

Northstowe Town Council - Risk Assessment and Management Plan (V2)

This Risk Assessment and Management Plan was approved by the Town Council on 20th May 2021 (V1).

The current version (V2) was adopted by Full Council on 25th October 2022 [item 141/22-23(2)].

AREA	RISK	SEVE- RITY	LIKELI- HOOD	CONTROL (and agreed improvement)	LEAD	PROGRESS / COMMENTS
Assets	Protection of Physical Assets	L	L	Town Council Assets are included in Asset Register.	Clerk & RFO	Asset Register last updated March 2022 – is due for an update, as further assets have since been acquired, e.g., through CCC.
	Security of buildings and equipment	M	L	Town Council does not own or manage any buildings (yet). Equipment's location listed on Asset Register. Most assets - those not in use by Clerk in home office - are currently in secure container storage. Security measures at home office in place.	Clerk & RFO	Location of all Council assets has been added to the Asset Register. Most assets are in container storage until new external storage/office space is available, following closure of Wing in June 2022.
	Maintenance of assets	L	L	Regular fault checks and maintenance of assets in home office taking place. Condition of all assets is checked annually and included in the Asset Register.	Clerk & RFO	Annual electrical equipment checks (PAT testing) to be instigated. Regular maintenance cycles to be instigated once all assets have semi-permanent location in office-storage place.
	Maintenance of IT systems	M	M	Regular consideration to be given 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.	Clerk & RFO, with Council	A number of discussions about potential IT and software improvements have taken place to date, yet to result in any significant changes.
Finance	Banking	H	L	Town Council Accounts are administered by the Responsible Financial Officer (= Clerk). Bank Account is with Unity Trust. All transactions securely entered through accounting system Scribe.	RFO	Ensured Unity Trust bank correct their faulty two-councillor Unity Trust banking authorisation system. Ensured that at all times there are four Councillors registered with Unity Trust who can authorise payments online.

AREA	RISK	SEVERITY	LIKELIHOOD	CONTROL (and agreed improvement)	LEAD	PROGRESS / COMMENTS
				<p>Investments to be reviewed quarterly and reported to Finance & Governance Committee and annually to 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>Application for Unity Trust (via Lloyds Bank) debit card – to replace the need for the Clerk to use their own banking to pay for e.g. emergency spend needs and stationary.</p>	Allocated Finance & Governance Committee Members	<p>The development of a 'Financial Reserves Policy' as well as an 'Investment Policy' are to be considered by the Town Council in the near future, in particular for any finances over £85K, S106 reserves and in light of rising interest rates.</p> <p>Debit card application is live – expected to start using card in Nov/Dec 2022.</p>
	Risk of consequential loss of income	M	L	<p>Insurance Cover (As required by the Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969 and the Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Regulations 1998).</p> <p>Fidelity Guarantee in place.</p> <p>Important documents backed up and kept in the cloud.</p> <p>Weekly and monthly backups of all Council files done and kept on separate USB sticks.</p>	Town Clerk & RFO	<p>NTC's Insurance cover checked at least annually, with Asset Register details shared with Council's insurer.</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>All Council files are secure on the Clerk's laptop (password-protected) and are kept in the Cloud (on OneDrive).</p>
	Loss of cash through theft or dishonesty	H	L	No Cash will be held by the Town Council.	RFO	Unity Trust Cheque book kept secure.
	Financial controls and records	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</p>	RFO, with Finance & Governance Committee/ Full Council	Internal audit taking place in November and April each year.

AREA	RISK	SEVE- RITY	LIKELI- HOOD	CONTROL (and agreed improvement)	LEAD	PROGRESS / COMMENTS
				<p>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> <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>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>Financial Regulations reviewed annually. Last reviewed 25th May 2022.</p>		
	Comply with VAT Regulations	H	M	<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>	RFO	<p>Regular VAT Returns yet to be instigated.</p> <p>Council in future to be VAT registered, which may be needed when it is to take on larger assets.</p>
	Sound budgeting to	M	M	Council to develop comprehensive Vision, Mission Statement and long-term Business Plan, distilling from	Council, with Clerk & RFO	Budget development process is started in September each year, with each Committee in

AREA	RISK	SEVERITY	LIKELIHOOD	CONTROL (and agreed improvement)	LEAD	PROGRESS / COMMENTS
	underlie annual precept.			<p>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>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>		<p>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, which then presents a final draft budget to Full Council, before Christmas, or the middle of January at the latest.</p> <p>A first two-year action Plan was instigated in July 2022 and is the start of longer-term business planning and associated performance management, to be undertaken.</p>
	Complying 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.</p>	Town Clerk & RFO	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).

AREA	RISK	SEVERITY	LIKELIHOOD	CONTROL (and agreed improvement)	LEAD	PROGRESS / COMMENTS
						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.
	Legal liability as consequence of asset ownership.	H	L	Insurance in place. Written reports are kept on file.	Town Clerk & RFO	The Town Council does not yet own any physical assets. The Council could consider developing an Asset Transfer Policy, to pro-actively consider under what conditions it would consider taking on asserts.
	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 & RFO With Working Groups set up to develop and deliver events and markets	Written risk assessments are kept on the Council's files, for responsibilities regarding events, meetings and office; the guidelines as set by HSE are followed in completing risk assessments.
Employer Liability	Comply with employment law	M	M	Membership to CAPALC, NALC and SLCC. Training courses attended by these organisations and other external providers. Legal and professional advice sought when required.	Town Clerk/ 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 asserts. Development of an Employment Handbook (to cover requirements as set out in the Employment rights Act 1996) is yet to be carried out, as well as related Policies such as Lone Working Policy.
	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	No Council premises at present.

AREA	RISK	SEVERITY	LIKELIHOOD	CONTROL (and agreed improvement)	LEAD	PROGRESS / COMMENTS
				<p>HSE information displayed in Council Offices in compliance with HSE legislation and guidance.</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 kit kept in Council office. Contents of this kit 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>The Council has adopted a Health & Safety Policy (last updated 20th May 2021).</p> <p>The Council has not yet developed a Lone Working Policy</p> <p>Annual risk assessments for staff Home Working, and for in office are yet to be established – e.g. fire safety checks; PAT checks; annual display screen and workstation checks; policies, protocols and template risk assessments for e.g., dealing with hazardous substances , manual handling risks.</p>
	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' work load 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>	Town Council/Personnel Committee, with Town Clerk	Current proposal to expand central staffing with an additional .7FTE Deputy Clerk, with a potential start date early 2023.
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	Following the loss of the General Power of Competence (on 11 th May 2022), 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.

AREA	RISK	SEVE- RITY	LIKELI- HOOD	CONTROL (and agreed improvement)	LEAD	PROGRESS / COMMENTS
	Ensuring all legal duties are considered			The Council has a legal duty to have regard to conserving biodiversity (Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, s40). The Council has a legal duty to act with due regards to crime and disorder in the area (Crime and Disorder Act 1998, s17).	Council & Officers	The Council to consider developing specific policies including a 'Statement on Duties related to Biodiversity and Crime & Disorder' and a 'Low Carbon and Environment Policy.'
	Proper and timely reporting via the minutes.	M	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 Chairs & Vice-Chairs of Council and Committees	draft minutes are 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	Safe yet to be purchased – potential to do this when semi-permanent office is to be available, or off-site safe file security to be considered. Council to develop a 'Retention of Documents Policy'
	Provision of goods and services by third parties	H	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	
	Volunteering	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.	Town Clerk, with Members and relevant Working Groups	A Volunteer Policy is yet to be established.
Decision-Making	Loss of Councillors	H	M	Elections and co-option to be advertised widely, to attract sufficient candidates for Member vacancies.	Officers & Members	The Council has adopted a Co-Option Policy (version 25 th May 2022).

AREA	RISK	SEVERITY	LIKELIHOOD	CONTROL (and agreed improvement)	LEAD	PROGRESS / COMMENTS
				<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>		All NTC Councillors encouraged to go on Councillor training, and are regularly reminded of the legal duty when summoned.
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 on May 2022.</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>	<p>Councillors</p> <p>Town Clerk/ Councillors</p>	<p>All Councillors are reminded each May (or following co-option, such as in June 2022), 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>The Council could consider devising a 'Conflicts of Interest Policy' and a 'Dispensation Granting Policy' (to further details the information as per the Standing Orders).</p>
	Code of Conduct	H	M	<p>The Town Council has adopted the current "Code of Conduct".</p> <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>	Members & Officers	<p>Adoption of the adapted (Dec. 2021) South Cambridgeshire District Council's Code of 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 training courses.</p>

AREA	RISK	SEVE- RITY	LIKELI- HOOD	CONTROL (and agreed improvement)	LEAD	PROGRESS / COMMENTS
	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>The Council could consider developing a 'Community Engagement Policy'</p>