

ALARM 2008 Annual Awards

Risk Manager of the Year 2008

Theresa Mortimer: Gloucestershire County Council

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Executive Summary

Risk Management in Gloucestershire County Council – “Well above minimum requirements – performing strongly” – Audit Commission, December 2007, Use of Resources Assessment.

Theresa Mortimer, the Risk Manager within GCC, has overseen a journey which has seen us improve from an assessment of only being at minimum requirements for Risk Management in 2005, when Theresa took over this role, to our current assessment of performing strongly, with confirmation of the integration of risk management within our authority wide strategic planning and performance management process.

This major achievement, which has focused on all of the positive impacts of effective risk management, is down to the inspiration, leadership, drive and determination of Theresa, as confirmed below:

“Tremendous enthusiasm, commitment and sheer hard work are the qualities demonstrated by Theresa Mortimer, which have resulted in the very positive and significant improvements in risk management arrangements over the past two years, both within Gloucestershire County Council and working in partnership with other bodies. Such achievements, which have resulted in significant service improvements and major financial savings to the benefit of the residents of Gloucestershire are, in my opinion, worthy of the honour of being chosen for this top ALARM award”. (Peter Bungard, Chief Executive)

The improvements, which have a real impact on outcomes, can be clearly seen, and range from :

- A robust, embedded and fully documented risk management process, which is fully integrated within the overall performance management system:
- Strategic and operational risk management groups, with Risk Management “champions” within all Directorates who, with support and guidance from Theresa, lead on service specific initiatives:
- Integrated training programmes, commencing at the induction stage, through to specific management training based on clear manuals of guidance, thereby ensuring that all staff utilise positive risk management principles:
- A high quality newsletter “Risk Focus” which is distributed to all staff, members and schools:
- A large number of “invest to save” initiatives, many involving partnership working: and
- Secure and effective Risk Management arrangements with partners.

In addition to contributing to performance management and improved outcomes within Gloucestershire, many of the risk management initiatives have led to very significant resource savings:

“As the lead Cabinet member I have been most impressed with the performance improvements and very tangible outcomes of many of the recent risk management initiatives. These range from major improvements in the way in which we handle highways claims in the council, saving around £500k a year, partnership working with Gloucestershire Police on asset identification which has seen ICT thefts in schools fall by 57%, and the relatively recent decision, based on the monitoring of climate change risks, to insure against the risks of flood, which, following the unprecedented July floods, has saved the tax payers of Gloucestershire £1.9 million”. (Raymond Theodoulou, Lead Cabinet Member for Resources)

Risk Management within GCC – A positive approach

As outlined within this submission, Theresa Mortimer has led the development and implementation of an overarching and effective risk management system based on clear documentation, high quality training, and robust monitoring and reporting arrangements, which are all set out in the GCC Risk Management Policy Statement and Strategy “ Maximising Opportunities by taking Managed Risks”.

This is what the thrust of Risk Management has been about within Gloucestershire, encouraging officers not to be risk adverse, but to identify and manage their risks in a proactive manner, thereby maximising the chances of success. All of Theresa’s efforts have been targeted at this aim, with Theresa running many risk workshops in relation to key projects within the authority including the waste strategy and climate change. Such workshops have been supplemented with targeted training and general awareness initiatives designed to fully embed positive risk management principles within GCC.

Getting the message across

In addition to the provision of many different training opportunities to staff, high quality web pages on staff text on which all key risk management guidance documents can be located, Theresa has also developed and produced, in association with Zurich Municipal, Marsh, Gloucestershire Constabulary, Gloucestershire Youth Offending Service and the Arson Task Force, a high quality “easy read” Risk Management newsletter “**Risk Focus** – Lets manage the risk not manage the damage”. This newsletter, distributed to all staff and members, includes a wide variety of articles written by numerous different officers from within GCC and partner organisations, covering a very wide range of risk related topics designed to encourage a wide range of readers to engage in many different aspects of risk management.

A flavour of some of the articles from the December 2007 edition of *Risk Focus* include “winter – respect the elements”, “theft of lead and copper from buildings”, “worried about data protection”, “fighting fraud”, “safe driving at work”, “stay safe from fire this winter”, all of which, in the way they are presented, supplemented by a regular competition associated with the management of risk, have resulted in this being an extremely well received newsletter within the authority.

Delivering positive outcomes to GCC clients and the Community

As recommended by Theresa Mortimer, the Corporate Risk Management Steering Group set up a *Risk Management ‘Invest to Save’ fund* designed to target key risks within the authority to reduce our exposure. As part of this process formal criteria were developed on which to base allocations from the fund, to ensure that projects could be evaluated and benefit or impact clearly demonstrated.

Projects that are either fully or partially funded by the Invest to Save fund, and where Theresa has been working with Directorate service areas and external partners to date, include:

(1) The SmartWater schools theft reduction project

As a result of the partnership working between GCC, the Police, Schools and the Youth Offending Service, which included an extensive media campaign, significant reductions in thefts of ICT equipment from schools have been achieved, as illustrated below.

Details		Overall % Reduction
Police	number of all burglaries on SMARTWATER school premises	33.3
Police	Aggregated value of items stolen	81.9
Police	Burglaries occurring on SMARTWATER school premises relating to ICT	56.8
Police	Aggregated value of items stolen – computer related burglaries	83.4
GCC	Number of insurance claims reported to RM & IS	63.8
GCC	Number of claims reported to RM&IS resulting in payments being made	60.5
GCC	Value of claims paid out of the insurance funds	64.6

These have resulted in an £80,000 pa reduction in the value of claims paid from the insurance fund, premium charges to schools being reduced by 6%, and has had a major impact on service delivery. In addition, our joint initiative has also been awarded the most effective project in the UK by SMARTWATER themselves, and has led to the National Tilley Crime Reduction Award nomination (submitted by Gloucestershire Constabulary).

(2) Arson Awareness – Theatre in Education Project

The aim of the project was to produce a piece of theatre suitable for first year secondary school pupils (targeted high risk age group), to be toured throughout Gloucestershire’s ‘highest risk’ schools to educate pupils about the possible consequences of deliberate fire setting. To date, the GCC Arson Task Force has commissioned two tours in the autumn terms of 2006 and 2007 covering 26 schools, with 15 school productions due to commence in 2008. The majority of the feedback received from schools was scored as excellent. Analysis has been undertaken at each school visited to establish the number of incidents three months before the production and three months after the production, the results have proved positive, in one high risk school the percentage reduction was 70%.

(3) Fire prevention measures at SCOLA schools.

Following surveys of all high risk schools (financial + arson + security) we are currently programmed to undertake building works during the summer 2008, fully funded from the “invest to save” fund, to remove asbestos where necessary and replace the missing roof voids at all of our high risk schools, thereby significantly reducing fire and health risks within these schools.

(4) CCTV and Security on high risk home to school buses

Theresa has been working with other colleagues within GCC to identify cost effective mitigation measures to reduce the increasing crime experienced on buses taking children to/from school. Working in partnership with Gloucestershire Police, Police Community Support Officers now travel on the high risk school bus routes, on a “spot check” basis, to help reduce crime and disorder, vandalism and bullying. CCTV has also been installed on high risk home to school buses, and effective partnership working is now in operation with bus operators and schools.

CCTV Pilot evaluation – June 2006 to December 2007

432 reported incidents	20 crimes captured on CCTV
99 incidents involving crime or police involvement	4 prosecutions

Types of crimes reported:

Anti Social Behaviour	Criminal Damage	Vandalism	Robbery
Driving	Assault	Drugs	Fire

Incidents captured on CCTV/Value of Project

20 criminal or police involvement incidents	Criminal Damage	Anti Social Behaviour	Unruly Behaviour
Two fatal RTC's	Drug Taking	Bullying	Four other RTC's

Reducing ASB	Assisting Child Protection & evidencing Bullying	Assisting Complaint investigation	Improving the travel experience
Improving Crime Detection	Road Traffic Collisions	Increased performance management	Promoting sustainable travel

As a result of the success of the above, we are developing a similar project with a major Gloucestershire commercial bus provider and implementing CCTV for parking and traffic regulation.

(5) Minibus driver training programme.

It was decided that we could help to mitigate the 'driving at work risk' by providing the right training. With Theresa working with the Integrated Transport Unit, two free places on new courses were provided per minibus to each establishment/school. The positive outcomes to date include:

- Between April and December 2007 there have been 31 training courses, almost all of which were completely full.
- Individual organisations have mixed with other directorate service areas to create a varied classroom where they don't just learn from the trainer but from each other.
- Volunteers attending such training have offered their services to other schools.

(6) DVD Project – opportunist theft awareness programme in schools

This is a new project which builds on the successes of the Smartwater project, which has produced significant reductions in theft offences against schools. The DVD project is designed for years 5 & 6 and will highlight the issues of opportunist theft in schools and elsewhere, with workshops being delivered by Gloucestershire Police, advising on how to take care of property, challenging strangers in their schools and highlighting the consequences of crime for both the offender and the victim. This is being developed as a result of the continuing partnership between GCC and the Police, which is also being supported by Avon and Somerset Police.

In addition to these initiatives, two other risk management initiatives have delivered significant economies to GCC :

Robust Highways Inspection / claims handling procedures

A new approach to highways inspections and dealing with insurance claims has saved GCC around £500,000 a year going forward since 2006, making a significant contribution to the council's Gershon target, as well as diverting resources to front-line services across the authority. This pioneering approach, developed by the staff themselves, has reduced claim payouts by up to 98%. It has also improved the speed and efficiency of claims handling; increased the training and knowledge levels of staff; improved team spirit; and reduced the council's overall and departmental insurance premiums.

Risk Management and Insurance services (RM&IS) - Insuring against flood damage in schools

RM&IS used the risk management process to identify an emerging risk during 2007 which related to flood and water damage at schools. It was noted that the level of 'incidents' and insurance claims relating to this risk were increasing significantly. RM&IS decided to insure against this emerging risk. This decision saved the council around £1.9m as a result of the recent flooding within GCC schools.

A dedicated commitment and robust system to continue to deliver effective Risk Management.

All of the above initiatives, which are being added to on an on-going basis, flow from Theresa's commitment to implement effective risk management within GCC, based on a robust and thorough risk management system which now encompasses the following key components:

- (1) **Risk Management Policy/Strategy** -Implementation of a revised Risk Management Policy and Strategy and framework from, January 2006.
- (2) **New Role of Risk Management and Insurance Services** - As from the 1st March 2005 Risk Management and Insurance Services were transferred into Audit and Financial Standards. This allowed closer links between the identification and the ongoing monitoring of key business risks and controls.
- (3) **Lead Committee(s) for Risk Management** - The Audit Committee & Budget & Performance Scrutiny Committee acts as the Lead Committees for Risk Management.
- (4) **CMT responsibility/Corporate Risk Management Steering Group:** CMT has responsibility for monitoring risk management and has nominated the Group Director –Business Management to be responsible for risk management. Supporting CMT is the Corporate Risk Management Steering Group, which is represented by Directors from across directorates.
- (5) **Lead Member responsible for Risk Management:** Cabinet nominated the Lead Cabinet Member – Resources to jointly be responsible with the Group Director – Business Management, for the implementation of the risk management strategy.
- (6) **Operational Risk Management Group/Directorate Risk Management Champions:** There is a dedicated Risk Champion from each Directorate. This champion is the directorate risk representative on the Operational Risk Management Group and helps to embed risk management into GCC's culture.
- (7) **Risk Management Manuals of Guidance and Toolkits:** namely A Practical Guide to Risk Management in GCC and Partnership Risk Management in GCC – A Guide and Toolkit.
- (8) **Strategic Decision Making** - Risk management information is included in Cabinet reports.

- (9) **Financial Management/Monitoring:** All budgets are risk assessed and monitored accordingly.
- (10) **Risk Management embedded into key corporate strategies:** Risk Management is further embedded into other key corporate strategies, examples to date are: Data Quality, Climate Change, Waste Management, Information Management, Highways Maintenance, ICT Security.
- (11) **Corporate Induction Programme/Training/Staff Awareness Briefings:** An 'Introduction to Risk Management' session forms part of the Council's Corporate Induction Programme. Theresa delivers two sessions per month. Theresa also works with senior managers across the authority to integrate risk management into Member training programmes and personally delivers a risk management training session within the monthly Manager Induction programmes. In addition, numerous risk management awareness /briefing sessions have been provided across directorates namely: Corporate Property Road shows rolled out to all directorates & schools during 2005/06 & 2006/07, Directorate Business Planning workshops, Directorate Management Team meetings, Service areas team meetings, Bursars of GCCs secondary schools, Service Area CPD workshops.
- (12) **Provision of Risk Management Advice on Key Project Teams:** include the: Work Health and Well being Project Board, Gloucestershire School, Security Group, The Criminal Record Bureau Checks applied to Home to School Transport Providers, The Highways Waste Management Procurement project team, Occupational Road Risk Project Team and a significant contributor to the Climate Change Board.
- (13) **Internal Audit (IA) Planning:** IA takes a risk-based approach to audit planning which means that IA focus their resources on providing independent assurance to management and members that the risk management processes are operating as intended and that the key risks that have been identified by the authority are being managed effectively. Theresa is a significant contributor to this process.
- (14) **Full integration into the Business Planning processes:** Risk management is fully integrated into its Business Planning/Performance Management processes. This has been as a result of Theresa's close working with the performance team.

Conclusion

The improvements and various initiatives highlighted above have received recent external praise from the Audit Commission : *"The improvement in risk management evidenced last year has continued to be embedded"* and *" The Council has undertaken a number of good practice initiatives this year, e.g. a review of its approach to responding to insurance claims received. In addition, it undertook an innovative review of risks associated with climate change and, as a result, revised its insurance cover against the risk of flooding"*. Use of Resources assessment (December 2007)

"Risk management is effectively integrated into the Council's strategic planning and will be part of all partnership plans by November 2007. The Council is clear what the main risks to the delivery of its priorities are and these are strongly evident within strategic and business plans. The Council's revised risk management policy and strategy, though recent, is comprehensive and includes partnership planning. Councillors play a defined role in assessing key risks, further strengthening the framework for managing risk across all work". Corporate Assessment (February 2008).