



# Executive Summary

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Last year I helped to achieve a £136m bonus for children in Sunderland.

I did it by following this advice:

*“An enterprise wide approach to risk management enables an organisation to consider the potential impact on all types of risk on all processes, activities, stakeholders, products and services. Implementing a comprehensive approach will result in an organisation benefiting from what is often referred to as the upside of risk”* (‘A structured approach to Enterprise Risk Management’ published by AIRMIC, ALARM and IRM)

This approach enabled me to manage the diversity of risks associated with delivering the education transformational agenda and to help Sunderland deliver strategic objectives.

I’m the Senior Risk Management Advisor with Sunderland Council, and have pioneered innovative risk management in the implementation of our Building Schools for the Future programme. During 2009/10 we created three new academies and transformed three existing schools.

The gateway reviews consistently commended the risk management and the government has included Sunderland in the second tranche of the BSF programme – the only local authority to be in both tranches – adding £136m to the initial investment of £120m. Now we will be able to renew every secondary school and transform the learning experience of all young people in the city.

My other contributions to effective risk management in Children’s Services during the last year include

- Re-engineering the risk management framework for schools and helping 60 head teachers to complete risk management plans.
- Drawing up a partnership agreement for all secondary schools, academies and special schools to provide access to diploma course for all 14-16 year olds in Sunderland.



# Executive Summary

- Assessing and mitigating the risks involved in the transfer of funding arrangements and responsibilities for learning provision for 16-18 years from the Learning and Skills Council to the local authority.
- Introducing risk management processes to help reduce by 2,000 the number of surplus places in schools.
- Delivering training in risk management to the partners and delivery groups of Sunderland's Children's Trust.
- Facilitating risk management in Sunderland's new Child Poverty Partnership.

I have contributed to the overall achievements of Sunderland's risk management team and was delighted when we achieved the highest possible grading in the government's Comprehensive Area Assessment.

I have been involved in a review of the council's Risk Management Framework in light of the publication of the International Standard (ISO31000) for risk management.

These achievements have been complemented by advances in my professional development. I became a member of the Institute of Risk Management following the completion of the IRM diploma. I passed the Managing Successful Programmes examinations.

I was invited to deliver two seminars on 'improving performance through risk management' for CIPFA.

I have delivered a considerable amount of training across the council's services, projects and partnerships.

Since January I have been training an 18-year-old apprentice in risk management. It's good to feel that I have reached the stage where I have skill, knowledge and experience to pass onto the next generation of risk managers.



# Main Submission

**Please write your main submission here. The submission should be no more than 1500 words. Please use Arial font, size 11, at 1.5 line spacing. Use additional spacing between paragraphs.**

## **IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN**

I am a Senior Risk Management Advisor at Sunderland Council specialising in Children's Services which represents 55% of the workforce. I have a commitment to minimise risk and to maximise opportunities for all children and young people.

### **Building Schools for the Future Programme (BSF)**

I have made a major contribution to the risk management of the BSF programme in Sunderland. This is part of the government's programme to rebuild or renew nearly every secondary school in England.

Our risk management process for BSF has been commended by central government at each gateway review and it has contributed to the early opening of three academies and one community school and the early handover of two more schools. All projects have been delivered within budget and to the desired quality.

At the end of 2009 we were rewarded with by the announcement that Sunderland would be included in the second tranche of the BSF programme – the only local authority to be in both tranches – and were allocated an additional £136m of government funding to transform every secondary school in the city.

I was instrumental in introducing an innovative strategic element into the risk management of our BSF programme. I felt that the initiative needed to go beyond traditional project risk management. The risk management processes needed to incorporate the city-wide remit for school transformation into the capital build project. For example the *Every Child Matters* agenda was about to introduce significant change to schools to address the five outcomes: Stay Safe, Be Healthy, Enjoy and Achieve, Make a Positive Contribution and Achieve Economic Well-Being. These changes included longer opening hours, the introduction of services to the community, extra activities for children and young people, breakfast clubs and after school meals, adult learning courses and access for other council services.



# Main Submission

Sunderland's BSF programme was to include the opening of the first academies in the city. We identified a need to develop a collaborative model between the city, the academy sponsors, the university and the partnership of schools.

The Project Manager was very receptive to the introduction of a risk management initiative which focused on the capital build project but which also incorporated the broader remit for school transformation and could maximise opportunities for our new schools.

## **School Risk Management Framework**

In 2009 I re-engineered our School Risk Management process to reflect the operational changes which schools were about to encounter. For example, schools needed to be ready to implement the government's educational reform agenda, address the raised profile of safeguarding in light of the Baby P case, increase community provision and offer a vast range of extended services for children, adults and families.

I asked a wide range of stakeholders to identify the risks they considered relevant for schools and the mitigation controls that they would expect schools to have in place. I then created a new template for schools which incorporated the new risks and controls. I then piloted the new template with three schools.

I worked with the School Governor Support Service to promote the new template and to arrange training for both head teachers and governors. I then arranged one-to-one meetings with head teachers to complete the template. I have helped 60 schools to produce risk management plans since October 2009.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Administration (CIPFA) have promoted the new template as an example of good practice.

## **Sunderland Futures Partnership**

By September 2013 it will be a statutory requirement for all children aged 14-16 to have access to 17 diploma courses. The diploma is a new qualification that combines theoretical study with practical experience.

Few schools are able to deliver all diploma courses from their own resources and therefore need to work in partnership and pool funding. Co-ordinating the provision of vocational training across a number of schools presents an operational challenge.

A partnership called Sunderland Futures was set up to run two centres which offer students courses that provide a direct link to business, industry and the world of work. Between 1,000 and 1,100 students aged 14-16 attend the centres. Good risk management has been integral to Sunderland Futures securing £9m of government funding.

The centres started to be developed by an informal partnership of the head teachers. The operations evolved organically from a team that had a shared vision. However some risks had not been addressed, for example the risk of a newly appointed head teacher not wanting to contribute, uncertainty regarding the ownership of assets, financial sustainability and governance. I worked with Sunderland Futures to draw up a partnership agreement that protected the spirit of this co-operative venture in a formal structure that secured sustainability.

The risk management has contributed to the success of the partnership. Sunderland is one of just six local authority areas currently able to offer 14 diploma courses to every student aged 14-16. It has high retention and success rates. The first cohort of 250 students to complete diploma courses (in 2009) achieved a 97.4% pass rate.

Sunderland Futures is used as an example of good practice by the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency.

## **Machinery of Government Changes for 16-19 funding**

The Machinery of Government Changes included a proposal to create an effective system to deliver learning to 16-19 year olds. Changes included the transfer of £7 billion of annual revenue funding to local authorities from the Learning and Skills Council from April 2010. There was a lack of clarity in 2009 regarding the transition, in particular the funding arrangements, support availability, resource allocation and proposed infrastructures.

I worked with the Project Manager to complete a risk assessment for the transition in

Sunderland and to raise awareness of risk management. I worked with council officers to mitigate the risks and issues throughout the journey and the transition was successfully completed in April 2010.

## **Introducing New Risk Management Activities**

I have been able to promote risk management in areas which either had little understanding of risk management or where there was a reluctance to introduce something new into existing processes. Examples include:

- **School Place Planning for the Future Project** - Many local authorities have surplus places in schools. They use data models to forecast pupil numbers. In 2008/09 Sunderland set up a project to review school place planning. I have been working with the core Project Team for over a year to develop risk management processes, introduce risk management governance arrangements and support risk reporting. So far we have successfully reduced over 2,000 surplus places.
- **Children's Trust** - In 2009 the government released new guidance for Children's Trusts which placed additional responsibilities on partners. In response Sunderland Children's Trust revised its governance arrangements. I provided training to the partnership board and to the delivery groups on the benefits of risk management. I produced risk management frameworks for each delivery group. I have received a very positive response from all partners indicating that my advice was valued.
- **Creation of the Child Poverty Partnership** - In 2009 Sunderland created a Child Poverty Partnership to take the lead on reducing the unacceptably high level of child poverty (51% in relative poverty as defined by government). To be successful it is vital to have an understanding of the triggers and risks associated with such high levels. I have taken responsibility for facilitating risk management and assisting the Lead Officer to report risks to the partnership board.

## **CONTRIBUTION TO OTHER RISK MANAGEMENT ACHIEVEMENTS**

I have been involved in a review of the council's Risk Management Framework in light of the publication of the International Standard (ISO31000) for risk management. I was also



# Main Submission

involved in the major review of the risk management manual, documentation and training programme.

In 2009 Sunderland achieved the obtained the highest grading possible of '4 – significantly exceeds minimum requirements and performs excellently' for Risk Management and Internal Control in the government's Comprehensive Area Assessment.

## **PROGRESS IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

In 2009 I became a member of the Institute of Risk Management following the completion of the IRM diploma. Building on my Project Management qualification (PRINCE2) I passed the Managing Successful Programmes (MSP) examinations to become a registered practitioner in MSP.

This year I was invited to deliver two seminars on 'improving performance through risk management' for CIPFA.

I have delivered a considerable amount of training across the council's services, projects and partnerships. Since January I have been training an 18-year-old apprentice in risk management.

I am on the editorial board of 'Riskwatch' – a magazine distributed to all council employees that promotes the benefits of risk management.

## **FUTURE ASPIRATIONS**

Writing this application has given me a clear picture of what I've achieved over the last year and what an important role I play in supporting the Council to manage and secure opportunities during times of change and economic constraint.

The additional investment of £136 that was achieved in BSF tranche 2, emphasis the benefits of my adoption of an enterprise wide approach to risk management.