

## **ALARM Award – Risk Manager of the Year 2007**

### **Executive Summary.**

*“The foundations laid down by Jan Collins prior to 2006 has seen Risk Management become an integral aspect of management delivery for the Council to embrace the management of risk and to be an enabler of high quality services to the Community of Swindon.”*

Rod Bluh, Leader of the Council and Gavin Jones, Chief Executive.

It was recognised that embedded strong leadership was core to the recovery and continued improvement of the Council. Risk Management was recognised as being one of the key foundations to support this leadership. Working with Sir Mike Pitt and Gavin Jones, Chief Executive SBC, the framework and delivery of Risk Management was consulted and reviewed and delivered as a new Strategy in March 2006 and subsequently being published. The Strategy required Members and Officers to assist in, take responsibility for the identification, control, and reduction of risk and containment of cost, in all aspects of their activities and areas of responsibility. To ensure improved strategies, operational and financial management, continuity of knowledge, improved compliance and importantly improved customer service delivery.

Working without a direct team Jan has made the Borough and Partners part of the Risk Management Team using leadership tools and techniques. To deliver the improvement needed within the Council Jan has been a key player on the foundation aspect of Risk Management. Cabinet and Corporate Board have on various occasions directly congratulated Jan for her outstanding work. Leading the Corporate Risk Management Group the Business Continuity Forum and Operational Risk Management Group, representing Risk Management on the Health & Safety Wellbeing Board, Joint Safety Committee, Safety of Events advisory partnership the Local Resilience forum along with reporting to Cabinet and Corporate Board biannually, Audit Committee and Directors Team quarterly shows depth of engagement across the Council.

A key achievement for Jan was in persuading our External Auditors of our Risk Management arrangements which was integral to the Accounts being signed off for the first time since becoming a unitary authority in 1997.

*“Jan is passionate and an ambassador of Risk Management and of associated organisations, her enthusiasm and zest to manage risk is unquestionable and powerfully persuasive.*

*Empowering and engaging others to manage risk for the benefit of the community*

Lead Member for Risk Management and Matt Gott Lead Director Risk Management.

**Corporate Risk Register** - Swindon Borough Council has had a Risk Register since 2002; for the first time in January 2006 Cabinet participated and approved the Corporate Risk Register. Jan worked alongside Sir Mike Pitt and Gavin Jones, the now Chief Executive of SBC, to facilitate, consult and implement the Corporate Risk Register. The register has since become embedded within the Performance Framework and is reviewed and updated monthly and quarterly through the Performance Framework. Jan reports on the Corporate Risk Register along with the Risk Management Strategy bi- annually to Cabinet and Quarterly to the Audit Committee.

Also put in place were the Group and Business Unit Risk Registers all monitored and actioned through the Local Performance Action Reviews and the Corporate Performance Action Reviews where significant risks and events are considered and actioned. This has proved essential as an early warning system for key risks. The process has seen better control, understanding, debate, challenge and ownership of risk within the council. The Registers have now extended to Capital Projects, significant projects, procurement and external funding and shortly as part of Policy setting.

**Risk Management Strategy** - Jan, taking a fresh and innovative approach, reviewed, consulted, designed and implemented the Risk Management Strategy. The Corporate Board, Directors, Lead Member for Risk, Audit Committee and Corporate Risk Management Group assisted with the consultation and final design. This became a published book in July 2006 and has subsequently been shared with other organisations who have adopted this approach.

Jan then put in place a framework for delivering the Risk Management Strategy. This was to drive forward the embedding of risk management throughout the organisation, its activities, and partnerships for the next 3 years with prioritised activities around 3 Strategic Objectives: This also provided focus of direction for the Corporate Risk Management Group. The strategy and supporting documents set out the key actions to support the delivery of the Risk Management Strategy and the activities to equip leaders and managers with the tools to support them in their risk management role and to support Members to fulfil their roles in managing risk.

Cabinet in March wholly supported this innovative approach and requested formal reporting of the Risk Management Strategy and the Corporate Risk Register bi-annually. This led to the adoption of the Business Continuity Strategy, which was approved along with the Business Recovery Team procedures and published. This document has now been shared with the British Standards Institute for Best Practice.

Certificated training was one key element to delivering the Risk Management Strategy. Jan took on the challenge to design, manage and implement an e-learning tool for risk management. The consultation, previous presentation material and benchmarking Jan carried out prior to and during 2006 led to the design and production of the e-learning training package. Produced within 2 months and with 148 Members including Cabinet, Chair of Audit Committee, Officers Inc Corporate Board and all Directors and key Officers trained within 9 days. The result being a resounding success. Nominations being received to train more Officers and Members and the experience being used as the foundation for the delivery of future e-learning packages within Swindon.

Other areas of Risk Management training Jan instigated and delivered with Zurich Municipal to assist in Officers compliance and understanding of risk implications included: -

- New and emerging risks - Hot Topics and Updating the “Risk Radar”(or can we see it coming)
- Partnerships, Joint ventures and Contracts
- Corporate Manslaughter and the Compensation Act 2006
- Occupational Health

**Practice Leaders** - The Council introduced the new Practice Leader programme for those who wished to move onto a fast track through the organisation Jan took the advantage of introducing Risk Management as a module alongside IIP, External Funding, Consultation and Facilitation. The Practice Leaders have to promote themselves with their portfolio along with promoting their area of expertise that they are developing in whilst assisting Jan deliver the Risk Management Strategy.

**Partnerships** - Swindon was entering more Partnership working than before. Jan looked at some methods to raise the importance of the application of risk management within Partnerships and delivered a series of training sessions to raise the awareness. Working with the Insurance Manager, Jan produced and delivered a series of awareness sessions on Partnerships and SBC Insurance arrangements and with Zurich Municipal on Partnerships, Joint ventures and contracts. Jan then moved to the Local Area Agreement Team and put in place a formal day’s risk management training on Partnership Risk Management with Public Risk Management.

Swindon entered into a Local Area Agreement in 2006 partners including strategic leaders within Police Authority, Primary Care Trust, Borough Council, Local Education Authority and third-sector (community, voluntary and not-for-profit agencies) in partnership with the Government Office of the South West. Jan was instrumental in pushing for a Strategic Risk register which would be monitored by the Partnership Board. Especially with the risk of

attaining a reward of potentially £5 million from the Government if successful with the stretch targets. Following the production of the Strategic risk register in 2006 further registers were adopted on all four blocks, Children, Economic, Stronger & Safer and Health. The Risk Register approach has been adopted by the local PCT. Wiltshire County Council are now requesting support for their LAA delivery.

Jan was instrumental in setting up the Unitary Benchmarking Group in the South West now chaired by North Somerset. As part of the South West Benchmarking Group Partnership working was a key agenda item. Jan recommend a discussion with Sunderland, who came to talk to the group on best practice. The outputs from this were shared with the Partnership Teams to enhance SBC's current arrangements.

**Procurement** - Jan working with the procurement team was instrumental in introducing and embedding formal Risk Registers into the procurement guidelines at Gateway 1 - the Procurement Business Case. This has encouraged businesses engaged to work with Swindon to formalise and demonstrate their Risk Management arrangements. Since the implementation of the Procurement / e procurement arrangements a saving of £2.4 million was achieved in the last financial year with the assessment of risk being one of the foundations to this success.

**Incremental Strategic Partnership** - Working with the ASPIRE project team to ensure consideration of risk. Capita consulted Jan as to the best approach for delivery of a risk register to underpin Business transformation, Business Transition, Service Delivery and Operational Delivery.

**Statement on Internal Control** – Jan along with the Head of Audit devised a formal reporting methodology approved by the Councils Audit Committee and Corporate Risk Management Group which is reviewed, reported and monitored annually and amended as needed.

**External Funding** - The Council has been working in partnership with External Funding providers creating an excellent track record of funding success that has helped to attract around £10 million in extra funds to Swindon over the last three years. Jan has been inspirational in helping to build the assessment of risk into the external funding toolkit. The assessment of risk addresses all issues with supporting action plans that may arise from the time-limited nature of the funding, for example, how the project may be sustained when the funding comes to an end and what liability may arise, what are the benefits gained. This has led to arrangements for External Funding Practice Leaders to receive Risk Management Training.

**Project Management** - Jan is working closely with Project management to compliment Prince 2 methodologies with the application of full risk management tools and techniques. Jan has been providing consultation to the Wichelstowe project team, which is the development of southern Swindon.

**Corporate Games** - Jan produced a full risk register for the management the risks of the National Corporate Games held in Swindon in 2006.

**Supporting ALARM** - Jan received her Registered Risk Practioner certificate in 2006 receiving congratulations from Cabinet.

Jan instigated the South West Unitary group which meets quarterly, to share best practices in risk management, to consider the implications of future risk areas and legislation, to provide a forum for benchmarking between unitary authorities. This group has extended beyond the Unitary Authorities and gained members of ALARM. They have also presented their work to South West ALARM and have now become a subset of South West ALARM.

Having only just been elected to the board and recognising the benefits of shared information and the work the South West were sharing and the experience of leading the ALARM document the Toolkit for Recognising and Mangering Stress at Work, Jan took on the mantle to engage, consult and provide the results of the survey which went out in February and March 2007 with Members and non members of ALARM Jan led on and worked alongside Richard Feltham, Gareth Kelly and the National Benchmarking Survey. This resulted in raising the awareness of ALARM as the voice of Risk Management as well as providing key information on Risk Management Performance nationally. The next steps will be to deliver the outputs being consolidated by Glasgow Caledonian University and lead the Special Interest Group in a National Risk Management Performance Framework working in partnership with other members of ALARM and sponsors.

**ALARM Matters** - Until 2005 ALARM Matters was supported contractually by a professional Marketing and Media Company from July 2005 to date Jan has solely been responsible for the page planning, designing, consulting and editing through to production of the ALARM Matters journal in her voluntary time. The Journal has developed on technical content during this period addressing Members areas of interest. From end April 2007 ALARM will be employing a skilled Media and Marking manager to support the deliver of the Journal.

*“Looking at Jan’s achievements over the last year makes you realise and appreciate how much has been done with PRIDE within and outside of Swindon”*

Kim Burgess, Head of Performance and Partnership.