

We reviewed the draft document entitled “Managing Partnerships: A Guide to Good Practice” and draft guidance entitled “Risk Management in Partnerships: a Simple Guide”. These documents have yet to be finalised, and in our view an ideal opportunity exists to carry out a final review drawing on Heath Lambert’s extensive experience in this area. As the Council’s newly appointed Risk & Insurance Advisers Heath Lambert are well-placed to add significant value to the final review process. This would enable the Council to draw on our experience of developing guidance materials for other authorities addressing the subjects of governance and risk management of partnerships.

We also note that during 2010 the risk management of partnerships was subject to reviews by both internal and external auditors to the Council. We have not replicated any of their work in this area but have paid close attention to the conclusions and recommendations arising from the following reports:





- Grant Thornton Partnerships Arrangements Follow-up Report dated August 2010
- Devon Audit Partnerships Report “Management of Partnerships 2010/2011” dated November 2010.

We support the recommendations that have been made and note the management responses, indicating that implementation of agreed actions is ongoing. We also note the comment included in paragraphs 9.2 and 9.3 of the Risk Management Annual Report 2009/2010, which states:

*“External inspections have confirmed that the Council’s significant partnerships have effective risk management arrangements in place with risk registers monitored routinely by Programme and Project Boards.*

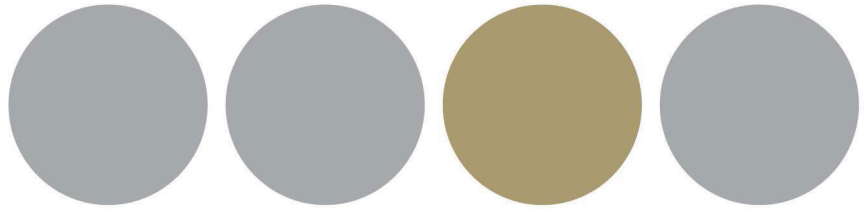
*In addition, the Local Strategic Partnership is currently developing a more robust system of risk logs in order to track the delivery of key outcomes for the four Theme Groups as part of its performance management framework.”*

We believe, therefore, that an opportunity exists to demonstrate the value that is added by risk management, through the use of facilitated risk workshops in the context of the Plymouth 2020 Partnership. To conform to best practice (as set out, for example, in the CIPFA Better Governance Forum Risk Management Guidance Note number Eleven – Partnership Risk Management) we advocate an approach that recognises the two main ways to view a partnership, that is from the perspective of the Council (particularly as Accountable Body) and also from the perspective of the partnership as a whole.

This is entirely consistent with the recommendations arising from the Devon Audit Partnership report and would, in our view, represent a very significant step forward. Heath Lambert would be pleased to provide an illustrative example of a methodology that has been applied elsewhere.

**Conclusion**

Assessment criteria	Conclusion
Partnerships, shared risks and resources	We recognise that the various recommendations arising from both internal and external audit reports relating to governance and risk management of partnerships are subject to ongoing management action. We also understand the need for a proportionate approach that is appropriate in the context of the Council’s Corporate Plan 2011-14 and the Plymouth Report/Plymouth 2020. In the current circumstances, however, this remains an area of relative weakness and <b>potential</b> risk exposure to the Council.



## Recommendations

**R5:** Heath Lambert should be invited to comment on the draft documents entitled “Managing Partnerships: A Guide to Good Practice” and “Risk Management in Partnerships: a Simple Guide”.

**R5:** The value added by risk management should be demonstrated through the use of facilitated risk workshops in the context of the Plymouth 2020 Partnership. These workshops should address the two main ways to view a partnership, that is from the perspective of the Council (particularly as Accountable Body) and also from the perspective of the partnership as a whole.

## Processes

### Scope

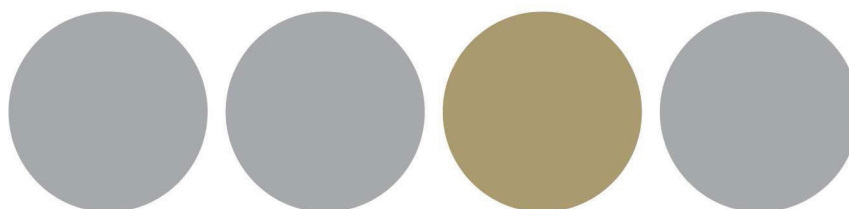
This criterion addresses the extent to which risk management processes are integrated with other business systems (such as strategic and financial planning, policy making and performance management) and support the day to day business of the Council.

### Findings

It is apparent that significant progress is being made to integrate risk management with key business systems. This is consistent with the Use of Resources Action Plan, and is unaffected by the demise of the Comprehensive Area Assessment. Examples of specific guidance to support this process include: the Business Planning and RM Factsheet; Strategic Procurement Factsheet (2009); Tender Risk Register Template (2009); Audit Plan for Risk Management; Procurement Baseline Risk Assessment Form; Joint Performance & Finance Report; and The Competency Framework Booklet.

With regard to specific areas we also note that:

- in relation to **strategic and financial planning**, delivery plans relating to the 4 corporate priorities are supported by risk logs and resources are allocated according to risk-assessed priorities
- in relation to **policy making**, report authors preparing papers for Member decisions are required to include risk considerations in the front summary of all Committee reports
- in relation to **performance management**, risks are recorded in the risk management module of the Council’s current Performance Management system. This will continue when the system is eventually replaced. In addition, risk management is recognised as a core competency in the Competency Framework



- in relation to **project and programme management**, the project management arrangements under the control of the Corporate Property team incorporate comprehensive risk management guidance
- in relation to **business planning**, operational risks are now being routinely incorporated into departmental business plans.

**Conclusion**

Assessment criteria	Conclusion
Processes	The management of risk and uncertainty is increasingly integrated with key business processes.

**Risk handling & assurance**

**Scope**

This criterion addresses the extent to which risks are effectively handled across the Council and what procedures are in place to provide assurance that risks are managed well.

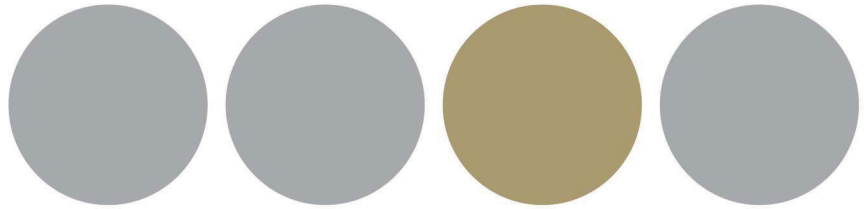
**Findings**

The Devon Audit Partnership’s audit plan includes reviews of the Council’s risk management arrangements. In addition, the Council’s Audit Committee receives Risk Management Annual Reports which summarise work carried out to develop the Council’s risk management approach, and also provides information on the focus for proposed risk management activity for the next twelve months. The use of the CIPFA and ALARM benchmarking facilities also provide added assurance.

On the basis of the various interviews we carried out as part of this review, it was also apparent that risk management is widely valued as a useful business tool. In many cases we perceived a genuine enthusiasm for risk management and an obvious willingness to contribute to the ongoing process of integration and embedding.

**Conclusion**

Assessment criteria	Conclusion
Risk handling & assurance	The usefulness, benefits of and value added by risk management are broadly recognised.



**Outcomes and delivery**

**Scope**

This section considers the extent to which risk management contributes to achieving successful outcomes, though this is notoriously difficult to demonstrate!

**Findings**

Monitoring reports prepared by the Council’s Head of Corporate Risk & Insurance provide comprehensive information regarding Strategic and Operational risk management activities. They also refer to the extent to which risk management is becoming increasingly integrated within day to day activities, including performance management and business planning processes. Section 4 of the 2009/2010 Risk Management Annual Report makes specific reference to the actions being taken in this area.

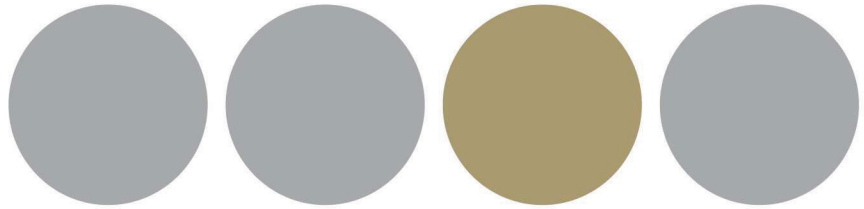
As stated in the previous section of this report, on the basis of the interviews conducted as part of this review we perceive that stakeholders are becoming increasingly aware of the contribution that risk management is making to successful delivery of improved outcomes.

Nevertheless, our experience of working with other high-performing Councils suggests that the reporting of risk management activity is an area where more could be done to demonstrate the contribution that risk management makes to overall corporate performance. Plymouth CC is undoubtedly heading in the right direction but, as is the case in most Councils we work with, there is potential to refine the style and content of risk management reports produced.

In expressing this opinion we recognise that there is no one style of reporting that suits all Councils, and would be pleased to discuss this further with the Council’s Head of Corporate Risk & Insurance to illustrate and expand upon our comments.

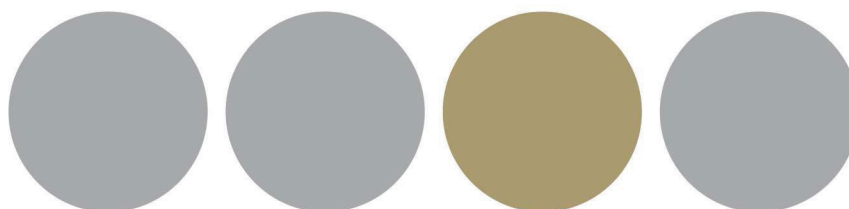
**Conclusion**

Assessment criteria	Conclusion
Outcomes and delivery	Risk management is becoming increasingly linked to business plans and planning cycles, and is recognised as making a contribution to the successful delivery of improved outcomes.



**Recommendation**

**R7:** Consideration should be given to the production of an expanded quarterly “risk report” which builds on the current monitoring report and incorporates additional information relating to: horizon scanning for new and emerging issues; the strategic risk register; the status of operational risk registers; the status of business continuity plans and summary of incidents; emergency planning; health & safety; insurance; and information governance. This report should be presented to the CMT/Strategic Risk Management Group and onwards to the Audit Committee.



## 5 Concluding Remarks

### The wider context

At the conclusion of this exercise it's appropriate to consider the results in a wider context, reflecting particularly on Heath Lambert's experience of working with other high performing Councils. This report refers in some detail to the many strengths we have observed in the Council's approach to risk management. These have contributed to our overall conclusion that the Council's RM framework is relatively mature. In our view, the key strength of risk management at Plymouth CC is the obvious support for risk management from members of the Corporate Management Team and elected members. We have also been extremely impressed by the level of engagement and quality of debate we have observed at Risk Management Group meetings. Whilst these features are not unique, they are all too rare in our experience!

It is apparent that risk management in the context of partnerships requires further attention. To put this into context, however, this is a relatively weak area in many local authorities and has been for some time. It's no surprise that the Report on the outcomes of the ALARM/CIPFA Risk Management Benchmarking Club 2010 concludes that:

*There has been significant progress in embedding risk management within public service organisations. A key area for improvement however remains the area of partnerships and collaborative working."*

### The way forward

What distinguishes Plymouth CC from some others, however, is that there is an obvious determination and commitment to move forward. Furthermore, the appointment of Heath Lambert as the Council's Risk & Insurance Advisers means that the Council now has access to additional expertise in this key area. It is to be expected, therefore, that steady progress can be made from now on in order to embed risk management across all forms of collaborative working.



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