

Risk Champion – Final Report from KVDP– March 2021

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to:

- Review and reflect on previous risk champion reports over my last two years in the role
- Highlight any outstanding issues or suggested areas for follow up
- Offer guidance and suggestions about the role of Risk Champion for future role holders

Summary of Risk Champion reviews since Sept 2019

I have explored the following areas in my Risk Champion reports (copies available if anyone would like them):

Sept 2019	Overview of risk management at BDC: Risk strategy & processes
Jan 2020	Environmental Services
March 2020	Planning
July 2020	Pandemic Response
Sept 2020	Safeguarding
Nov 2020	People processes: training and wellbeing
Jan 2021	Outcome of Motions & Written questions
March 21	Final report

Outstanding Issues

In my opinion, I think there are 3 areas that need further focus this year:

1. Risk management processes

- In my first report I gave an overview of BDC's risk management processes which at the time had already been deemed inadequate and needing improving, following the Zurich audit.
- Some of these gaps and weaknesses have been addressed or have remedial plans in place. However, due to the staff changes and lengthy period without our 151 officer who had overall responsibility for risk management, I suggest a repeat audit of our risk management processes is completed at the earliest opportunity to make sure everything is on track as previously planned. In particular, checking the following areas:
 - Is the Risk Steering Group and the departmental Risk Champions that were established in 2019 still working effectively?
 - Compliance was identified as an area of concern and commitment made to address this. Has that happened and have we seen improvements?
 - It was recognised that risk management needed to be made a higher priority across the organisation as risk meetings were often cancelled and this regularly dropped off the agenda but a commitment was made to improve this. Has that happened?
 - Once the new risk strategy and processes were developed, it was recognised that training would be required to ensure these are fully embedded. Has this happened?

2. Identifying risks

The focus of our risk register is predominantly inward looking, often focused on operational risks and less consideration for reputational risk or wider external factors. Given the impact and extent of external factors over the last 12 months, we may want to look at how we define risk and check our top strategic risks are wide enough and broad enough. That includes more horizon scanning and planning to enable us to manage future issues.

3. Reflections and learnings after Covid

We did an interim review of our Covid response last summer, but that was before the second wave so given the scale and impact of this emergency response, I suggest a further review and evaluation of how we have handled this ongoing situation would be useful.

The role of Risk Champion

- There is nothing defined or formally documented about this role, which I think is positive, as it means each role holder has freedom to approach it differently, making the best use of their own skills and interests which will maximise the value to the committee.
- The role provides a great opportunity for the Risk Champion to gain a better understanding of different parts of the council – whether that be a broad area or something specific – through an informal review, and then share this insight and learning with the rest of the committee.
- The Risk Champion informal review is just that: It doesn't duplicate or replace the comprehensive audits which are something quite different and essential.
- In a Risk Champion review, issues may be noted that are worth flagging up to the Audit and Standards Committee or other committees within council. However, it's important to note that the Risk Champion has no formal mandate in these areas so whilst observations may be passed on, this is in the format of 'suggestions to explore' not formal recommendations.

Thank you!

I have enjoyed my two years as Risk Champion. It has given me a useful and interesting insight into a variety of areas and improved my understanding of the council and how it functions. In turn, coming in as someone new, with a different perspective and a wide and flexible brief I feel I have been able to make suggestions for improvements in a variety of areas, which have gone on to be implemented.

Key to the Risk Champion rolling working effectively has been the attitude of officers which has been open and welcoming and receptive to suggestions: we've had some really interesting discussions, and I'd like to thank all officers I've spoken to. Most of all though, I'd like to thank the Chair of Audit and Standards Committee, Cllr Mallett for his support and encouragement throughout my two years in this role, which has been much appreciated.

I recommend the role and am happy to discuss it further if anyone is interested in taking it on.

Kate Van der Plank, March 2021