



Christchurch Town Council

Risk Management Strategy

Policy name	Version	Owner	Date Adopted	Review Date
Risk Management Strategy	V1.0	Clerk	August 2019	August 2020

RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

1 Introduction

1.1 This document forms the Council's Risk Management Strategy. It sets out:

- What is risk management;
- Why does the Council need a risk management strategy;
- What is the Council's philosophy on risk management;
- What is the risk management process;
- Roles and responsibilities;
- Future monitoring.

1.2 The objectives of this strategy are to:

- Further develop risk management and raise its profile across the Council;
- Integrate risk management into the culture of the organisation;
- Embed risk management through the ownership and management of risk as part of all decision making processes; and
- Manage risk in accordance with best practice.

2 What is Risk Management?

2.1 'Risk is the threat that an event or action will adversely affect an organisation's ability to achieve its objectives and to successfully execute its strategies. Risk management is the process by which risks are identified, evaluated and controlled. It is a key element of the framework of governance together with community focus, structures and processes, standards of conduct and service delivery arrangements.' Audit Commission, *Worth the Risk: Improving Risk Management in Local Government*, (2001: 5)

2.2 Risk management is an essential feature of good governance. An organisation that manages risk well is more likely to achieve its objectives. It is vital to recognise that risk management is not simply about health and safety, but applies to all aspects of the Council's work.

2.3 Risks can be classified into various types but it is important to recognise that for all categories the direct financial losses may have less impact than the indirect costs such as disruption of normal working. The examples below are not exhaustive:

Strategic Risk - long-term adverse impacts from poor decision-making or poor implementation. Risks damage to the reputation of the Council, loss of public confidence, in a worse-case scenario Government intervention.

Compliance Risk - failure to comply with legislation, laid down procedures or the lack of documentation to prove compliance. Risks exposure to prosecution, judicial review, employment tribunals and the inability to enforce contracts.

Financial Risk - fraud and corruption, waste, excess demand for services, bad debts. Risk of additional audit investigation, objection to accounts, reduced service delivery, dramatically increased Council Tax levels/impact on Council reserves.

Operating Risk - failure to deliver services effectively, malfunctioning equipment, hazards to service users, the general public or staff, damage to property. Risk of insurance claims, higher insurance premiums, lengthy recovery processes.

2.4 Not all these risks are insurable and for some the premiums may not be cost effective. Even where insurance is available, a monetary consideration might not be an adequate recompense. The emphasis should always be on eliminating or reducing risk before costly steps to transfer risk to another party are considered.

2.5 Risk is not restricted to potential threats but can be connected with missed opportunities. Good risk management can facilitate proactive, rather than merely defensive responses. Measures to manage adverse risks are likely to help with managing positive ones.

3 Why does the Council need a Risk Management Strategy?

3.1 Risk management will strengthen the ability of the Council to achieve its objectives and enhance the value of services provided.

3.2 The Risk Management Strategy will help to ensure that all Committees/ service areas have an understanding of risk and that the Council adopts a uniform approach to identifying and prioritising risks. This should in turn lead to conscious choices as to the most appropriate method of dealing with each risk, be it elimination, reduction, transfer or acceptance.

3.3 Strategic risk management is also an important element in demonstrating continuous service improvement.

3.4 There is a requirement under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011 to establish and maintain a systematic strategy, framework and process for managing risk.

4. Risk Management Policy Statement

Christchurch Town Council recognises that it has a responsibility to manage risks effectively in order to protect its employees, assets, liabilities and community against potential losses, to minimise uncertainty in achieving its goals and objectives and to maximise the opportunities to achieve its vision.

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 risk. Risk management is an integral part of the Council's management processes.

5. Implementing the Strategy

5.1 Risk Control

Risk control is the process of taking action to minimise the likelihood of the risk event occurring and/or reducing the severity of the consequences should it occur. Typically, risk control requires the identification and implementation of revised operating procedures, but in exceptional cases more drastic action will be required to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.

Options for control include:

Elimination – the circumstances from which the risk arises are removed so that the risk no longer exists;

Reduction – loss control measures are implemented to reduce the impact/ likelihood of the risk occurring ;

Transfer – the financial impact is passed to others e.g. by revising contractual terms;

Sharing - the risk is shared with another party;

Insuring - insure against some or all of the risk to mitigate financial impact; and

Acceptance – documenting a conscious decision after assessment of areas where the Council accepts or tolerates risk.

5.2 Risk Monitoring

The risk management process does not finish with putting any risk control procedures in place. Their effectiveness in controlling risk must be monitored and reviewed. It is also important to assess whether the nature of any risk has changed over time.

The information generated from applying the risk management process will help to ensure that risks can be avoided or minimised in the future. It will also inform judgements on the nature and extent of insurance cover and the balance to be reached between self-insurance and external protection.

5.3 Risk Management System

Risk Identification – Identifying and understanding the hazards and risks facing the Council is crucial if informed decisions are to be made about policies or service delivery methods. The risks associated with these decisions can then be effectively managed.

Risk Analysis – Once risks have been identified they need to be systematically and accurately assessed using proven techniques. Analysis should make full use of any available data on the potential frequency of events and their consequences. If a risk is seen to be unacceptable, then steps need to be taken to control or respond to the risk.

Risk Prioritisation - An assessment should be undertaken of the impact and likelihood of risks occurring, with impact and likelihood being scored using a matrix. This will require a numeric

value to be given to both the likelihood of the risk happening and the impact of the impact if it did, based upon the scoring identified in the Risk Management Schedule Risk Matrix.

6 Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 It is important that risk management becomes embedded into the every day culture and performance management process of the Council. The roles and responsibilities set out below, are designed to ensure that risk is managed effectively right across the Council and its operations, and responsibility for risk is in the right place. The process must be driven from the top but must also involve staff throughout the organisation.

6.2 Elected Members – risk management is seen as a key part of the Elected Member’s stewardship role and there is an expectation that Elected Members will lead and monitor the approach adopted, including:

- (a) Approval of the Risk Management Strategy;
- (b) Analysis of key risks in reports on major projects, ensuring that all future projects and services undertaken are adequately risk managed;
- (c) Consideration, and if appropriate, endorsement of the Annual Governance Statement; and
- (d) Assessment of risks whilst setting the budget, including any bids for resources to tackle specific issues.

6.3 Employees – will undertake their job within risk management guidelines ensuring that their skills and knowledge are used effectively. All employees will maintain an awareness of the impact and costs of risks and how to feed data into the formal process. They will work to control risks or threats within their jobs, monitor progress and report on job related risks to the Town Clerk.

6.4 Town Clerk – will act as the Lead Officer on Risk Management and be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Risk Management Strategy. The Town Clerk will:

- (a) provide advice as to the legality of policy and service delivery choices;
- (b) provide advice on the implications for service areas of the Council’s corporate aims and objectives;
- (c) update the Council on the implications of new or revised legislation;
- (d) assist in handling any litigation claims;
- (e) provide advice on any human resource issues relating to strategic policy options or the risks associated with operational decisions and assist in handling cases of work-related illness or injury;
- (e) advise on any health and safety implications of the chosen or proposed arrangements for service delivery;

6.5 Responsible Finance Officer – as the Council’s Section 151 Officer the Town Clerk will:

- (a) assess and implement the Council’s insurance requirements;
- (b) assess the financial implications of strategic policy options;

- (c) provide assistance and advice on budgetary planning and control;
- (d) ensure that the Council's financial procedures allows effective budgetary control;
- (e) maintain the Council's Risk Management Schedule;

6.6 Role of Internal Audit – Internal Audit provides an important scrutiny role by carrying out audits to provide independent assurance to the Council that the necessary risk management systems are in place and all significant business risks are being managed effectively. Internal Audit assists the Council in identifying both its financial and operational risks and seeks to assist the Council in developing and implementing proper arrangements to manage them, including adequate and effective systems of internal control to reduce or eliminate the likelihood of errors or fraud. Internal Audit reports, and any recommendations contained within, will help to shape the Annual Governance Statement.

6.7 Resources Committee – Review and future development of the Risk Management Policy and Strategy will be overseen by the Resources Committee and shall make recommendations for its adoption to Full Council.

6.8 Training – Risk Management training will be provided to Elected Members and staff through a variety of mediums. The aim will be to ensure that both Elected Members and staff have the skills necessary to identify, evaluate and control the risks associated with the services they provide.

6.9 In addition to the roles and responsibilities set out above, the Council is keen to promote an environment within which individuals/groups are encouraged to report adverse incidents promptly and openly.

7 Future Monitoring

7.1 Review of Risk Management Strategy - This Strategy will be reviewed annually.

8 Conclusion

The adoption of a sound risk management approach should achieve many benefits for the Council. It will assist in demonstrating that the Council is committed to continuous service improvement and effective corporate governance.

Christchurch Town Council Risk Management Schedule

RISK MANAGEMENT

Notes

Risk assessment is a systematic general examination of working conditions, workplace activities and environmental factors that will enable the employer to identify any and all potential risks inherent in the place or practices. Based on a recorded assessment the employer should then take all practical and necessary steps to reduce or eliminate the risks, insofar as is practically possible. This document has been produced to enable the Town Council to assess the risks that it faces and satisfy itself that it has taken adequate steps to minimize them. In conducting this exercise the following plan was followed.

- Identify the areas to be reviewed.
- Identify what the risk may be and level of risk
- Evaluate the management and control of the risk and record all findings.
- Review, assess and revise if required.

This report will be reviewed and is updated on an annual basis.

July 2019.

Key

L low risk

M Medium Risk

H High Risk.

ASSESSMENT OF RISK

Each risk identified will be objectively assessed in terms of its “likelihood” and “impact” upon the Town Council.

Likelihood

		Probability	Frequency
4	Almost Certain	>90%	Frequent Occurrence
3	Likely	>60%	Regular Occurrence
2	Possible	>10%	Occasional Occurrence
1	Unlikely	<10%	Has never occurred

Impact

		Risk Threat
4	Major	Financial Impact >£400,000 Fatality/life-changing injuries to staff or public/regulatory intervention – prosecution/service disruption/extensive legal proceedings against the Council.
3	Serious	Financial Impact >£200,000 Adverse media attention/public complaints/adverse findings by auditors -ICO-Ombudsman/significant service disruption/project delivery delayed or suspended/legal action.
2	Significant	Financial Impact >£50,000 Adverse service-user complaints/Some service disruption/Minor injuries or “near-misses” to staff and public
1	Minor	Financial Impact less than £5,000/isolated complaints/Minor service disruption.

Risk Matrix

Likelihood	4	4	8	12	16
	3	3	6	9	12
	2	2	4	6	8
	1	1	2	3	4
		1	2	3	4
		Impact			

Area	Risk(s) Identified	Impact	Likelihood	Level	Controls of risk/management <i>(bold indicates areas where work is needed)</i>	Review/assess/revise
Assets	Protection of workplace assets	1	1	L	Office and office furniture insured.	Ensure all equipment is fit for purpose, review insurance annually.
	Security of buildings, equipment etc*	2	2	M	Double Lock on door Old Town Hall Door. Burglar alarm and fire alarms installed and maintained and checked annually.	Continuing contract arrangements with alarm providers. Review contract annually and diarise checks as appropriate.
	Maintenance of buildings etc	3	2	M	Roof inspections required as appropriate. Listed building so checks required annually. Recent work to cupola currently in tender and budgeted for. Play parks currently managed by a Service-Level Agreement with BCP Unitary Council and includes maintenance and inspections.	Diarise roof inspections on an annual basis. Review SLA with BCP Council and seek extension where necessary, or look to procure maintenance/inspections of open-spaces.

	Mayoralty and items of value (Mayor's Chain, Regalia) risk of theft.	3	1	L	Items are currently insured (mayor's chain and civic regalia). Mayor to be accompanied at civic functions to reduce risk of robbery when in civic regalia.	Update and review insurance annually.
	Ongoing Management of Trees identified as requiring immediate/moderate attention failing.	4	2	H	Retained Tree consultants now instructed and management and actions of those problem trees identified and being actively managed.	Submission where appropriate to LPA for Conservation Area Consent Or "DDD" notices. Being managed by consultants. Existing procedures adequate.
Finance	Banking	1	1	L	Funds all held at Unity Trust bank.	Ensure the bank accounts are relevant and fit for purpose.
	Risk of consequential loss of income	1	2	L	Unlikely, annual events held at Christchurch Quay and the Bandstand and neighbouring Town Council land. Ensure fees policy is up-to-date and fit for purpose.	Adequately controlled
	Loss of cash through theft or dishonesty	1	1	L	No cash handled regularly all infrequent cash held safely in office and paid in asap preferably on the same day of receipt. Receipt given to payee.	Existing procedures adequate
	Financial controls and records	1	1	L	Monthly reconciliation prepared by clerk/administration Officer and reported publicly to Members. Two signatories on cheques and counter-signed by clerk. Financial regulations approved. Internal and external audit.	monitor
	Comply with HMRC Regulations	2	2	M	Use help line when necessary. VAT payments and claims calculated by Clerk. VAT reclaimed at least annually. Internal and external auditor to provide double check.	Existing procedures adequate
		4	1		Budget approved by full council	Existing procedures adequate

	Sound budgeting to underlie annual precept			M	from figures prepared by clerk.	
	Complying with borrowing restrictions	1	1	L	No new borrowing likely at present. If a loan is considered current financial regulations to be followed.	Existing procedures adequate
Insurance	Public Liability (statutory)	4	1	L	Continue existing cover (£15m)	Review annually with broker
	Employers Liability (statutory)	4	1	L	Continue existing cover (£10m)	Review annually with broker
	Money	4	1	L	Continue existing cover (£250K)	Review annually with broker
	Fidelity Guarantee	4	1	L	Continue existing cover (£1m)	Review annually with broker
	Property*	4	1	L	Continue with existing cover.	Review annually with broker
	Personal Accident.	3	2	M	£500k (aged 16-80) and £2m any one accident.	Review annually with broker
Payroll	Loss of data on PC due to system fault.	1	1	L	Payroll with external contractor and systems registered with HMRC and employer/employee numbers.	Existing procedures adequate
	Loss of services of employee.	2	1	L	Job roles and descriptions to be kept up-to-date and re-drafted accordingly, ready for immediate advertisement.	Review annually
Administration	Payment arrangements	1	1	L	Continue with requirement to report all payments to Council/committee for approval. Continue with requirement for signatories to initial cheque stubs. Continue with x2 Cllr signatories on cheques with clerk counter-signatory. Bank mandate and signatories to be reviewed annually. Financial Regulations in place.	Existing procedures adequate

	Reconciliation	1	1	L	Continue with bank reconciliation to be carried out on the receipt of each statement.	Existing procedures adequate
	Agency advice	1	1	L	Continue with memberships of NALC and DAPTC	Existing procedures adequate
Minutes/agenda/notes/statutory documents	Accuracy legality of business conducted	1	1	L	Minutes, agenda and public notices are produced by the clerk to comply with legal requirements. Minutes are approved and signed at the following council/committee meeting. Minutes and agenda are displayed according to legal requirements. Business is managed by the Mayor/Chair.	Existing procedures adequate
Election Costs	An election is requested	2	2	M	Elections cannot be controlled. In election year or if a casual vacancy occurs, the electorate can call for an election, cost to be borne by the Town council. An amount is set aside each year via contingency in the budget to allow for an election.	Existing procedures adequate
Councillor Allowances	Councillors overpaid.	1	1	L	No allowances are paid to The Christchurch Town Council councillors.	Existing procedures adequate
	Income tax payment on such allowances	1	1	L	If it is determined in future that an allowance should be paid the relevant procedures will be needed and external payroll contractors informed.	Existing procedures adequate
Allotments	Increase in net expenditure.	2	2	L	Annual budget approved and precept raised for anticipated expenditure. No allotment capital projects for the first year of existence. All expenditure can be reasonably anticipated and dealt with by budget monitoring and setting process.	Existing procedures adequate

	Disbanding of allotment association	1	3	M	Take over running of the site.	Existing procedures adequate
	liability	2	3	M	Insured risk and insurance adequate.	Existing procedures adequate
Precept	Annual precept not the result of proper detailed consideration.	3	1	L	Continue to present budget in Autumn for approval by January the following year	Existing procedures adequate
	Inadequate monitoring of performance.			L	Continue to regularly consider budget monitoring report (quarterly)	Existing procedures adequate
Precept	Illegal expenditure.	3	1	L	Continue to ensure that all expenditure is within legal powers.	Existing procedures adequate
Accounting	Non-standard and/or non-compliant records kept.	1	1	L	Continue to require adequate, complete and statutory financial records and accounts. All invoices and payments logged and reported to Council/Committees.	Existing procedures adequate
	Non-compliance with statutory deadlines for the completion/approval/submission of accounts and other financial returns.	1	1	L	Continue to ensure that all accounts and returns are completed and submitted by the deadlines.	Existing procedures adequate
	Non-compliance with internal audit requirements.	1	1	L	Appoint internal auditor	Internal auditor to be appointed and reviewed.
Contracts	Ensure continued value for money coupled with continuity of work.	2	2	M	Ensure financial regulations are followed. Review Service-Level Agreement with BCP Unitary Council.	Existing procedures adequate
	Contractors	2	1	L	Check relevant paperwork to ensure they are qualified to carry out work contracted to do.	Existing procedures adequate
Liability						
Employer Liability	Comply with Employment Law	2	1	L	Town Council would need to seek advice from experts in employment if needed. Entry in budget for legal expenses to be maintained going	Existing procedures adequate

					forwards.	
	Comply with Inland Revenue requirements	2	1	L	Regular advice from HMRC. Internal and external auditor carries out annual checks. Payroll out-sourced.	Existing procedures adequate
	Safety of Staff and visitors	2	2	M	Office in Old Town Hall. Clerk and Admin' Officer when working alone shut the front door to public. Bell available to deal with public. Office on High Street and in public view and location.	Existing procedures adequate
	Computer back up	1	1	L	External hard drives and Microsoft office backed-up. Council's IT supplier contactable for retrieval.	Existing procedures adequate
Legal Liability	Ensuring activities are within legal powers	2	2	M	Clerk to clarify legal position on any new proposal. Legal advice to be sought where necessary. Clerk non-practising barrister so "day job" queries are no concern. More complicated projects, grievances may need external legal advice. Budget provides for legal support when necessary.	Existing procedures adequate
	Proper and timely reporting via the Minutes	1	1	L	Council meets in 6 week cycles and committees more regularly. Both always receive and approve minutes of meetings held in interim. Minutes made available to press and public at the Town Council office and via the forthcoming web site.	Existing procedures adequate

	Proper document control	1	1	L	Share-point filing registry completed and hard-copy office files kept for back-up/business continuation. Publication Scheme to be completed once website is functional and live.	Existing procedures adequate
	Freedom of Information	1	1	L	Timely response in line with statutory time-frames. A publication scheme is to be completed once website live.	Existing procedures adequate
	Data Protection	1	1	L	The Town Council is registered with the Information Commissioners Office.	Existing procedures adequate
Grants and support payable	Power to pay Authorisation to Pay	1	1	L	The Town Council shall produce a grants policy and all requests for grants are considered by the Town Council with consideration for the policy. Once approved, cheques are raised and signed by two councillors with clerk as counter-signatory.	Existing procedures adequate
Grants-receivable	Receipt of monies	1	1	L	The Town Council is able to apply for and receive grants it wishes to seek. Neighbourhood plan contemplated and government funding/grant to be considered here.	Existing procedures adequate
Charges Rents Payable	Payment of rent, value for money	1	1	L	No rents currently payable.	Existing procedures adequate
General						
	Complaints procedure	1	1	L	The Town Council shall produce a complaints procedure policy.	Existing procedures adequate
Christmas Lights	Storage	1	1	L	No lights stored by the Town Council	Existing procedures adequate
	Installation of trees and lights	1	1	L	Qualified contractors to be employed.	Existing procedures adequate

	fittings	1	1	L	Hook testing should be carried out as per current requirements.	Existing procedures adequate
	Lights	1	1	L	Checked before installation and qualified electricians used.	Existing procedures adequate
Councillors propriety	Registers of Interests	4	2	H	Register of interest completed and to be updated at least twice a year.	Existing procedures adequate

* Buildings Insured as follows:

Druitt Hall, High Street, Christchurch Dorset.
Sum insured: £351, 880.00

Old Town Hall, 30 High Street, Christchurch.
Sum insured: £1,035, 414.00

Cricket Pitch and Pavillion, Ledbury Road, Christchurch
Sum insured: £149,929.00