

WORKINGTON TOWN COUNCIL RISK REGISTER

A risk register is an essential document for any council to ensure that risks are managed effectively. It provides a structured way to identify, assess, manage, and mitigate risks that might affect the council's activities, finances, legal responsibilities, and reputation.

Approved at a meeting of the Full Council on 28th November 2024 (Min FC24.107)

FINANCIAL RISKS					
Topic	Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Management/control of risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Precept	Adequacy of precept Precept request not submitted to Cumberland Council	L	H	<p>The Council receives budget monitoring reports at every Full Council meeting which includes reserves, actual spend and projected year-end indicative figures.</p> <p>Budget monitoring reports are also taken to each committee meeting to allow a regular review of the Council's finances and available budget.</p> <p>Following the Full Council meeting in January the Chief Officer submits the precept request to Cumberland Council. If the Chief Officer is unavailable the Deputy Proper Officer will submit the request.</p> <p>Cumberland Council would inform WTC if they had not received their precept request before bills were issued to taxpayers.</p>	Existing procedures adequate
Financial Records	Inadequate records Financial irregularities	L	M	<p>The Council has adopted Financial Regulations which set out the requirements for reporting financial information to the Council. This includes procedures that are designed to prevent fraud and irregularities.</p> <p>The Council is putting together an internal controls policy which it follows for the signing off all payments.</p> <p>The Council's appointed internal auditor carries out audits twice a year and once a year the Council is audited by an external auditor.</p>	<p>Put in place an internal controls policy.</p> <p>Review the Financial Regulations at least yearly.</p> <p>Carry out a review of auditor feedback and suggested improvements</p>
Bank and Banking	Inadequate checks Bank mistakes	L	M	<p>The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements for banking and reconciliation of accounts and reports are taken to every meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and Full Council.</p> <p>The Finance Officer/Chief Officer reconciles the bank accounts monthly to ensure transactions are correctly reflected in the financial information presented to the Council.</p> <p>A weekly payment run is checked and signed off by two Councillors and the Chief Officer before any payments can be made.</p> <p>The Chief Officer periodically checks bank transactions for accuracy.</p>	<p>Existing procedures adequate.</p> <p>Review Financial Regulations annually.</p> <p>Review bank signatory list at the annual meeting and after an election.</p> <p>Statements monthly and present to F & GP and Full Council at each meeting.</p>

Cash	Loss through theft or dishonesty	L	L	<p>The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements for the handling of cash.</p> <p>The Mayor signs off a report to confirm receipt of funds at fundraising events and this is reported to F & GP and Full Council at each meeting.</p> <p>The Council does not hold petty cash. The only cash income that is received by the Council is from the Mayor's fundraising efforts.</p> <p>Financial regs determine how this is handled by staff and paid into the Council's current account.</p>	Existing procedure adequate. Review the Financial Regulations when necessary.
Reporting and Auditing	Provision of monitoring information. Compliance	L	M	<p>A budget monitoring report is produced for every committee meeting.</p> <p>The Council has an internal audit twice a year.</p> <p>Council can review actual spend, projected spend to the end of the financial year, breakdown of receipts and payments balanced against the bank statements.</p> <p>A full report of all Council finances is produced for all Finance and General Purposes committee and Full Council meetings.</p>	Existing reporting procedures are adequate. Council annually to appoint an Internal Auditor
Supplier Procurement	Council procurement policy not followed Supplier not reputable	L	M	<p>Due diligence completed during the procurement of contracts process.</p> <p>Insurance and liability is included in the procurement process.</p>	Existing procedure adequate
Direct costs Orders and invoices Debts	Goods billed but not supplied Unpaid invoices Incorrect invoicing	L	L	<p>The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the underlying requirements.</p> <p>The Council does not carry any stock.</p> <p>The Council is provided with details of payments and receipts for the preceding month at every council meeting for consideration and approval.</p> <p>Unpaid invoices are pursued by the Chief Officer and action taken via small claims court if necessary.</p>	Existing procedures adequate. Review the Financial Regulations annually.
Grants payable	Is there a power to pay Is authorisation properly recorded	L	L	<p>All such expenditure is considered by relevant committees or Full Council depending on the value of the request, as stated in the Financial Regs. All approvals or rejections are minuted accordingly.</p> <p>If payment is made using the S137 power, this is recorded specifically</p>	Existing procedure adequate. A report on expenditure under S137 is taken to the annual meeting.
Grants - receivable	Receipts of Grant	L	L	<p>The Council does not routinely receive any regular grants.</p> <p>One off grants would be dealt with within the specifically defined terms and conditions and would be itemised for all F & GP and Full Council meetings.</p> <p>The relevant committee is informed if Officers are applying for funding if not previously requested as a resolution.</p>	Receipt of one-off grants would be recorded through the council meeting minutes and financial management systems for approval
Charges – rentals receivable	Payments of charges, leases, rentals	L	L	<p>The Council receives payment for allotments rents, garages and a car park.</p> <p>These transactions are shown as income in the budget monitoring reports which go to relevant committees, F & GP committee and Full Council meetings.</p>	Existing procedure adequate.

OPERATIONAL RISKS					
Topic	Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Management/control of risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Business Continuity	Risk of Council not being able to continue its business due to an unexpected or tragic circumstance	L	M	Loss of Chief Officer or loss of Council papers / electronic records A business continuity plan holding simple key information will be created and put in place. A copy is held by the Chief Officer, Mayor and Chair of Finance and General Purposes committee. The Council has an appointed Deputy Proper Officer who can act in the absence of the Chief Officer.	Appropriate back-up arrangements in place. Put in place a business continuity plan.
Value for Money Accountability	Work awarded incorrectly Overspend on services	M	M	Financial Regulations specify the procedures for procuring goods and services. If problems are encountered with a contract or a service, the Chief Officer would investigate, check the relevant circumstances and report to Council.	Existing procedures, contained within Financial Regulations, are adequate.
Salaries and associated costs	Salary paid incorrectly Wrong deductions of NI or Tax Unpaid Tax & NI contributions to the Inland Revenue	L	M	The Council authorises the appointment level of remuneration of all employees. Rates of pay are linked to national terms and conditions. Payslips are generated automatically through Cumberland Council's software. Cumberland Council manages the payment of staff wages plus NI, tax and Pension contributions. The Chief Officer/Finance Officer receive a breakdown of costs per staff prior to wages paid to ensure the information is correct. All staff submit log hours on a timesheet. All staff have a contract of employment and job description.	Existing systems include adequate controls.
Councillor allowances	Councillors over-paid Income tax deduction	L	L	The Mayor receives a monthly allowance (10 months) which is paid as part of the Council's staff wages and managed by Cumberland Council. Payments are stopped when a new Mayor is elected and details of the new Mayor are sent to Cumberland Council.	Existing procedure adequate
Election costs	Financial risk to the council of an election.	M	M	Risk is higher in an election year. The Council sets a budget for by-elections each year. An earmarked financial reserve is held to cater for an election if this becomes necessary.	Existing procedure adequate Introduce ear marked reserves for elections
VAT	Re-claiming/charging	L	L	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the required processes and an accounting software programme which calculates & records VAT input and output	Existing procedure adequate
Annual Audit Return	Submit within time limits.	L	H	Annual Audit Return is completed and approved by the Council, documents subject to internal audit prior to being forwarded to the External Auditor within required time limit.	Existing procedures adequate
Legal Powers	Illegal activity or payments	L	H	All activity and payments within the powers of the Council to be resolved and minuted at Full Council	All powers appropriately considered and minuted.

Minutes/Agendas/Notices/ Statutory Documents	Accuracy and legality Business conduct	L	M	Minutes and agendas are produced in the prescribed form by the Chief Officer and adhere to legal requirements. Business conducted at Council meetings is managed lawfully by the Chair in accordance with Standing Orders and with the advice and guidance of a qualified Chief Officer. Minutes are approved and signed at the next committee/Council meeting. Minutes and agendas are accessible to the public in compliance with the legal requirements.	Existing procedure adequate. Guidance/training is available to the Chair and Chief Officer. Members to adhere to Code of Conduct.
Members interests	Conflict of interest Register of Members interests	L	M	The declaration of interests by members at meetings is a standing item to remind Councillors of their duty. Register of Members Interest forms should be reviewed regularly by Councillors.	Existing procedure adequate. Members take responsibility to update the register.
Insurance	Adequacy Cost Compliance Fidelity Guarantee	L	H	An annual review is undertaken (at time of policy renewal) of all insurance arrangements. Employers and Employee liability insurance is a necessity. Ensure compliance measures are in place. Ensure Fidelity checks are in place.	Existing procedure adequate. Review insurance provision annually. Review of compliance.
Data protection	Policy	L	L	The Council is registered with the Information Commissioner.	Ensure annual review of registration Policy is reviewed annually by Full Council
Freedom of Information Act	Policy and publication	L	L	The Council has a FOI policy and a model publication scheme for Local Councils in place. Ensure the Chief Officer is aware that if a substantial request arrives then this may require many hours of additional work. Where possible, WTC will not charge requesters a fee for complying with requests however it reserves the right to do so. If WTC determines that a fee will be charged for complying with the request, a fee notice will be issued to the applicant in accordance with section 9 of the FOIA. The Council reserves the right to refuse to respond to a request for information if it exceeds the value of £450 to process in terms of staff time and disbursements. The £450 is calculated to be 18 hours of staff time based on an hourly rate of £25 per hour, which is provided for by Regulation 4 of the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004.	Monitor and report any impacts of requests made under the F of I Act. FOI requests are to be reported to the next available Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting.

REPUTATIONAL RISK					
Topic	Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Management/control of risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Poor consultation & representation	Poor two-way consultation, resulting in loss of reputation, goodwill, understanding etc.	L	M	Ensure all consultation from other organisations, bodies, agencies and individuals is properly scheduled for consideration and due dates are met Ensure all consultations from Town Council are objective Minutes/agendas and associated reports to be available online. Periodic press releases Use of Town Council noticeboard Timely responses to all correspondence, consultations etc. Respecting electors rights by encouraging attendance at meetings and other appropriate occasions Production of Annual report for Town Assembly	Existing procedure adequate
Elections : Failure to properly induct councillors following election	Reputational damage. Disqualification of councillors; Challenge to validity of Council decisions	L	M	Chief officer to ensure all induction procedures (especially Declarations) are commenced within 2 working days of election	Existing procedure adequate
Libel and Slander	Reputational damage to council			Relevant insurance cover in place if needed Chief Officer is responsible for communications	Existing procedure adequate
Capability of councillors	Poor policy-making and decision-making	M	H	Councillors must be actively encouraged to undertake training: it may be compulsory for some functions Regular training bullets from CALC are circulated and offered to Cllrs.	Existing procedure adequate

PHYSICAL EQUIPMENT OR ASSETS					
Topic	Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Management/control of risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Assets	Loss or damage/risk Damage to third parties/property	L	M	An annual review of assets is undertaken for insurance provision, storage and maintenance purposes. Appropriate insurances in place. Appropriate procedures in place for the acquisition and disposal of Council assets (such as buildings).	Existing procedure adequate. Keep under review during year.
Maintenance	Poor performance of assets or amenities Loss of income or performance Risk to third parties	L	M	All assets owned by the Council are regularly reviewed and maintained. All repairs and relevant expenditure for these repairs are actioned/authorised in accordance with the procedures agreed by the Council. Where necessary annual maintenance plans are put in place, e.g. computer & CCTV equipment. All public amenity land is inspected regularly by Officers.	Existing procedure adequate. Ensure timely inspections carried out.
Notice boards	Risk/damage/injury to third parties	L	M	Council has 6 notice boards, two digital text screens and a digital colour screen. Appropriate insurance cover is in place. Regular inspections are carried out repaired/maintained as required.	Existing procedure adequate.
Play areas	Risk/damage/injury to third parties	M	H	Council staff carry out weekly inspections of play area surroundings and equipment and action any concerns. Annual inspections by a third party are carried out.	Existing procedure adequate.

Street furniture	Risk/damage/injury to third parties	L	M	The Council is responsible for a number of planters and benches around the town. Appropriate insurance cover is in place. Regular inspections are carried out repaired/maintained as required.	Existing procedure adequate.
Green spaces	Risk/damage/injury to third parties	M	M	The Council carries out regular tree surveys. A call out policy is in place for staff how are required to attend sites (i.e falln tree)	Existing procedure adequate.
Christmas Lights	Risk/damage/injury to third parties	M	M	The Council's Christmas lights are installed by a reputable contractor, a call out fee and procedure it included as part of the contract. The Council is able to call on the assistance of the principal authority if required.	Existing procedure adequate.
Meeting locations	Adequacy Health & Safety	L	L	The Council meetings are held at appropriate venues to allow for public and disabled access.	Existing procedure adequate.
Allotments	Health and safety Non cultivation Non payment General issues: fly tipping, burglary Self management failure River bank erosion	M	M	Regular meetings held with allotment holders Process for non cultivation letters and eviction in place General issues reported to Estates team and logged Regular contact with self management associations River bank owner aware, regular checks and concerns escalated by Estates team	Existing procedure adequate.
Council records – paper	Loss through: theft, fire and damage	L	M	The Council's current records are stored at premises belonging to the Council. Adequate storage facilities required in the event of a fire or flood damage.	Damage (apart from fire) and theft is unlikely and so provision adequate. Council to investigate fire and water proof storage for historic and valuable items. Deeds/leases are copied and stored off-site.
Council records - electronic	Loss through: theft, fire, damage, computer virus	M	H	The Council's electronic records are password controlled and are secure as part of the Cumberland Council network. Back up happens regularly, this includes the Council's CCTV recordings. Annual computer maintenance is carried out. Officer IT equipment is hired allowing renewal every 3-5 years. Access to CCTV images and recordings is password protected and accessed only with the approval of and in the presence of the Chief Officer.	Computer records are backed up weekly. Council is secured by the principal authorities network and back up system

EMPLOYEES					
Topic	Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Management/control of risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Provision of a safe and fulfilling working environment for staff	Unsafe or unhealthy working environment will have an impact on staff and their ability to work constructively and positively	L	M	<p>H & S risk assessment and policy to keep safe. H and S briefings annually. Covid risk assessment in place and updated with changes. Code of conduct in place for staff and councillors and regular team meetings and appraisals.</p> <p>Staff can work flexibly and from home in consultation with their line manager.</p> <p>Weekly team meetings in place. One staff member is trained in Mental Health in the workplace.</p>	H & S policy updated annually. Appraisals completed annually.
Employees contravene H & S regs	Resulting in an accident, affecting staff and services	L	M	<p>Employers Liability insurance</p> <p>Employee training and awareness</p> <p>Health and safety policy reviewed annually</p>	Insurance and policies updated annually.
Potential legal proceedings	Accidents and reputational damage.	L	H	As above	Insurance and policies updated annually.
Staff retention issues	Impact on staff mental health and on delivery of projects, services and running of the council.	L	M	<p>Staff training</p> <p>Regular staff meetings.</p> <p>Staff receive informal regular positive feedback and also formal appraisals.</p> <p>Staff are supported by Chief Officer, The Mayor and Chair of Finance and General Purposes.</p> <p>Commitment to staff wellbeing – Chief Officer ensures an open approach to discussing any issues that arise and solving them.</p> <p>Staff have been encouraged to purchase equipment they need to effectively work from home.</p>	Existing procedure adequate.
Insufficient staff or other resources to deliver the service needs	Slower completion of tasks and hold up in projects and services	L	M	<p>Staff have good awareness of other team members' essential tasks and can provide cover when required. Team meets weekly to keep each other updated.</p> <p>Town Clerk to formally monitor and review staff and work levels. Any concerns regarding this to then be brought to Personnel Committee.</p>	Existing procedure adequate.
Compensation claim from employee for contractual employment defects	Reputational damage for Council	L	H	<p>Contract of employment in place (modelled on NALC contract).</p> <p>Matters relating to staff discussed in confidence and in part two of committee meetings where press and public are excluded.</p> <p>Chief Officer to keep up to date with employment law and seek HR advice where appropriate.</p>	Existing procedure adequate.
Loss of services of employee	Impact on delivery of services and projects and smooth running of the council	M	M	<p>Chief Officer ensures knowledge across roles is shared, so far as reasonably practical, that loss of any one employee does not cause unrecoverable damage to business.</p> <p>Robust recruitment process in place.</p>	Existing procedure adequate.

Risk matrix

IMPACT	High	Medium	High	High
	Medium	Low	Medium	High
	Low	Low	Low	Medium
		Low	Medium	High
		LIKELIHOOD		