

Northstowe Town Council - Risk Assessment and Management Plan (V3)

This Risk Assessment and Management Plan was first adopted (V1) by the Town Council on 20th May 2021, item 12/21-22 (h).
A fully revised and extended version (V2) was adopted by Full Council on 25th October 2022, item 141/22-23(2).
This version (V3) has been drafted for review & adoption at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council on 27th May 2025.

Explanation of columns:

AREA: Area of risk

RISK: Type of risk

SEVERITY: Assessment of how impactful it would be were the risk to materialise (L=Low; M=Medium; H=High)

LIKELIHOOD: Assessment of the likelihood of the risk materialising (L=Low; M=Medium; H=High)

CONTROL: Mitigation measures put in place to mitigate against risks identified

LEAD: Key people/groups of people responsible for overseeing the control and implementation of mitigation measures

PROGRESS & ACTIONS: Key changes to mitigation measures put in place; also identification of plans/future actions for further risk mitigation.

AREA	RISK	SEVERITY	LIKELIHOOD	CONTROL	LEAD	PROGRESS & ACTIONS
Assets	Management of Physical Assets	L	L	Town Council Assets are included in Asset Register.	Clerk	Asset Register last updated March 2024 Future action: incorporate current Asset Register within Scribe accounting system, to ensure up-to-date register at all times.
	Security of buildings and equipment	M	L	<p>Town Council does not own or manage any buildings (yet).</p> <p>X1 Defibrillator owned by Town Council securely located in grounds of Pathfinder Primary School; CCTV in operation there; regular, monthly checks taking place and any additional ones when prompted automatically by The Circuit where it is registered.</p> <p>X1 Speed Indicator Device securely fixed to a lamp post on Station Road (B1050).</p> <p>Equipment's location listed on Asset Register.</p> <p>Almost all assets are located in secure Town Council office (occupied since September 2023) or secure</p>	Clerk	Location of all Council assets has been added to the Asset Register.

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				<p>Community Lounge cupboard within The Cabin or in shed in secure grounds of The Cabin.</p> <p>Assets of value within office securely stored within fireproof cabinet.</p> <p>Security measures at home office in place.</p>		
	Maintenance of assets	L	L	<p>Regular fault checks and maintenance of assets in office taking place: Council equipment and facilities checked to ensure that they are safe and without risk to health, to maintain safe, healthy working conditions for staff, Members and volunteers. Includes regular checks that: places of work and meeting places are adequate in terms of heating, lighting and ventilation; fire precautions are in place; and electrical equipment checks are carried out annually.</p> <p>Condition of all assets is checked annually and included in the Asset Register. Faulty equipment flagged up in Asset Register updates and safely disposed off thereafter.</p>	Clerk & Deputy Clerk	<p>Annual electrical equipment checks (PAT testing) carried out each autumn period..</p> <p>Regular checks in place with standard form-filling instigated for defibrillator.</p> <p>ACTIONS:</p> <p>To invest in asset labelling with bar codes.</p> <p>To consider pursuing a Building Maintenance/Facilities Management System and look to implement this; Software such as MaintainX & Concerto can be purchased and depending on usage prices will vary</p>
	Maintenance of IT systems	M	M	<p>Regular consideration to be given to improvements that could be made to the Council's IT systems and software (as well as hardware such as mobile phones) being utilised by the Council's staff and Members and consideration to be given where possible increase in security, effectiveness and efficiency can be achieved.</p>	Clerk & Council	<p>All staff now have Microsoft 365 Business Premium and iPhones.</p> <p>Early 2025 IT contract entered with Cloudy IT to improve on email system, e-security and backup systems, as well as giving all Councillors access to 365 Business Premium.</p> <p>Future consideration to be given to change website provider.</p>

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Finance	Banking systems management	H	L	<p>Town Council Accounts are administered by the Responsible Financial Officer (= Clerk).</p> <p>Bank Account (Current Account) is with Unity Trust.</p> <p>All transactions securely entered through accounting system Scribe.</p> <p>Investments reviewed at least quarterly – in practice on a monthly basis - and reported to Finance & Governance Committee and annually to the Town Council (as part of AGAR paperwork at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council).</p> <p>Two Councillor authorisation for payments made from Town Council bank accounts.</p> <p>Finance & Governance Committee Chair to physically inspect and sign bank reconciliation/statements at every meeting.</p> <p>Credit card can only be used by Town Clerk.</p> <p>Credit card use limit to match the level suitable for transaction levels.</p>	RFO; Finance and Governance Committee	<p>Ensured Unity Trust bank corrected their faulty two-councillor Unity Trust banking authorisation system.</p> <p>Ensured that at all times there are four Councillors registered with Unity Trust who can authorise payments online.</p> <p>Credit card Provided for Town Clerk, with usage per month limited to £2,000 maximum (£1,000 maximum single transaction). This has significantly reduced the risk of staff needing to pay for things and then claim back through expenses.</p> <p>Three saving accounts opened up in 2024, with Unity Trust, Redwood Bank and Cambridge Building Society, to ensure that earmarked and General Reserve is spread out over different accounts to reduce risks of losing funds in case of bank collapsing.</p> <p>ACTIONS: The development of a 'Financial Reserves Policy' to be developed.</p> <p>An Investment Strategy is to be developed by the Town Council, in particular for any savings over £100K, S106 reserves and in light of changing interest rates. In accordance with Proper Practices and statutory guidance on local government investments, (issued under section 15(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 2003), the council should implement an Investment Strategy since the reserves now exceed £100,000.</p>

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	Consequential loss of income	M	L	<p>Insurance Cover (Legislation identifying the need for Local Councils to be insured and have adequate insurance cover; as Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969 and the Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Regulations 1998). The Town Council's Insurance Policy includes adequate cover for Public Liability, staff accidents and Council Assets.</p> <p>Fidelity Guarantee in place.</p> <p>Cloudy IT safe and secure data storage done three times per day. Scribe information secure through their system.</p>	RFO	<p>NTC's Insurance cover checked at least annually, with Asset Register details shared with Council's insurer, to ensure that the insurance cover remains adequate. The council's asset includes insurance values.</p> <p>Insurance includes Fidelity Guarantee, covered under 'Employee dishonesty' for up to £150,000.</p> <p>Council's Public Liability Cover is up to £10 million.</p> <p>Cloudy IT safe and secure data storage done three times per day. Scribe information secure through their system.</p>
	Loss of cash through theft or dishonesty	L	L	No Cash will be held by the Town Council.	RFO	Unity Trust Cheque book kept secure.
	Financial controls and records management	H	L	<p>Monthly bank reconciliation and management accounts prepared by RFO and reported to the Finance & Governance Committee by the Town Clerk.</p> <p>Payments and Receipts overview presented to the Finance & Governance Committee monthly, to ensure regular checks against budget can be made and any emerging issues can be highlighted through forecasting.</p> <p>Hard copies printed of all invoices and paperwork evidencing income and expenditure made, and signed, at Finance & Governance Committee meetings, by two Councillors authorised for payments made from Town Council bank accounts.</p>	RFO, with Finance & Governance Committee/ Full Council	<p>Internal audit taking place in November and April/May each year.</p> <p>ACTIONS: Financial Regulations: new NALC Model Financial Regulations Template from 2024/ further updated early 2025 to be adopted by the Town Council.</p> <p>Consideration to be given whether third signature from independent Councillor is still needed; Internal auditor believes all internal financial control procedures are correct and adequate and this may be unnecessary additional step.</p>

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				<p>Monthly Bank statements are checked by a Councillor independent of the Finance & Governance Committee; this is done on a quarterly basis where all financial paperwork for receipts and payments is checked and counter-signed against the two Finance & Governance Committee Councillors – a report is presented to the next Committee meeting where any irregularities were found or suggestions for system improvements were raised.</p> <p>Internal interim and year-end audit.</p> <p>At the Annual Meeting of the Town Council: legal need for the Council to review the effectiveness of its Internal Control measures, in which the Council is to consider its: Division of duties; Payroll/ payment/ banking controls; budgetary control & monitoring; reconciliation between records; locks and passwords (Proper Practices are specified in the 'Practitioners' Guide').</p> <p>The Council approves the annual accounts on time (Council duty as per Local Government Act 1972 2003, Sch 1, para 2(4)).</p> <p>Internal auditors check list reviewed twice annually.</p> <p>Compliance with the publication requirements for the annual AGAR for external audit, including a Conclusion of Audit notice.</p> <p>Compliance with the provision of the period for the exercise of public rights.</p> <p>Financial Regulations to be reviewed annually. Last reviewed 25th May 2022.</p>		<p>Consideration to be given whether hard copies of invoices and other paperwork evidencing income and expenditure is needed or whether a fully online system (in Scribe) may be more efficient use of staff time.</p>

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	Compliance with VAT Regulations	H	L	<p>VAT returns complied and submitted by RFO online.</p> <p>Town Council to receive direct notification from HMRC regarding repayments due.</p> <p>HMRC account to be reviewed annually.</p> <p>Procedures for making payments in line with proper practices and VAT properly accounted for, using Scribe to manage accounts.</p>	RFO	<p>RFO followed basic VAT training, from Scribe and HMRC.</p> <p>Regular VAT 126 Returns to be carried out, at least yearly.</p> <p>Council in future to be VAT registered, which may be needed when it is to take on larger assets such as a community centre and will charge VAT for business activities to clients (currently not needed as only business activity, market traders' fees is exempt from VAT)</p>
	Sound budgeting to underlie annual precept requests	M	M	<p>Council to develop comprehensive Vision, Mission Statement and long-term Business Plan, distilling from these its Annual Action Plans which is to direct the development of the budget.</p> <p>The Council to make decisions about the services and facilities the council provides in the 'spirit of best value'.</p> <p>The Council to set a realistic budget and precept, targeted at identified needs of the Council and the community.</p> <p>Council to ensure there is an adequate General Reserve, to cover for any unforeseen costs or projects it may wish to undertake during the financial year.</p> <p>The Council to keep an adequate level of General Reserve, to allow for future asset transfer possibilities in next few years. In this, it is important that measures are put in place to ensure that the Council does not hold excessive reserves, where here are no long-term plans identified or agreed on.</p>	Council, with RFO	<p>Budget development process is started in September each year, with each Committee in September or October discussing and presenting their committee budget proposals – these are collated, together with overarching Council budget needs in a draft budget to the Finance and Governance Committee in November and again in December, which then presents a final draft budget to Full Council, before Christmas, or the middle of January at the latest.</p> <p>ACTIONS: longer-term business planning and associated Council performance management are to be undertaken in earnest</p>

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				<p>To consider applying for external grants where possible, to strengthen the council's financial position.</p> <p>Finance & Governance Committee and Council to receive detailed budgets in the late autumn, with the precept derived directly from this.</p> <p>Expenditure against budget reported to Finance & Governance Committee at every meeting.</p> <p>Town Council to set up a Performance Management Framework, to monitor and evaluate its investments, and the outcomes and impact it wishes to achieve.</p>		
	Compliance with borrowing restrictions	L	L	No borrowing at present.	RFO	
Liability	Risk to third party, property or individuals.	M	L	<p>Insurance in place.</p> <p>Risk assessments completed annually and kept on file.</p> <p>Risk assessments will be carried out for all Town Council events and activities (such as market; Community Lounge)</p> <p>Comprehensive risk assessments and prove of public liability insurance cover is requested from all the Town Council's contractors (for verge maintenance); market traders, as well as from organisations delivering projects on the Town Council's behalf or with their financial support (ParkPlay; Hope CIC Mobile Food Hub).</p>	Town Clerk & Deputy Clerk	<p>Risk Assessment and Management Plan (this document) reviewed and updated at least annually (as per RFO's duty as described in the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, reg 4).</p> <p>Risk Assessments are always created in advance of each event where the Town Council is leading, or it is part of the organisations delivering an event. These are also shared with venues/landowners where requested.</p>
	Legal liability as consequence of asset ownership.	H	L	<p>Insurance in place.</p> <p>Written reports are kept on file.</p>	Town Clerk	The Town Council does not yet own any physical assets (except for some 'street furniture' – i.e. Speed Indicator Device and a defibrillator, the Town Council does not, currently, own any fixed physical assets such

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						as land; buildings; play parks; cemeteries; allotments; green space; etc ACTIONS: The Council could consider developing an Asset Transfer Policy, to pro-actively consider under what conditions it would consider taking on new assets.
	Legal liability as consequence of approved civic events.	H	L	Insurance in place. All events are risk assessed prior to place. Written reports are kept on file.	Town Clerk & Deputy Clerk	Written risk assessments are kept on the Council's files, for responsibilities regarding events, meetings and office; the guidelines as set by <u>HSE</u> are followed in completing risk assessments.
Employer Liability	Compliance with employment law	H	M	Membership of CAPALC, NALC and SLCC. Training courses attended by these organisations and other external providers. Legal and professional advice sought when required. Council to ensure that staff, Councillors, contractors, volunteers and visitors are supervised or trained, to ensure they are competent in their Council activities and not needlessly exposed to health or safety risks, such as hazardous substances. Includes: instructions for handling equipment; regular display screen checks; Councillors trained up as first aiders.	Town Council	Council ensures there is, each year, sufficient budget included, to cover legal expenses where they may become needed during the year, to e.g., investigate the potential for taking on assets. ACTIONS: Development of an Employment Handbook (to cover requirements as set out in the Employment rights Act 1996) has been set in motion through new contract with HR company WorkNest. Related Policies such as Lone Working Policy and Disciplinary Policy being presented to Full Council in May 2025). Other Related HR Policies such as Grievance Policy to be developed.
	Safety of staff and visitors	H	M	Employees are advised to follow the Lone Worker policy when working alone both at and away from Council premises.	Town Clerk	The Council has adopted a Health & Safety Policy (last updated 20 th May 2021). NB: the Health and Safety at Work etc Act (HSAWAEA) 1974 requires all employers with

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				<p>HSE information displayed in Council Offices in compliance with HSE legislation and guidance. NB: Key legislation is the Health and Safety at Work etc act 1974.</p> <p>Staff issued with a health and safety briefing relevant to their roles upon commencement of their employment and to be revisited during their yearly appraisal.</p> <p>First Aid kits kept in Council office, as well as in Community Lounge cupboard and in shed with market materials. Contents of these kits should be reviewed annually.</p> <p>All incidents and accidents to be recorded and reviewed.</p> <p>Covid-19 Policy used when needed and precautionary measures to be put in place.</p>		<p>five or more employees to have in place a policy on health and safety at work. It is good practice to have one in place anyway.</p> <p>ACTIONS: Health & Safety Policy is to be reviewed.</p> <p>The Council has not yet developed a Lone Working Policy – being finalised through Personnel Committee</p> <p>Annual risk assessments for office working are yet to be established – e.g. fire safety checks; annual display screen and workstation checks; policies, protocols and template risk assessments for e.g., dealing with hazardous substances , manual handling risks.</p>
Staffing	Sufficient staffing levels	H	M	<p>Town Council has a legal duty to ensure it looks after employees' health and wellbeing (the Health and Safety at Work etc act 1974) – the Council, therefore also needs to ensure that employees' workload is not becoming too much and staffing structure and levels are therefore considered in time before there is a risk of it affecting the Council's ability to perform and fulfil its statutory duties.</p> <p>Staffing structure and Council needs to be regularly considered by the Personnel Committee, to anticipate growth areas in particular where new projects, assets or other liabilities are taken on by the Council.</p> <p>Council to join the Government's Disability Confident Employer Scheme, with the aim to reach Level 1 (Disability Confident Committed)</p>	/Personnel Committee/ Full Council	<p>Deputy Clerk (0.7 FTE) started work in May 2023.</p> <p>Market Manager in place March -Apr 2024 and Aug 2024 – Mar 2025.</p> <p>Assets and Estates Manager in place Nov 2024-May2025.</p>

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	Staff turnover	H	M	<p>Fill vacant positions promptly to ensure sufficient staff capacity to meet governance requirements effectively</p> <p>Town Council to present itself as an attractive employer, through adverts, contracts and employment conditions.</p> <p>Council to have a contingency plan in place cover unexpected and sudden key staff absences: For all activities to have in place straightforward set of instructions that any authorised person could follow; in case of unexpected locum or other cover needs the processes whereby they are able to take over the functioning of the council are then clear.</p>	Personnel Committee	<p>Contracts now all include three months' notice period (after probationary period), to allow time to find replacement staff.</p> <p>ACTIONS:</p> <p>Consider timescales for probationary period and notice periods for different types of jobs.</p> <p>Consider implementing regular wellbeing checks.</p> <p>Consider capturing satisfaction surveys from staff.</p> <p>Adopt a Training and Development Policy (draft being discussed by Personnel Committee)</p>
	Protection of staff	H	M	Council to protect its staff from vexatious, harassment or bullying behaviour	Full Council	<p>ACTIONS;</p> <p>Council to adopt a 'Vexatious and Unreasonable Complainants Behaviour Policy'.</p> <p>Consider implementing regular wellbeing checks.</p>
Legal Liability	Ensuring activities are within legal powers	H	L	<p>Town Clerk clarifies the legal position on any new proposal.</p> <p>Legal advice to be sought where necessary.</p>	Town Clerk	<p>The Clerk has regularly shared information about discretionary legal powers under which Council activities could take place, and has also created an overview of such powers to this end, which is being kept up-to-date as and when the Council embarks on, or starts investigating, new projects – latest version of this is on Council's website: Alternative powers to GPC Update Sep 2023.pdf</p> <p>Motion paper template introduced to Council; this has preset boxes to indicate legal powers</p>

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						<p>under which activities can be carried out and money spent.</p> <p>Clerk obtained professional clerking qualification CiLCA in May 2024, which allowed the Council to declare it wishes to make use of the General Power of Competence in May 2024.</p>
	Ensuring all legal duties are considered	M	L	<p>The Council has a legal duty to have regard to conserving biodiversity (Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, s40).</p> <p>The Council has a legal duty to act with due regards to crime and disorder in the area (Crime and Disorder Act 1998, s17).</p>	Council & Officers	<p>Council has adopted a Policy for the Protection of the Environment (April 2025).</p> <p>ACTIONS: The Council to consider developing further, more detailed and specific policies including a 'Statement on Duties related to Biodiversity and Crime & Disorder' and a 'Low Carbon and Environment Policy.'</p>
Data Protection	Compliance with Data Protection/G DPR Obligations			<p>SARR (Subject Access Request Register) kept up.</p> <p>FOI request information log kept up.</p> <p>Data Protection Policy in place</p> <p>Data Breach Log kept up; and any breaches to be reported to next relevant Council meeting, in line with adopted Data Breach Response Policy.</p>	Clerk & Council	<p>ACTION: Council to implement a ROPA (Record of Processing Activities).</p>
Policies	Policies and protocols in place	M	M	<p>Identification of policies and procedures in place and those that are still needed as well as those that could be considered at a later stage.</p> <p>Areas for recommendation as raised in internal audit reports to be addressed as soon as possible.</p>	Council, with Town Clerk	<p>Comprehensive document identifying the policy documents in need of review has been presented to the Council (Finance and Governance Committee in November 2024 – see northstowetowncouncil.gov.uk/ UserFiles/Files /66 NTC Policies and protocols needs overview.pdf).</p> <p>ACTION: Council to implement a schedule of review to ensure all policies remain up to date.</p>

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Documentation	Proper and timely reporting via the minutes.	L	L	The Council meets monthly – with, in addition, several Committee meetings meeting monthly or at less regular intervals – and receives and approves minutes of meetings held in interim. Minutes made available to press and public at the Town Council office and via the website.	Town Clerk, with Deputy Clerk	draft minutes are – wherever possible - shared within one month of the meeting being held, or as part of the meeting pack for the subsequent Full Council or Committee meeting, whichever comes first.
	Proper document control	M	M	Leases and legal documents in safe in the Town Council office. Other data storage to comply with GDPR. To use version control methods when filing documents electronically when appropriate. All hard copy documents to be scanned for electronic storage. Ensure that all information as per the Town Council's Publication scheme is kept up to date	Town Clerk	Fire Safe cabinet has been purchased ACTIONS: Town Council's Publication Scheme is to be updated. Council to develop a 'Retention of Documents Policy' – this will help staff determine what records should be retained and for how long.
Contracting	Provision of goods and services by third parties	M	L	All reasonable efforts are made to establish third parties have appropriate qualifications, skills, insurance and public liability when working for or under the direction of the Town Council.	Town Clerk	
Volunteers	Volunteering & volunteer management	H	M	Volunteers must be fully briefed as per the Town Council's Volunteer Policy. Insurance company to be contacted for advice if the volunteer job is complex. Council to address lack of sufficient volunteers for volunteer-led activities, where needed.	Town Council, Councillor leads on Council-led activities, with Clerk & Deputy Clerk	A Volunteer Policy has been drafted and is to be presented to Full Council in May 2025.
Decision-Making	Loss of Councillors	H	M	Elections and co-option to be advertised widely, to attract sufficient candidates for Member vacancies.	Council	The Council has adopted a Co-Option Policy (last, updated version: NOV 2022).

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				<p>Ensure visibility of Councils' work through its online and media outlets.</p> <p>Reduce risk of meetings being inquorate, reducing frequency of meetings, or postponing, or cancelling, meetings in time if there is no, or little business to be transacted.</p> <p>Council to allow and encourage public participation in meetings and council consultations and activities to improve public engagement (e.g. through publicising meetings; articles in magazines; holding residents' surgeries with Councillors; encouraging active engagement in Council business planning events etc).</p>		<p>All new NTC Councillors encouraged to go on Councillor training within six months of taking up the position.</p> <p>Councillors are regularly reminded of the legal duty to attend meetings when summoned.</p>
Councillor propriety	Registers of Interest and Gifts and Hospitality in place.	H	M	<p>Register of interest completed and reviewed by members and officers annually. Last reviewed in May 2024.</p> <p>Gifts and hospitality register is available at each Council Meeting.</p> <p>Members are reminded of their obligation to declare interests and gifts at the Annual Meeting and one other meeting during the Town Council year.</p>	Councillors	<p>All Councillors are reminded each May (or following co-option) of their legal duty to update their Register of Interests.</p> <p>A 'Gift and hospitality register' is yet to be made available, but this has not yet been relevant.</p> <p>Declaration of Interests is included at the start of each Council meeting.</p> <p>ACTIONS: The Council could consider devising a 'Conflicts of Interest Policy'.</p> <p>Council to adopt a 'Dispensation Granting Policy', with associated Dispensation Form (to further details the information as per the Standing Orders).</p>
	Code of Conduct	H	M	The Town Council has adopted the current "Code of Conduct".	Councillors	<p>ACTION: Adoption of the adapted (Dec. 2021) South Cambridgeshire District Council's Code of</p>

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				<p>The Council has also adopted the related 'Complaints Procedure – Code of Conduct', a 'Complaints Procedure – Administration', and a 'Member/Officer Protocol'.</p> <p>Councillors to uphold high standards of behaviour in public life (duty as per Localism Act 2011, s27(1)) and to abide to the Council's Code of Conduct when acting in their capacity as Councillor (duty as per Localism Act 2011, s 27(2)).</p> <p>Council to adopt Draft Dignity at Work Policy</p> <p>Council to sign the <u>Civility and Respect pledge</u></p>		<p>Conduct is yet to take place – awaiting further information from SCDC before adapting for NTC's purposes.</p> <p>All Councillors are sent a copy of 'the Good councillor Guide' and all councillors are encouraged to go on relevant training courses.</p> <p>ACTIONS: Council to adopt Draft Dignity at Work Policy (being presented to Full Council in May 2025).</p> <p>Council to sign the <u>Civility and Respect pledge</u></p>
	Reputational Risk	H	L	<p>Council to comply with Health & Safety Law at all times.</p> <p>Council to ensure that adequate Public Liability Insurance is in place.</p> <p>Council to ensure that decision-making reflects the needs of all residents of the parish.</p> <p>Council to ensure that all spending is accounted for carefully.</p> <p>Council to act in an open, transparent and accountable manner at all times.</p>	Members & Officers	<p>NTC has adopted a 'Health and Safety Policy', 'Press and Media Policy' and a 'Social Media Policy' to ensure all involved are aware of the protocols that are in place.</p> <p>ACTION: The Council could consider developing a 'Community Engagement Policy'.</p> <p>Social Media Policy is to be reviewed</p>