



SAXMUNDHAM TOWN COUNCIL

RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2024-2025

Annual Approval: January 2025
Minute Item: 120/24TC



Objectives of the Risk Management Strategy

- To develop risk management and raise its profile within the Council.
- To manage, monitor and control risk where possible.
- To anticipate and respond to changing social, environmental and legislative requirements.

Risk management is the process used by the Council to address the risks associated with an event or action which will adversely affect its ability to achieve its objective to deliver high quality public services. The failure to manage risks effectively can be expensive in terms of litigation and reputation and the ability to achieve desired targets. The Council is aware that some risks can never be eliminated fully, and it has in place a strategy that provides a structured, systematic and focussed approach to managing and mitigating risk.

Implementing the Risk Management Strategy

1. Risk Identification – informed decisions can only be taken by the Council if it has identified and understood the risks facing the policies and decisions it undertakes.
2. Risk Analysis – once risks have been identified, analysis should be undertaken as to the potential frequency of the risk and its consequences. If a risk is seen to be unacceptable then steps should be taken to ensure that the risk is controlled and mitigated.
3. Risk Prioritisation – an assessment should be made of the impact and probability of risks occurring and prioritised as low, medium or high.
4. Risk Control - the process of taking action to minimise the probability of the risk occurring and/or reducing the severity of the consequences should it occur.
Methods used will include:
 - Elimination – circumstances from which a risk arises are removed so the risk no longer exists.
 - Reduction – control measures are implemented to reduce the impact/probability of the risk.
 - Transfer – the financial impact is passed to others.
 - Sharing – the risk is shared with another party.
 - Insuring – against some or all of the risk to mitigate the financial impact.
 - Acceptance – documenting a conscious decision after assessment of areas where the Council accepts or tolerates the risk.
5. Risk Monitoring – the risk management process must be monitored and reviewed regularly to ensure that any changes to the nature of any risk have been considered and the risk schedule adapted accordingly.



Risk Assessment Matrix

Probability of Occurrence	1 x 5	2 x 5	3 x 5	4 x 5	5 x 5
	1 x 4	2 x 4	3 x 4	4 x 4	5 x 4
	1 x 3	2 x 3	3 x 3	4 x 3	5 x 3
	1 x 2	2 x 2	3 x 2	4 x 2	5 x 2
	1 x 1	2 x 1	3 x 1	4 x 1	5 x 1
	Impact of Occurrence				

Risk Management Schedule

AREA	RISK	IMPACT 1-5	PROBABILITY 1-5	RATING IMPACT X PROBABILITY	MANAGEMENT/CONTROL OF RISK	IMPROVEMENTS REQUIRED TO MITIGATE RISK
BUSINESS CONTINUITY	IT security is compromised	5	1	5	<p>A Cyber Resilience Review is conducted biennially by the Council's IT company. The audit tests all aspects of the Council's network security. The latest review was conducted in October 2024.</p> <p>The review concluded that the external and internal network security was rated very good with no suggested remedial</p>	To improve computer security and password management, the Town Clerk's computer is scheduled to be upgraded to Windows 10/11 Pro and encrypted and the Maintenance Officer's access to the main SharePoint site will be removed.



					actions, computer security and password management was rated good with two suggested remedial actions, and staff knowledge and response to threats was rated good with one remedial action.	To improve staff knowledge and response to threats, all staff will attend a cyber security presentation focused on protecting organisations from threats.
BUSINESS CONTINUITY	Loss of IT and/or data	5	2	10	Officers are equipped with laptops and many take these home each evening to support homeworking. This increases the risk of loss, damage or theft but this risk is accepted as the practice is considered prudent to mitigate the risk of Council operations being suspended due to loss of IT.	
BUSINESS CONTINUITY	Loss of key records	5	1	5	All digital records are stored on a secure, cloud-based IT system. All paper records, current and archived are retained at the Town House. Title deeds and historical supporting papers are held in fire and waterproof document bags which can be salvaged.	
BUSINESS CONTINUITY	Loss or long-term incapacity of Officers	4	1	4	The Town Clerk/RFO conducted a Staffing and Structure Review in August 2023. The Council adopted the recommendations which will ensure resilience and adequate resource across all Council functions.	



					<p>The Town Clerk will ensure that all Officers continue to be cross-trained and have reasonable day-to-day experience of all procedures and systems to ensure continuity.</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk and authorised to act as the Council's Proper Officer in the event of absence of the Town Clerk.</p> <p>The Assistant Town Clerk is fully trained to use the Rialtas financial software and the Deputy Town Clerk is undertaking training.</p> <p>The Suffolk Association of Local Councils can provide locum cover.</p> <p>Councillors may provide temporary, unpaid cover.</p>
<p>BUSINESS CONTINUITY</p>	<p>Inability to retain staff</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>The Council seeks to support staff retention by ensuring officers are recognised and rewarded with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriate titles and responsibilities • permanent employment contracts • annual leave entitlement • flexible working arrangements • commensurate remuneration • pension contributions • annual appraisals • personal development plans



					<p>The Council adopted the Civility and Respect Pledge, the Model Councillor-Officer Protocol, and the Dignity at Work Policy in December 2024.</p>	
BUSINESS CONTINUITY	Loss or long-term incapacity of Councillors	4	1	4	<p>If there are not enough Councillors for a quorum, the District Council may provide temporary replacements.</p> <p>The Chair and Vice-Chair are ex-officio members of all Committees.</p> <p>Councillor vacancies may be filled by co-option.</p> <p>A Scheme of Delegation was approved in July 2024 which records Council functions which can be lawfully delegated to Officers.</p>	<p>Town Clerk to advertise two current Councillor vacancies.</p> <p>Town Clerk to consider further Council functions which may be lawfully delegated to Officers.</p>
BUSINESS CONTINUITY	Loss of premises	3	2	6	<p>Officers are equipped with laptops and laptop bags and have been instructed to take these home each evening to support homeworking in the event of a loss of the Town House.</p> <p>The Webster Room can be quickly adapted to provide alternative office accommodation for key staff.</p> <p>The Council's telephone system is a landline based in the Town House. Voicemail messages are automatically</p>	



					forwarded to the Town Clerk's email address.	
BUSINESS CONTINUITY	Pandemic or similar global event	3	2	6	<p>As above for loss of premises as central government may issue a work from home order.</p> <p>Long-term Councillors are equipped and familiar with conducting virtual meetings.</p> <p>Reserves in place to provide contingency to respond to unexpected events.</p> <p>Risk assessments in place to consider health risks to Councillors, officers and members of the public.</p>	<p>As above for loss of premises.</p> <p>Town Clerk/RFO to consider key workers and arrangements for other Officers.</p> <p>Town Clerk/RFO to ensure new Councillors are equipped to attend virtual meetings.</p> <p>Council to consider IT provision to enable members of the public to attend public meetings virtually.</p> <p>Town Clerk/RFO to ensure risk assessments are reviewed considering changing government guidance.</p>
BUSINESS CONTINUITY	Inexperienced, untrained and/or continual change of Officers leads to errors and lack of progress.	3	2	6	<p>The Town Clerk/RFO is CiLCA qualified and has 9 years of experience in the sector.</p> <p>Other officers are educated and either experienced in specific skills or gaining sector experience.</p> <p>Officers regularly attend training courses specific to their role and the sector and have access to books and other printed materials.</p>	



					<p>Officers are provided with appropriate supervision from the Town Clerk.</p> <p>The Council is a member of the Suffolk Association of Local Councils which is a source of information and training.</p>
FINANCE	Tension between Councillors and Officers results in Officers hiding errors	3	2	6	<p>With the adoption of the Civility and Respect Pledge, the Model Councillor-Officer Protocol, and the Dignity at Work Policy, Officers should have confidence that they will be supported by Councillors enabling them to admit to errors when they occur.</p>
FINANCE	Precept adequacy	4	1	4	<p>Sound planning and budgeting process to support the annual precept requirement taking into account officer and committee recommendations.</p> <p>The Town Clerk/RFO prepares a proposed budget for consideration by the Resources Committee in December with approval by Full Council each January.</p> <p>The Resources Committee regularly reviews the level of the Council's reserves and annually reviews its Reserves Policy.</p> <p>If central government were to change the rules under which precepts are set or calculated, this would require an Act of Parliament or local government legislation</p>



					which would afford the Council sufficient time to mitigate any change.	
FINANCE	Budgetary control	4	1	4	<p>The Town Clerk/RFO provides the Resources Committee and Full Council with monthly updates regarding receipts and expenditure against each budget category.</p> <p>The Town Clerk/RFO provides the Resources Committee and Full Council with budget versus actual income and expenditure reports each month.</p> <p>Committees and officers are aware, and follow, the budgetary control and authority to spend set out in the Financial Regulations.</p> <p>A purchase order processing system is in place which supports the control and monitoring of Committee and Officer's expenditure to ensure budget categories are not overspent.</p>	Committees to be assigned budget categories and empowered to take ownership and management of their budgets.
FINANCE	Best value accountability	2	2	4	<p>Financial Regulations set out the process to follow to ensure contracts are rewarded correctly and lawfully.</p> <p>For contracts greater than £3,000 excluding VAT, the Town Clerk shall seek at least three fixed-price quotations.</p>	



					Formal competitive tenders are sought for major contract services in accordance with Financial Regulations.
FINANCE	Insurance adequacy	4	1	4	<p>The Council meets the statutory requirement to hold the following insurance:</p> <p>Employers' Liability to £10,000,000 Public Liability to £10,000,000 Fidelity Guarantee to £500,000</p> <p>The Council's Asset Register is reviewed at least annually or updated more frequently as required. Separate asset registers have been compiled for each of the Charitable Trusts.</p> <p>A review is undertaken at the time of the annual policy renewal to ensure that the terms of the policy remain acceptable and that all known risks and assets are adequately protected.</p> <p>The Town Clerk reports to the Resources Committee on the adequacy of insurance at the time of renewal.</p> <p>Town House to be revalued for insurance purposes.</p>
FINANCE	Adequacy of online banking authorisation	4	1	4	The Council has approved Financial Regulations which determine the procedure.



					<p>Invoices are provided to authorised signatories when approving payments.</p> <p>The Resources Committee scrutinises all payments and bank reconciliations monthly.</p> <p>An independent audit is conducted annually.</p>
FINANCE	Fraud or theft	5	1	5	<p>Monthly reconciliation of all bank accounts are prepared by the Town Clerk/RFO.</p> <p>Bank Reconciliations are checked and signed by a designated Councillor who is not an authorised signatory.</p> <p>An independent audit is conducted annually.</p> <p>Internet banking payments are initiated by the Town Clerk/RFO and approved by two authorised signatures.</p> <p>Four authorised signatories have online access to the Council and Charitable Trusts' bank accounts and may review the transactions at any time.</p> <p>Changes to the banking mandates must be approved by two authorised signatories.</p>



The Town Clerk/RFO ensures all Officers observe internal procedures and controls.

Internal controls are under continual review by the Town Clerk/RFO and their adequacy is documented in an Internal Controls Statement which is reviewed annually by Full Council.

Adequate Fidelity Guarantee insurance is in place.

Officer salary calculations are checked by an authorised signatory in advance of payment and reviewed quarterly by the Staffing Sub-Committee.

The Council does not hold petty cash.

The Council has approved Financial Regulations which determine the procedure.

Financial decisions are resolved by Committees and clearly recorded in the minutes prior to any commitment.

All income and expenditure is detailed in the monthly financial reports presented to the Resources Committee and Full Council.

FINANCE

Adequate approval of expenditure

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					<p>Financial Regulations have been reviewed and specific limits specified.</p> <p>A Purchase Order Processing system has been implemented to further control and monitor Committee's and Officer's expenditure to ensure budget categories are not overspent.</p>
FINANCE	VAT and other taxes are not lawfully operated	4	3	12	<p>The Council's Financial Regulations define the requirements for VAT recovery.</p> <p>VAT returns are completed and submitted digitally on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>Payroll is outsourced and PAYE and NI is paid as defined by HMRC regulations.</p> <p>VAT recovery in relation to the Council's business activities and Charitable Trusts to be reviewed by the Town Clerk/RFO and professional advice sought as necessary.</p>
FINANCE	Adequacy of reserves	5	1	5	<p>The Resources Committee regularly reviews the level of the Council's reserves and annually reviews its Reserves Policy.</p> <p>The Council seeks to protect its reserves through judicious management of expenditure and receipts.</p> <p>General Reserves are held in accordance with JPAG guidance.</p>
FINANCE	Investment of reserves	3	1	3	<p>The Resources Committee regularly reviews the investment of reserves to ensure they are distributed among</p>



					<p>reputable financial institutions to afford protection from the Financial Services Compensation Scheme.</p> <p>The Resources Committee regularly reviews the investment of reserves to ensure they are secure, appropriately liquid, and high yield.</p> <p>The Council reviews and adopts an Investment Strategy annually.</p>	
FINANCE	The Charitable Trusts are not properly managed	5	1	5	<p>The Charitable Trusts follow the same financial processes and adhere to the same internal controls as the Council.</p> <p>The Charitable Trusts are independently examined annually.</p>	
LAND AND PROPERTY	Missing documents of ownership and possession	3	2	5	<p>Registration of title from HM Land Registry on file for the Town House, Chantry Road play park, and High Street walkway.</p> <p>First registration of title has been submitted for the Memorial Field and Seaman Avenue play park.</p>	Town Clerk to ensure registration of title on file for the Market Hall and Gannon Rooms.
LAND AND PROPERTY	Licenses and Leases	2	2	4	<p>The Scout Hut lease from the Town Council is currently under review with Pulhams & Co.</p> <p>The Men's Shed licence from the Town Council was renewed in October 2024.</p>	Alde and Blyth Community Radio and IP17 Good Neighbours Scheme licences have been incorrectly issued by the Town Council rather than the Gannon Institute Trust. These licences to be revised and reissued correctly.



					<p>Alde and Blyth Community Radio licence is due for renewal in December 2027.</p> <p>IP17 Good Neighbour Scheme licence from is due for renewal in March 2025. A five-year extension was agreed in October 2024. A revised licence is currently under review with IP17 Good Neighbours Scheme.</p> <p>Monthly and weekly Market Regulations were reviewed in July 2024.</p> <p>CYDS licence for the Youth Booth from the Town Council due to be reviewed.</p>
LIABILITY	Damage to Council assets	3	2	6	<p>An Asset Register is maintained, and insurance is held at an appropriate level for all items.</p> <p>Regular checks are made on all assets by the Officers.</p> <p>A Capital Replacement Fund in place.</p>
LIABILITY	Illegal activity or payments	4	1	4	<p>All activity and payments are made within the General Power of Competence and are clearly recorded in the minutes.</p>
LIABILITY	Accuracy and legality of agendas, minutes and other	4	1	4	<p>Agendas and minutes are produced in the prescribed method and adhere to legal requirements.</p>



statutory documents

Minutes are approved and signed at the next meeting where possible.

Agendas and minutes are displayed according to legal requirements.

The Council has a clear governance structure and business conducted at Council and Committee meetings is managed by the Chairs in accordance with Standing Orders.

All decisions taken by the Council and Committees are open and transparent with the exception of confidential matters correctly conducted in private session.

Statutory documents are reviewed annually by Full Council and published on the website.

LIABILITY

Risk to third party, property or individuals

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Adequate insurance is in place.

Risk assessment of any individual event is undertaken.

Separate insurance is taken for one-off events if necessary.

Health and safety risk assessments, training and instruction of officers and volunteers is routinely completed.



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT	Failure to comply with the Act	3	1	3	<p>The Council has an approved model publication scheme.</p> <p>A substantial request arrives may necessitate additional hours of work. The Council may request a fee if the work is excessive.</p>	
DATA PROTECTION	Failure to comply with the requirements of the GDPR and associated legislation	4	1	4	<p>The Officers follow good administrative practice for securing personal and GDPR related data.</p> <p>The Council is registered as a Data Controller with the Information Commissioner's Office.</p> <p>The Town Clerk/RFO has attended Data Protection Act, Freedom of Information and GDPR training courses delivered by SALC and ESC.</p>	Town Clerk/RFO to review Council's current Data Protection policies and draft new policies for adoption as required.
DATA PROTECTION	Access to confidential information	4	1	4	<p>Access to the SharePoint drive is limited as appropriate to individual officers.</p> <p>Password security is managed by the IT support company. All devices require a unique login.</p> <p>Office doors are locked when Officers are not present. Cleaners can access office keys via a combination lock to the cleaning cupboard.</p>	Town Clerk to research the use of a password manager, such as Last Pass.



					<p>HR files are stored in a locked cabinet only accessible by the Town Clerk/RFO.</p> <p>Officers have been instructed to operate a clear desk policy.</p>	
COUNCIL REPUTATION	Lack of input or support from Councillors leads to an ineffective and inefficient Council	3	3	9	<p>The importance of the members shared role and responsibilities is recognised.</p> <p>Involvement is ensured by regularly attending effective Council meetings.</p> <p>Designated members have responsibility for specific areas and are represented on local groups.</p> <p>Attendance records for Councillors are maintained and published. Councillors are asked to step down from Committees if they do not attend six meetings in a row.</p>	<p>Current working practices require improvement to ensure the Council is working effectively and efficiently.</p> <p>All Councillors and Officers to attend a bespoke training.</p>
COUNCIL REPUTATION	Register of Members' Interests and Conflicts	3	1	3	<p>Councillors are aware that the Localism Act 2011 creates criminal offences for providing false or misleading information about, or failing to register, disclosable pecuniary interests.</p> <p>Councillors declare any personal or prejudicial interests at the outset of meetings or when an interest becomes apparent during meetings. There is a</p>	



standing agenda item at all Council and Committee meetings to enable this.

Councillors with a pecuniary interest must leave the meeting while that item is discussed.

Register of Members' Interests form have been completed, submitted to the District Council, and published on the Council website. Reminders are issued to review annually.

It is the duty of the members and officers to ensure that the highest standards of public service are attained and that everyone adheres to the strict rules and guidelines applicable to local authorities.

The Council has adopted the LGA Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020 which sets out the expected ethical standards.

A professional approach is undertaken for all Council matters. The Civility and Respect Pledge and a Model Member-Officer Protocol has been adopted.

Members are provided with a copy of NALC's Good Councillor Guide.

COUNCIL REPUTATION

Councillors and Officers bring the Council into disrepute

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					<p>The Council has adopted a Social Media and Communications Policy.</p>
HEALTH & SAFETY	Accident/injury to public and Officers	5	1	5	<p>The Council is aware of its statutory obligations for health and safety.</p> <p>Officers are made aware of the requirements of Health and Safety at Work legislation and the Council's fire safety procedures during their induction and they are issued with the Council's Health and Safety Policy.</p> <p>It is a requirement of the Council's Fidelity Guarantee insurance to comply with all health and safety legislation and to follow the guidelines of the Health and Safety Executive.</p> <p>Fire safety information is displayed in a prominent place in all Council buildings used by members, officers and members of the public.</p> <p>Officers continually assess health and safety and maintenance issues for all Council land and property.</p> <p>The Council has a five-year contract with Worknest to support the Council to ensure health and safety requirements are met. Officers meet with WorkNest to ensure all</p>



aspects of the Health and Safety contract are being considered and followed appropriately.

Monthly inspections of grounds and play equipment are conducted by competent officers. High risk items are highlighted and repaired or removed immediately. Medium and low risk items are monitored.

Annual independent inspections of play equipment are conducted by a qualified inspector. Risks are highlighted and dealt with or monitored in accordance with the recommendations in the safety report. Repairs to play equipment are carried out expediently.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Meeting location adequacy

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Full Council meetings are normally held in the Market Hall.

Committee meetings are normally held in the Town House.

Both premises provide good meeting facilities, are fully accessible, and provide opportunities for the community to engage in meetings during each public session held.

Both premises are considered satisfactory providing all statutory health and safety obligations are observed.



ENVIRONMENT	Degradation of the local environment and failure to consider the Biodiversity Duty	4	1	4	The Council has a dedicated Environment Officer who leads a Green Team of volunteers who seek to conserve ecology and consider biodiversity.	Council to adopt a new Wildlife, Biodiversity and Environmental Policy.
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	The website is not fully accessible	3	1	3	The Council has a dedicated Community Officer with responsibility for ensuring the Council's website is compliant with Website Accessibility Guidance. The Council has published a Website Accessibility Statement.	
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	The Council fails to engage adequately with the diverse community	3	2	6	The Council has a dedicated Community Officer with responsibility for engaging with the community through a variety of means including newsletters, noticeboards, social media, and websites. The Council hosts the Annual Assembly of the Parish and encourages electors, local groups and organisations to attend. The Council publishes an Annual Report which details its activities over the financial year. The Council holds an Open Forum session at the outset of each Full Council and Committee meeting where members of	Town Clerk to attend a training course on ways to recruit more diverse Councillors. Town Clerk to attend training on how to engage with young people. Council to consider the creation of a Civil and Community Committee with delegated authority to deliver effective community engagement.



the public are encouraged to attend and address the Council.

The Council consults the community through the use of surveys for important issues.

The Council financially supports a wide variety of local groups and organisations with grant aid.

Contact with the Town Clerk can be made by email or telephone and the Town House is staffed from Monday to Thursday during office hours.