Sedgefield Town Council

CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT SCHEDULE

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Version:	Adopted:	Officer Responsible:	Review Date:
11.0	10.11.2025	Jane Ayre, Town Clerk	October 2026

SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT SCHEDULE

Adopted at P&R Committee Meeting held on 7th December 2015. Reviewed November 2016 and re-adopted 5th December 2016. Reviewed November 2017 and re-adopted on 4th December 2017. Reviewed November 2018 and re-adopted on 10th December 2018. Reviewed November 2019 and re-adopted on 9th December 2019. Reviewed November 2020 and re-adopted on 8th March 2021. Reviewed January 2022 and re-adopted on 14th February 2022. Reviewed November 2022 and re-adopted 12th December 2022. Reviewed November 2023 and re-adopted 11th December 2023. Reviewed October 2024 and re-adopted 11th November 2024. Reviewed October 2025 and re-adopted 10th November 2025.

Definition of Risk Management: **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.**
This document has been produced to enable the Town Council to assess the risks that it faces and satisfy that it has taken adequate steps to minimise them. The Council is aware that although some risks can never be eliminated fully, it has in place a strategy that provides a structured, systematic and focussed approach to managing risks which: • Identifies the key risks facing the Council; • Identifies what the risk may be; • Identifies the level of risk; • Evaluates the management and control of the risk and records findings; • Reviews, assesses and revises procedures if required.

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MANAGEMENT:				
Subject:	**Risk(s) Identified:**	**Risk Level H/M/L**	**Management/Control of Risk**	**Review/Assess/Revise**
Business Continuity	Council not being able to continue its business due to an unexpected or tragic circumstance.	M M	All IT records are held in the Cloud via BlueComm's Data Centre. All records held on EDGE software are held in the Cloud via EDGE's Data Centre. All office based staff have ability and tools needed to work from home. Loss of key staff – elements of some roles are understood by other staff for those not understood then contractors/agencies would need to be used. In the event of the Clerk being indisposed the Chair to contact CDALC Executive Officer. If long-term absence this would have high negative implications for Town Council's operation in terms of legal and financial governance. Emergency procedure produced for Council Chair and Personnel Committee to follow which details immediate actions to take/consider.	Review when necessary. Ensure procedures below are undertaken. Personnel Committee to consider creation of a Deputy Town Clerk's position at some point in the future.
Meeting location	Adequacy. Health and safety.	L	Following the pandemic, when the Council returned to face to face Committee meetings the decision was made to hold all such meetings in the Parish Hall. This is a larger venue allowing social distancing and better ventilation. The Parish Hall as a venue for Council Committee meetings will continue. The premises and facilities are maintained by the Town Council. The exceptions to this are the Personnel Committee and Working Group meetings which have all continued to be via Microsoft Teams to reduce personal contact and infection risk whilst making more effective use of time.	Continuously assess the facilities at both the Town Council Offices and the Parish Hall.
Council Records	Loss through theft, fire, damage	L	Electronic back-ups of IT records held in the Cloud via BlueComm's and EDGE's Data Centres respectively. The Council employs the services of an external IT Support Contractor who oversee all IT management issues including virus protection etc.	Damage or theft is unlikely and so provision is adequate.

			With regards to EDGE software systems there is separate dedicated software support via an annual service agreement. All paper records are stored securely with Burial Books and Personnel Records kept in lockable filing cabinet/fireproof safe. Historic paper documentation of importance have been transferred to Durham Records Office (and other documentation is continuously assessed for such transfer). The Town Council Offices are fully alarmed. The Town Council Offices have undergone an extensive refurbishment programme which has included new double glazed doors and windows as well as creation of lobby area for the public with key coded access only permitted to Council staff into the operational parts of the building.	
FINANCE:				
Precept	Adequacy of precept	L	Sound budgeting to underline annual precept. The Town Council receives monthly budget updates and reconciliations as well as having a Finance Working Group scrutinising all financial matters. The precept is considered initially by the Finance Working Group who make a recommendation which is then scheduled on the January P&R Committee agenda for agreement. Alongside this work is a review of fees and charges, development of income and expenditure budget plus review of Medium Term Financial Plan.	Existing procedure adequate.
Insurance	Adequacy Cost Compliance Fidelity Guarantee	L	A review is undertaken of all insurance arrangements in place through the Finance Working Group with a subsequent recommendation to the P&R Committee prior to expiry of long-term insurance agreements. Any new insurance needs/issues are raised at the Finance Working Group and if necessary taken with recommendation to P&R Committee. Employers Liability, Public Liability and Fidelity Guarantee are statutory requirements.	Existing procedure adequate. Review provision and compliance annually (albeit tied into a five year insurance programme).
Banking	Inadequate checks Banking system	L L	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements for banking, cheques and reconciliation of accounts. The Council is covered to a degree by the Financial Services	Existing procedures adequate. Review Financial Regulations annually.

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	failure		Compensation Scheme (FSCS) and reserves split between bank and investment in the form of Public Sector Deposit Fund ran by triple A rated CCLA.	
Cash	Loss through theft or dishonesty	L	The Council has a relatively small petty cash float which is held in a safe. All money is recorded and reconciled on a monthly basis.	Existing procedures adequate.
Financial Controls and Records	Inadequate checks	L	Monthly reconciliation double checked by staff, reported to P&R Committee. Three signatories on cheques plus prior authorisation for payment approval required by P&R Committee (with record being made in the minutes). Internal and external audits. Bank mandates reviewed as appropriate. For payments made by Barclays.net there is a dual authorisation process with the Financial Assistant as inputter and the Town Clerk as authoriser.	Existing procedures adequate although some contractors/suppliers are starting to refuse payment by cheque.
Freedom of Information Act	Policy Provision	L	The Council has a Publication Scheme. The Clerk has responsibility for dealing with Freedom of Information requests and a log for such is in place.	Monitor and report any impacts made under Freedom of Information Act.
Personnel	Loss of qualified Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer Loss of Head Gardener & Cemetery Superintendent Fraud Actions undertaken. Salary paid incorrectly.	M M L L L	A contingency fund has been established within reserves to enable training for the CiLCA qualification in the event of a new non-qualified Clerk being appointed. Plus another member already has this qualification. Emergency procedure produced for Council Chair and Personnel Committee to follow which details immediate actions to take/consider. A Gardener position has been created as a way of some method of succession planning. Loss of key worker insurance cover has been added to the Council's insurance policy covering the Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer and Head Gardener & Cemetery Superintendent. The requirements of Fidelity Guarantee insurance must be adhered to. Clerk should be provided with relevant training, reference books, access to assistance and legal advice. Payroll has been outsourced to a specialist provider. Payroll is checked as part of the work of the internal auditor.	Purchase revised reference books. Membership of SLCC and CDALC. Monitor working conditions, hours of pay and rates of pay. Town Council have SLA in place with DCC for HR Support. Town Council has an annual appraisal system in place with full reporting to Personnel Committee. Training opportunities are offered to all staff with encouragement to attend (and budget allocation made).

Election Costs	Risk of election cost	M	Risk is higher in an election year. There are no measures which can be adopted to minimise risk of having a contested election. A contingency fund has been established within reserves to meet the cost.	Existing procedure adequate.
VAT	Re-claiming	L	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirement of reclaiming VAT on a 6 monthly basis, however, during 2025/26 and the capital expenditure project to expand Butterwick Road Cemetery the frequency of VAT reclaiming has been increased to enhance cashflow.	Existing procedures adequate and from 2026/27 the Town Council will revert back to reclaiming VAT on a 6 monthly basis.
Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)	Not submitted within time limits	L	AGAR is completed and signed by the Council, submitted to the Internal Auditor for completion and signing, then checked and sent on to the External Auditor within time limit.	Existing procedures adequate. Work is underway to ensure compliance with Assertion 10 introduced for 2025/26.
Asset Management	Loss or damage. Risk/damage to third party(ies)/property	L	The Council holds an Asset Register which is reviewed periodically and forms part of the Council's Annual Return. All repairs and relevant expenditure for assets are actioned in accordance with correct procedures.	Existing procedures are adequate. In 2024/25 there is a commitment, if possible, to develop an Asset Management Plan which supports the Town Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.
LIABILITY:				
Legal Powers	Illegal activity or payments	L	All activity and payments made within the powers of the Town Council and are resolved and clearly minuted. Where required appropriate terms of reference are also established.	Existing procedures adequate.
Minutes/agendas/ statutory documents	Accuracy and legality. Non-compliance 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 next meeting. Minutes and agendas are displayed according to legal requirements as well as in 'draft' and 'approved' format on the Town Council's website. Business conducted at Council meetings is managed by the Chair.	Existing procedures adequate. Undertake adequate training. Members to adhered to Code of Conduct and Standing Orders plus Delegation Scheme.
Public Liability	Risk to third party, property or individuals.	M	Insurance in place. Risk assessment of any individual event undertaken.	Existing procedures adequate.

Employer Liability	Non-compliance with employment law.	L	Undertaken adequate training.	Existing procedures ade7quate. Town Council have SLA in place with DCC for HR Support.
Legal Liability	Legality of activities. Proper and timely reporting via minutes. Proper document control.	M L L	Clerk to clarify legal position on proposals and to seek advice if necessary. Council always receives and approves minutes at monthly meetings. All documents are retained.	Existing procedures adequate. Existing procedures adequate. Existing procedures adequate.
COUNCILLORS PROPRIETY:				
Members Interests	Conflict of interest Register of Members Interests	M L	Councillors have a duty to declare any interest at the start of a meeting. Code of Conduct updated based upon CDALC/NALC advice. Register of Members Interests form to be reviewed at least on an annual basis with the responsibility for doing so place upon the individual Councillor.	Existing procedures adequate. Members to take responsibility to update their register. Cllrs are offered the opportunity to attend Members Interests training offered by DCC via CDALC and encouraged to do so.

TIMETABLE FOR ASSOCIATED REVIEWS:

As part of the Council's Corporate Risk Management work the following items are reviewed at set points during the financial year as follows:

ITEM	FREQUENCY	LAST REVIEWED	COMMENTS/ACTION
Asset Inspection	Annually		To be undertaken before end of financial year.
Financial Matters:			
Banking arrangements	Annually	**May 2025**	Bank mandate has been updated to reflect Councillor signatory changes following recent elections.
Insurance providers	In year prior to end of existing agreement (currently in 5 year agreement)	**March 2025**	
VAT return completed	Usually 6 monthly but increased in 2025/26 due to large capital expenditure project	**1st April 2025, 1st July 2025 and 1st September 2025**	**Will revert to 1st April and 1st September in 2026.**
Budget agreed	Annually	**January 2025**	
Precept requested	Annually	**January 2025**	
Bank reconciliation overseen by Councillors	Monthly		
Staff salaries to be reviewed and documented	Monthly		
Internal audit	Annually		
External audit	Annually		**Additional internal support days to feature from 2015/16 onwards. In 2025/2026 requested additional audits for Sedgefield Youth Club and Butterwick Road Cemetery Expansion project. In 2026/27 will include digital compliance**
Internal check of financial procedures	Monthly		

			(Assertion 10 of the AGAR)
Administration: Minutes properly numbered Asset register available/updated Financial Regulations reviewed Standing Orders reviewed Backups taken of computer records	 On-going On-going On-going On-going Daily		
Employers Responsibilities: Contracts of employment in place Contractors indemnity insurance	 On-going On-going		
Members' Responsibilities: Code of Conduct adopted Register of Interests completed and updated Register of Gifts/Hospitality Declarations of Interests minuted	 On-going On-going On-going On-going		

Note: Underpinning this Schedule are an array of individual Risk Assessments themed as follows:

- Open Spaces
- Events
- Council Buildings and Property
- Procedures

Individual risk assessments relating to events are prepared as part of the planning process for each event and continue to be reviewed up to, and including, the event taking place. All other risk assessments are reviewed in October of each year as a standard practice but will be reviewed and updated at any point in the financial year should circumstances dictate or national/local advice demand that.