



BLEADON PARISH COUNCIL

RISK ASSESSMENT POLICY

Adopted Date – 14/09/20

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“The greatest risk facing a local authority is not being able to deliver the activity or services expected of the Council.”

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.

Risk Policy Statement

Bleadon Parish Council hereafter referred to as BPC recognises that it has a responsibility to manage risks effectively in order to protect its Councillors assets liabilities and the community against potential losses to minimise uncertainty in achieving its goals and objectives and to maximise its opportunities. BPC is aware that some risks can never be eliminated fully and we have tried to ensure we have a strategy that provides a structured systematic and focussed approach to managing risk.

Approach to Risk Management

BPC’s approach to risk management is that we should try to identify and manage risks in the most cost effective manner within overall resources available. Each risk identified by BPC is recorded in BPC’s risk assessment document. The impact is assessed; control measures we feel to be appropriate are put in place together with the frequency with which the risk should be reviewed.

Responsibility for Risk Management

BPC recognises that it is the responsibility of all councillors and the clerk as an employee to have regard for risk in carrying out their duties. If uncontrolled risk can result in a drain on resources that could better be directed to front line service provision and to the meeting of HPC’s objectives and community needs. This policy has the full support of BPC which recognises that any reduction in the risk of injury, illness, loss or damage benefits the whole community. From recent experience, we already know that Council responsibility cannot be taken lightly and areas like succession planning are critical. The co-operation and commitment of all members of HPC and clerk as an employee is required to ensure that council resources are not wasted as a result of uncontrolled risk. BPC is responsible for ensuring that this procedure is adhered to.

This Policy and Risk Assessment will be reviewed annually in line with the Standing Order Calendar

1. FINANCE				
Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H/M/L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Precept	Adequacy of precept Requirements not submitted to North Somerset Council Amount not received by North Somerset Council	L L L	The Council commences the review of the precept requirement annually in November by consideration of a first draft based on known income and expenditure as at the 30 th September. The presented budget will include actual position and projected position to year end and estimated figures for the next financial year. With this information the Council and that for the nine months as at the 31 st December then agrees the amounts set for the specific budget headings for the following year. The final figures to be formally resolved at the January Council Meeting. The total of which is resolved to be the precept amount to be requested from North Somerset Council. This figure is submitted by the Clerk, as the Responsible Financial Officer, in writing to North Somerset Council. The Clerk informs the Council when the precept has been received.	Existing procedure adequate.
Financial Records	Inadequate records Financial irregularities	L L	The Council has Financial Regulations that set out the requirements. The Clerk receives training to ensure knowledge is up to date. The accounts system is automated to a high degree to reduce arithmetical mistakes. The Internal Auditor will visit twice a year. Regular reviews of income and expenditure will be provided to the members every quarter	Existing procedure adequate. Review the Financial Regulations when necessary.
Bank and Banking	Inadequate checks Bank mistakes Loss Charges Internet hacking FSCS limits exceeded	L L L L M H	The Council has Financial Regulations that set out the requirements for banking, cheques and reconciliation of accounts. The Clerk reconciles the bank accounts once a month when the statements are received. Errors are communicated to the bank immediately. The Clerk reviews the Council's banking arrangements regularly. Internet Banking procedure established requiring two signatories for every transaction. Antivirus software on Clerk's and every signatory's device. FSCS covers deposits to £85k. When bank accounts exceed this amount the Clerk authorises a transfer of funds to an additional account.	Existing procedure adequate Financial Regulations reviewed annually. Bank signatories are reviewed at least annually and when personnel change. Bank statements checked monthly. Consideration to be given to diversifying bank accounts to reflect FSCS limits of cover
Reporting and Auditing	Information communication Compliance	L L	A budget monitoring statement is produced each month and provided for members for information purposes. A full list of payments and receipts and cheques to be signed is provided at the meeting and the financial records including a breakdown of receipts and payments balanced against the bank statement are presented and checked by a Councillor at each meeting.	Existing communication procedures adequate. Council appoint a Councillor to check financial records for Fidelity compliance
Invoices	Goods not supplied but billed Incorrect invoicing Errors in authorisation Unpaid invoices	L L L L	The Council has Financial Regulations that set out the requirements. Invoices are only submitted for approval once the Clerk has inspected the goods/services received. Cheques when used are presented to the signatories with the relevant invoice attached once checked as correct by Clerk. Scanned invoices are sent to signatories for online payments. A schedule of payments is produced for approval at each Council meeting and minuted accordingly.	Existing procedure adequate. Review the Financial Regulations when necessary.
Best Value Accountability	Work awarded incorrectly Overspend on services	L L	When it is to enter into a contract of less than £30,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk or RFO shall obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply); where the value is below £5,000 and above £250 the Clerk/RFO shall strive to obtain 3 estimates. For major contract services, formal competitive tenders would be sought. If a problem is encountered with a contract the Clerk would investigate the situation, check the quotation/tender, research the problem and report to Council.	Existing procedure adequate. Review Financial Regulations regularly.

Salaries and associated costs	Salary paid incorrectly Wrong deductions of NI or Tax Unpaid Tax & NI contributions to the HMRC. Incorrect overtime paid.	L L L L	The Parish Council authorises the appointment of all employees through a recruitment process. The Clerk keeps a record of hours worked and has a contract of employment and job description. Salary is based according to the national pay scales advised by SLCC and NALC. Salaries are paid by internet banking. The payroll service maybe outsourced. The Clerk prepares payments for authorisation by Signatories. Overtime is only paid for work approved by the Chair of the Personnel Committee.	
Councillor allowances / expenses	Councillors over-paid	L	The Chairman has a small budgeted annual allowance for a specific task. No allowances are allocated to other Parish Councillors. Any expenses are claimed by presenting the relevant receipt to the Council for approval. Expenses are monitored to ensure the budget is not exceeded and expenditure reported monthly to the Council.	Existing procedure adequate.
Election costs	Unexpected election cost	L	Sufficient monies in reserve are budgeted to be available should the need arise.	Reviewed in the budget
VAT	Failure to reclaim	L	The Council has financial regulations which set out the requirements and the clerk adopts a system to diarise tasks. The electronic accounts system works out VAT for the quarterly reclaim.	Existing procedures adequate.
Annual return	Not submitted within time limits Not published in compliance with regulation	M	Year-end accounts are submitted to the Internal Auditor then approved by the Council. The Annual Return is completed in accordance with the regulations and sent to the External Auditor within the time limit. Dates for deadline are stated by auditor. Accounts are published as stated on auditor notices.	.Existing procedure adequate.
Grants payable	No power to pay or authorisation of Council to pay	L	The Council has a Grant Funding Policy that sets out the requirements. All such expenditure goes through the required Council process of approval and is minuted. Any grants awarded have the terms and conditions satisfied before money is released.	Existing procedure adequate.
Grants receivable	Incorrect amount received or paid in	L	Grants received are paid via online banking and recorded in the electronic accounts system.	Existing procedures adequate.
Charges/rentals payable	Non-payments of leases/rentals	L	The Clerk monitors payments and reports to the Council meetings.	Existing procedure adequate.
Charges/rentals receivable	Youth Centre rent not received Allotment rents not received. Adverting revenue not received	L	Clerk undertakes credit control. Allotment holders invoiced in August for the year commencing 29 September. Youth Centre defaults on the lease if not paid.	Existing procedure adequate. Review agreement and fees annually.

2. MANAGEMENT

Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H/M/L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Business continuity	Risk of Council not being able to continue its business due to unexpected circumstances	M	The Councils everyday working files are kept online by way of a remote cloud system. Necessary paper records are retained in accordance with the Council's Retention Policy as well as on the Council's Website. The Clerk makes regular back-ups of files to an external hard drive. In the event of the Clerk being indisposed a locum will be arranged Alternative meeting rooms are available in the village A communication plan has been developed	Existing procedures to be reviewed.
Employees	Loss of key personnel Fraud by staff Unlawful action taken by staff Breach of Health and Safety	M L L M	Proactive management to ensure that employees are well motivated and respected. Contingency arrangements and funding in place to provide adequate cover in the event of employee absence Policies are in place to address staff grievances. The Personnel Committee undertakes six-monthly appraisals. All appropriate employees of the council shall be included in a suitable fidelity guarantee insurance in accordance with the Financial Regulations All employees are made aware of their responsibilities for health and safety through their contract, H&S policy and training as required. The Clerk will be provided with relevant training, reference books, access to assistance and legal advice required to undertake the role. Regular contact with Chairman and members of the Personnel Committee	Existing procedure adequate. Chair of the Personnel Committee to maintain regular contact. Monitor working condition safety requirements and insurance regularly. Statutorily satisfactory Insurance policy. Training provided.
Legal powers	Illegal or unlawful activity or payments	L	All activity and payments within the powers of the Parish Council to be resolved and minuted at Full Parish Council Meetings.	All activities and payments minuted.
Council records - paper	Loss through theft, fire or damage	L L L	The Councils everyday working files are kept online by way of a remote cloud system. Necessary paper records are retained in accordance with the Council's Retention Policy as well as on the Council's Website in a locked cabinet which is currently stored in the Coronation/Jubilee Halls, The Clerk's home office will be a private dedicated room and appropriate insurance arranged.	Existing procedure adequate.
Council records - electronic	Loss through theft, fire or damage Corruption or loss of laptop	L M	The Parish Council's electronic records are stored on a Council computer at the Clerk's home. Back-ups of the files are taken at regular intervals to an external hard drive. Clerk's laptop is routinely backed up to a separate (additional) external hard drive. New laptop/updated software to be secured at least five-yearly.	Existing procedure adequate. Although the Clerk works on a remote system it is centrally backed up regularly throughout the day at an off site Update of IT (hardware and software) for Clerk and councillors to be undertaken in 2024
Insurance	Inadequate cover Expensive policy Lack of compliance Fidelity Guarantee compromised	L L L L	An annual review is undertaken (before the time of the policy renewal) of all insurance arrangements in place. Ensure that the asset register is up to date Ensure compliance measures are in place. Ensure Fidelity checks are in place.	Existing procedure adequate. Asset Registered currently under review. Insurance Policy reviewed Annually

Data protection GDPR	Policy Provision Non-compliance with GDPR	L L M	Data Protection requirements stated in the Council's Standing Orders. Ensure that Employees and Councillors receive training Retain NSC Information Governance service	Existing procedure adequate. Provide training where necessary
Freedom of Information Act	Failure to recognise requests. Failure to comply adequately.	L L	NSC Information Governance Service assists with Fol requests.	Monitor and report any impacts of requests made under the Freedom of Information Act
Meeting location	Inadequate Breach of Health & Safety	L L	The Parish Council Meetings are held at the Coronation Hall/Church Rooms/Youth Hall. The premises and the facilities are considered to be adequate for the Clerk, Councillors and Public who attend from Health & Safety and comfort aspects. The venues are insured and risk assessed.	Existing location adequate.

3. ASSETS				
Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H/M/L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Maintenance	Poor performance of assets or amenities	M	An asset register is kept up to date and insurance is held at the appropriate level for all items. All assets owned by the Parish Council are regularly reviewed and maintained. All repairs and relevant expenditure for any repair is actioned/authorised in accordance with the correct procedures of the Parish Council. The Parish Council has arrangements in place to check and maintain assets. Weekly visual play area inspections carried out by the Ranger and documented. Quarterly Operational Inspections of Play Area equipment made by GB Sport. Annual inspection carried out by registered play inspection company RoSPA.	Existing procedure adequate. Review insurance requirements annually.
Noticeboards	Risk/damage/injury to third parties Road side safety Need for replacement	L L L	Parish Council has five notice boards sited around the Parish. All locations have approval by relevant parties and insurance cover is in place. Noticeboards are inspected regularly. A budget has been established to repair/replace noticeboards.	

4. LIABILITY				
Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H/M/L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Legal Powers	Illegal activity or payments Working Parties taking decisions	L L	All activity and payments made within the powers of the Parish Council (not ultra vires) and to be resolved and clearly minuted. Ensure Working Parties understand that only the Parish Council can make decisions	Existing procedures adequate.
Minutes/Agendas/ Notices/Statutory documents	Inaccurate minutes Unlawful actions Public notice not given sufficient notice Missing documents Business not conducted correctly	L L L L L	Minutes and agenda are produced in the prescribed manner by the Clerk according to the legal requirements. Minutes are approved and signed at the next Council meeting. Minutes and agenda are displayed according to the legal requirements, on noticeboards and Parish Council website. Business conducted at Council meetings is managed by the Chair and advised by the Clerk	Agendas & Minutes to be regularly posted on to the Council's Website Members to adhere to Code of Conduct.
Public Liability	Risk to third party, property or individuals	L L	Insurance is in place. Risk assessments regularly carried out to comply with requirements if necessary.	Existing procedures adequate.
Employer Liability	Non-compliance with employment law	L	Insurance is in place. Undertake adequate training and seek advice from the Association of Local Councils.	Existing procedures adequate.

Legal Liability	Lack of clarity of legality of activities Inaccurate reporting via Minutes Lack of document control	L L L	Clerk to clarify legal position on proposals and to seek advice if necessary. Parish Council always receives and approves Minutes at monthly meetings. Retention of document policy in place.	Existing procedures adequate.
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4. COUNCILLORS' PROPRIETY				
Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H/M/L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Members interests	Conflict of interest not declared Register of Members interests	M M	Councillors have a duty to declare any interests at the start of the meeting, reminder on the agenda .However it is not the responsibility of members or the Clerk to cajole the member with a potential interest to actually declare one. It is the sole responsibility of the councillor concerned. Register of Members Interest forms to be reviewed regularly by Councillors.	Check understanding of requirements, as new councillors in place. Members to take responsibility themselves to update the Register.