

Burnham-On-Sea and Highbridge Town Council Risk Management Policy

To be reviewed quarterly

Adopted on 13th March 2023. Reviewed April 2024

Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge 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.

The Town Council, based on a recorded assessment, will 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 to implement adequate steps to minimise them.

SUBJECT	RISK(S) IDENTIFIED	LEVEL H/M/L	MANAGEMENT/CONTROL OF RISK	REVIEW/ASSESS/REVISE
FINANCE				
Budget & Precept	Adequacy of precept in order for the Council to carry out its statutory duties	L	The Council receives monthly budget reports. Each Committee produces a DRAFT budget, which is considered by the Finance & Resources Committee before a recommendation final Draft budget is presented to Full Council for review and consideration. The report includes actual and projected position to the end of the year and indicative figures or costings obtained by the RFO. The Precept is derived directly from this information and is considered and approved by Full Council and the request submitted to the Somerset Council within the specified deadline.	Existing procedures adequate.

Financial controls and records	Inadequate records	L	<p>The Council has Financial Regulations which sets out the requirements and is reviewed on an annual basis.</p> <p>Rialtas financial software is used to prepare accounts and Council subscribes to the support services.</p> <p>An order spreadsheet is completed and authorised by a manager.</p> <p>Invoices are checked before being passed to the RFO for payment. Goods received and internal authorisation procedures reviewed in 2023 and increased control introduced from January 2024. Debtors & Creditors reviewed in 2023 and increased control introduced from January 2024.</p> <p>All payments are reviewed at a Finance & Resources Committee or Full Council and minuted for transparency.</p> <p>Ticketsolve is used for issuing tickets and taking payments at the Princess Theatre.</p>	Existing procedures adequate. Pre-payment card services have been reviewed, application for Government Procurement card reviewed and approved by F&R 05/02/24. Application in process.
Banking	Inadequate checks	L	<p>Online bank payments are authorised by two Councillors. Councillors receive sight of invoices/documentation to check before authorising.</p> <p>Accounts are internally checked by at least two Councillors on a quarterly basis. Annual internal and external audits.</p> <p>The Council has Financial Regulations which set out banking requirements.</p> <p>Any cash is held in a locked safe.</p> <p>Cash is banked regularly. However, the Post office no longer accepts denominations smaller of a £1 that is not</p>	Existing procedures adequate

			<p>a full money bag. Anything less than a full bag is kept in a locked safe and banked as soon as practical.</p> <p>Cheque receipts are banked at least fortnightly.</p> <p>Accounts are reconciled on a monthly basis and recorded. Earmarked reserves are accounted for separately.</p>	
Investment of Council Funds	Investment Policy	H	<p>Council funds currently held between 1 x bank and 1 x building society. Funds exceed recommended threshold.</p>	<p>Risk Management Policy reviewed and approved F&R 23/01/24. Statement of Internal Control reviewed and approved F&R 05/02/24. Annual Investment Strategy reviewed and approved F&R 05/02/24. Investment options report produced for F&R 18/03/24. Investment decisions for 24/25 decided 18/03/24.</p>
Receipt and payment of grants	<p>Monies ringfenced and accurately managed</p> <p>Power to pay and authorisation of Council to pay</p>	<p>L</p> <p>L</p>	<p>The Town Council does not presently receive any regular grants. Any transactions from a grant received are itemised separately.</p> <p>All grant requests are made following the Grants Awards Policy & Procedure and a specific application form. Grant monitoring forms completed and reviewed.</p> <p>All such expenditure goes to the Finance & Resources Committee process of approval, it is minuted and listed accordingly under the S137 expenditure heading.</p>	<p>Existing procedures adequate</p>

Salaries and associated costs	Salary paid incorrectly Unpaid Tax and Pension payments	L L	Financial controls in place to pay staff salaries agreed in line with NALC pay scales. Iris Payroll Services, an external company, is used for payroll services and the Council subscribes to support services. BACS payments for PAYE & Pensions made monthly. Internal check carried out by 2 Councillors on a quarterly basis. Annual internal and external audits.	Existing procedures adequate.
VAT	Reclaiming	L	VAT claims are completed electronically on HMRC website and acknowledgement printed and kept in office. Internally reviewed by at least 2 Councillors on quarterly basis. Rialtas financial software produces VAT reports. Financial Regulations set out the requirements. Annual internal and external audits.	Existing procedures adequate.

Employees	Fraud by staff	L	Insurance in place. Cash is kept in a locked safe. All payments require two Councillor signatures. All orders are authorised a manager. Division of monetary responsibilities.	Existing procedures adequate.
Best value accountability	Work awarded incorrectly	L	Town Council practice is to seek, if possible, three quotations for any substantial work undertaken.	Existing procedures adequate.
	Overspend on services	L	For major work, competitive tenders would be sought in line with the rules for contracts in Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. If problems encountered with contract, the Clerk would investigate the situation and report to the Council.	
Loans	High interest rates and non recognised lenders	L	Full Council to approve any loans. Loans to be taken out via PWLB and two signatures required.	Existing procedure adequate.
Annual Return	Not submitted within time limits	L	Rialtas are contracted to complete the end of year close down and complete the AGAR. Internal Auditors complete reviews throughout the year and sign off AGAR Agenda item on Full Council agenda for completing and signing by the Council and then checked and sent to External Auditor within time frame.	Existing procedure adequate.

			Council could ask for an extension to the deadline.	
Election	Mid-term election costs	M	Some monies are earmarked if a mid-term election is called. Measures cannot be adopted to minimise risk of a contested election.	Ensure monies are earmarked for elections costs when setting budget.
ADMINISTRATION & LIABILITY				
Legal Powers	Illegal activity or payments	L	The Town Council has adopted the General Power of Competence. Committees have power of expenditure, within their remit. Advice to be sought when required.	Existing procedure adequate.
Minutes/ Agendas/ Statutory documents	Accuracy and legality Non compliances with statutory requirements	L L	Minutes and agendas are produced in the prescribed method and adhere to legal requirements. Minutes are approved and signed at the next meetings. Agendas displayed according to legal requirements. Business conducted at meetings should be managed by the Chair.	Existing procedures adequate. Members adhere to Code of Conduct and Member/Officers Relations Policy and undertake adequate training.
Public Liability	Risk to third party, property or individuals	M	Insurance in place. Open spaces checked regularly. Trees investigated when damage reported. Tree survey carried out in 2021 and reviewed in 2023. A maintenance programme is in place.	Existing procedures adequate.

			Risk assessments carried out on individual events e.g. Fireworks display. All third party users of Council facilities have to complete a booking form. Health and safety services provided by Worknest.	
Legal liability	Legal liability as consequence of asset ownership	H	Checks undertaken on buildings on a weekly basis. Insurance in place and new equipment added ad hoc. Adequate Cemetery Rules in place. Yearly memorial inspections carried out. Health and safety services provided by Worknest.	Existing procedures adequate.
Employer Liability	Non-compliance with Employment Law	L	Membership of various national and regional bodies including South West Councils. Town Clerk and Deputy Clerk are members of SLCC and the Council is a member of SALC. Policies in place. Employer's Liability insurance in place. Health and safety services provided by Worknest.	Existing procedures adequate.
Employer Liability	Safety of staff and visitors	M/H	Employees are provided adequate direction and safety equipment needed to undertake their roles. Staff training undertaken as required and appraisals undertaken annually. Health and safety services provided by Worknest. Risk assessments carried out. Staff issued with mobile phones as	Existing procedures adequate.

			required.	
Freedom of Information	Policy provision	L	The Council has a Model Publication Scheme and Freedom of Information Policy in place. The Town Council can request a fee for substantial requests.	Monitor and report any impacts made under FOI.
Data Protection	Mis-use of information	L	Town Council is registered with the Information Commissioner and renewed annually. Policies in place.	Ensure annual renewal of registration.
Council records - paper	Loss through theft, fire, damage	L/M	Historical minutes have been deposited at Somerset Archives. Burial records are stored in a fire proof safe. All records from Mid 2016 are electronic. All other records are stored in the Council office. Filing system is currently being updated. Land and buildings registered with Land Registry.	Damage or theft is unlikely and so provision is adequate. Review of data to be held annually and deposited at archive when appropriate.
Council records - electronic	Loss through theft, fire, damage, corruption	L/M	The Town Council's electronic records are stored on a cloud basis system. IT plan is in place for support services. Off-site daily back-up. Anti-virus protection annually renewed and installed by IT support services.	Existing procedures adequate.

Members Interests	Registers of Interests	M	Councillors have a legal duty to complete a form for the Register of Members Interests and keep it up to date within 28 days of any changes and to withdraw from a meeting in the event of a pecuniary interest. Declaration of Interests is an agenda item for all meetings.	Existing procedures adequate. Members have a personal responsibility to declare interests and update their register entries.
ASSETS				
Asset register	Asset register incomplete	L	An asset register is updated as required.	Existing procedures adequate. Asset register reviewed and approved F&R 18/03/24.
Buildings	Loss or damage	M	Buildings currently maintained on an ad hoc basis.	Existing procedures adequate.
Buildings	Maintenance of buildings etc	M	Buildings currently maintained on an ad hoc basis.	Existing procedures adequate.
Other assets e.g. dog bins, bus shelters	Loss or damage	L	Contract in place with Somerset Council for dog bins to be regularly emptied and checked. Street furniture maintained in-house. Insurance in place.	Existing procedures adequate.

Vehicles	<p>Unable to use due to fire, theft, accident.</p> <p>Third party liability</p>	<p>L/M</p> <p>L/M</p>	<p>One vehicle owned by the Council. Comprehensive vehicle insurance in place.</p> <p>Driver training to be undertaken on all new vehicles. Vehicle inspected in morning before vehicle driven.</p> <p>Vehicle stored in secure car park.</p>	Existing procedures adequate.
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