

Euxton Parish Council - Risk Assessment

Introduction

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

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. Making sure that all employees are made aware of the results of the risk assessment.

This document has been produced to enable the Parish Council to assess the risks that it faces and satisfy itself that it has taken adequate steps to minimise them. In conducting this exercise, the following plan was followed:

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

FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT					
Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H / M / L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise	Action/By
Business continuity	Risk of Council not being able to continue its business due to an unexpected or tragic circumstance	L	No management presently for loss or long term incapacity of a Clerk, loss or theft of records, full or majority replacement of the Council at an election or other such instances.	Existing procedure adequate. Ongoing plan revisions necessary.	
Precept	Adequacy of precept Requirements not submitted to CBC Amount not received by CBC	L L L	Parish Council regularly receives budget update information. When the precept is on the agenda the Council receives a budget update report, including actual position, projected position to end the year and indicative figures/costings. With this information the Council maps out the required monies for standing costs and projects for the following year and applies specific figures to budget headings, the total of which is resolved to be the precept amount to be requested from Chorley Borough Council. This figure is submitted by the Clerk in writing to CBC. The Clerk informs Council when the monies are received (approx May time).	Existing procedure adequate.	
Financial records	Inadequate records Financial irregularities	L L	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements.	Existing procedure adequate. Review Financial Regulations when necessary.	

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Bank and banking	Inadequate checks Bank mistakes Loss Charges	L L L L	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements for banking, cheques and reconciliation of accounts. The Parish Council has three bank accounts (current, reserve and bid deposit). Cash and cheques received banked within 3 days. Cheques require two signatures, there are three nominated Councillors as signatories (any two to sign). The bank does make occasional errors in processing cheques which are discovered when the Clerk reconciles the bank accounts once a month, when the statement arrives, and corrected immediately by informing the bank and awaiting their correction.	Existing procedure adequate. Ensure Financial Regulations relevant Review when necessary the bank signatory list, especially after an election. Monitor the bank statements monthly.	
Cash	Loss through theft or dishonesty	L	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements. Cash received is banked within 3 days. The £300 cash float is accounted for at each meeting, checked and signed off by a Councillor and a top-up cheque issued to keep it at a £300 level.	Existing procedure adequate. Review the Financial Regulations when necessary.	
Reporting and auditing	Information for Councillors Compliance	L L	A monitoring statement is produced regularly at each Council meeting which is distributed, discussed and approved. This statement includes, bank reconciliation, budget update, and a breakdown of receipts and payments made balanced against the bank. A cumulative budget should be created for any future major projects. Council should regularly audit internally to comply for the Fidelity Guarantee.	Existing procedures adequate and informative. Implement on new projects Council(lor) to audit.	On new projects Audit
Direct costs Overhead expenses Debts	Goods not supplied but billed Incorrect Invoicing Cheque payable incorrect Loss of stock Unpaid invoices	L L L L L	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements. At each Council meeting the list of invoices awaiting approval is distributed to all Councillors, and questioned. One Councillor is nominated to check each invoice against the cheque book and associated paperwork and initials the invoice. Council approves the list of requests for payment. Unpaid invoices to the Council for adverts in the newsletter or services are pursued and where possible, payment is obtained in advance.	Existing procedure adequate.	
Grants and support - payable	Power to pay Authorisation of Council to pay	L	All such expenditure to go through the required Council process of approval and minuted and listed accordingly if a payment is made using the S137 power of expenditure.	Existing procedure adequate.	
Grants - receivable	Receipts of Grant	L	The Parish Council does not presently receive any regular grants.	Procedure would need to be formed if required.	
Charges - rentals payable	Payments of charges, leased, rentals	L	The Parish Council has land which it leases on which it receives invoices payable for the rental amounts which are entered into the normal payment system for authorisation.	Existing procedure adequate.	
Charges - rentals receivable	Receipt of rental Insurance implication	L L M	Football Pitches - The Parish Council agrees in advance each year the fee for the rental of the football pitches. The Clerk issues an agreement for usage and a monitoring form along with the invoice. Both parties sign the agreement and the Parish Council copy is held in Parish Council records. The cheque is received and banked. The Parish Council is notified accordingly. The Football Club arranges its own insurance and provides a copy to the Parish Council each year.	Existing procedure adequate. Review agreement and fees annually. Ensure payment received and copy of insurance document received.	

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Best value Accounta- bility	Work awarded incorrectly Overspend on services/budget	L M	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements. Normal Parish Council practice is to seek more than one quotation for any substantial work required to be undertaken or goods. 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. Clerk to report any possible budget overspends at the next meeting.	Existing procedure adequate. Implement reporting of any possible overspends	
Salaries and assoc. costs	Salary paid incorrectly Wrong hours paid Wrong rate paid False employee Wrong deductions of NI or Tax Unpaid Tax & NI contributions to the Inland Revenue	L L L L L L	The Parish Council authorise the appointment of all employees through a Personnel Committee of the Council. Salary rates are assessed annually by the same Committee and applied on 1 April each year. Salary slips are produced by the Clerk monthly together with a schedule of payments to the Inland Revenue (for Tax and NI). These are inspected at the Council meetings and signed off. The Tax and NI is worked out using an Inland Revenue computer programme updated annually. All Tax and NI payments are submitted in the Inland Revenue Annual Return. The Lengthsmen each submit a weekly time sheet containing hours, tasks and mileage costs. These are checked and initialled by the Clerk and submitted into the records. Each has a contract of employment and job description. The Clerk does not keep a time sheet and has a contract of employment and job description. All contracts of employment contain a section on overpayment and recoup.	Existing appointment and payment system is adequate.	
Councillor allowances	Councillor over-paid Income tax deducts	negative	No allowances are allocated to Parish Councillors .	No procedure required.	
Grants and support	Power to pay Authorisation of Council to pay	L L	All such expenditure goes through the required Council process of approval, minuted and listed accordingly if a payment is made using the S137 power of expenditure.	Existing system adequate. Parish Councillors to request a copy of S137 rules if required.	
Election costs	Risk of cost from an election or Parish Poll	H	When an election is due the Clerk will obtain an estimate of costs from the Borough Council for a full election and an uncontested election. A recently emerging risk, also identified in Internal Audit report of 06/08/11 - Casual Vacancy bye-election calls. There are no measures which can be adopted to minimise the risk of having a contested election, bye-election or Poll called, as this is a democratic process but, the Council was recommended to consider having a reserve fund.	Council to consider whether to have a reserve fund and/or a specific election budget.	Consider at next Precept meeting
VAT	Re-claiming/ charging	L	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements .	Existing procedure adequate.	
Annual Audit	Appointment of Internal Auditor and scope of work	L	The Council appoints an Internal Auditor annually. The Council 'Review the Effectiveness of the system of Internal Control' annually and appoints a Councillor to view the corresponding paperwork.	Existing procedure adequate.	
Annual return	Submit within time limits	L	The Clerk completes the Employer's Annual Return online and submits to the Inland Revenue within the prescribed time frame.	Existing procedure adequate.	

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Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H / M / L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise	Action/By
Employees	Loss of key personnel Fraud by staff Actions undertaken by staff Health & Safety	M L L L	As good practice, the Council should ensure Employee Guidelines are followed/reviewed. Refer to Continuity Plan should be made in case of loss of key personnel. Fidelity Guarantee insurance guides to be adhered to with regards to Fraud. The Clerk should have opportunity for training, reference books, access to assistance and legal advice required to undertake the role. The Lengthsman should be provided with adequate direction and safety equipment needed to undertake the roles, ie. protective clothing and training.	Existing procedure adequate. Purchase revised books, membership of the SLCC/ training. Monitor working conditions, safety requirements and fidelity insurance regularly.	
Legal powers	Illegal 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, including a reference to the power used.	Power minuted.	Minute power.
Minutes/ Agendas/ Notices Statutory documents	Accuracy and legality Business conduct	L M	Minutes and agenda are produced in the prescribed method by the Clerk and adhere to the legal requirements. Minutes are approved and signed at the next Council meeting. Minutes and agenda are displayed according to the legal requirements. Minutes are reviewed by the Internal Auditor. Business conducted at Council meetings should be managed by the Chair.	Existing procedure adequate. Guidance/training to the Chair should be offered. Councillor and Chair training be arranged throughout the year.	
Members interests	Conflict of interest Register of Members interests not being up-to-date	L M	The declaring of interests by members at a meeting should become a more regular and obvious process. Register of Members Interest forms should be reviewed regularly.	Members take responsibility to check and update their Register and undertake training	
Insurance	Adequacy Cost Compliance	L M	An annual review is undertaken (before policy renewal) of all insurance arrangements. Employers and Employee liability insurance is a necessity and must be paid for. Ensure compliance measures are in place. Fidelity insurance cover needs to be reviewed in the period before the next years precept arrives.	Existing procedure adequate. Review compliance. Annual review. Fidelity level review	Review FebMar12
Data protection	Policy Provision	L H	The Council is with the Data Protection Agency. New guidance from the Information Commissioner highlights areas for the Council to consider.	Renew registration annually. Council set to review through a working group Sep-Dec 2011	Act on review
Freedom of Information Act	Policy Provision	L M	The Council has a model the publication scheme in place. There has been many requests made in the last year. Council should be aware that these requests require many hours of additional work for the Clerk. The Council is able to request a fee if the work will take more than 15 hours but the applicant also has the right to re-submit the request broken down into sections.	Monitor and report any requests made under the FofI Act. Ongoing. Many received in last 12 months, 14 alone from one person.	Monitor

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PHYSICAL EQUIPMENT OR AREAS					
Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H / M / L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise	Action By
Assets	Loss or Damage	L	An annual review of assets is undertaken for the External Audit process and the asset list is scrutinised by the Internal Auditor. A further review was requested 16/06/11.	Existing procedure adequate. Further review requested.	Review to be done.
Maintenance	Poor performance of assets or amenities Loss of income or performance Risk/damage to third parties	L L L	All assets owned by the Parish Council are regularly reviewed and maintained. All repairs and relevant expenditure for these repairs are actioned/authorised in accordance with procedures. All assets are insured and reviewed annually. All public amenity land is inspected over and above the requirements of the Insurers, quarterly by the Borough inspector by report, weekly by trained parish employees who submit a written inspection report for this action.	Existing procedure adequate. Ensure quarterly inspections are carried out. Ensure inspection sheets are adequately filed.	
Equipment	Training and usage Insurance	M	Equipment is only used by employees who have undergone the adequate training required for use. Insurance for staff and equipment is covered.	Review training requirements, ensure insurance reviewed.	
Equipment storage	Loss due to theft, damage, damp, fire etc	M	Council equipment by the Village Caretakers is stored in the garage (Greenside) behind a locked shutter door. Only Council workers and the Clerk have key access. If item is valuable eg. strimmer etc are shackled to the building walls. The Speed Indicator Device is stored at the Clerks home in a locked garage. When erected on plate it is padlocked to the plate which is tightly attached to either a lamp post or a post concreted into the pavement. No rubbish sacks are to be left in the pavilion.	Existing procedures adequate.	
Notice boards	Risk/damage/injury to third parties Road side safety	L L	The Parish Council has five notice boards sited around the village. All locations have approval by relevant parties. All noticeboards have insurance cover, inspected regularly by the Clerk and any repairs/maintenance requirements brought to the attention of the Parish Council. Keys are held by the Clerk. The Clerk is mindful of roadside safety when at the notice board.	Existing procedure adequate. Spare key could be given to a nominated Councillor if required.	
Street furniture	Risk/damage/injury to third parties	L	The Parish Council is responsible for its wayside seats, flower planters and boundary signs around the village. No formalised programme of inspections is carried out, all faults of damage or faults are reported to Council dealt with.	Existing procedure adequate.	
Land areas	Risk/damage/injury to third parties	L	The Parish Council has pockets of land which are maintained and cleaned by the lengthsmen.	Existing procedure adequate.	
Meeting location	Adequacy Health & Safety	L M	The Parish Council Meetings are held at Euxton PC Community Centre in mostly one room. The premises and the facilities are considered to be adequate for the Clerk, Councillors and Public who attend from Health & Safety and comfort aspect.	Existing location adequate.	
Council records - paper or electronic	Loss through theft/fire/damage	L	The Parish Council records are stored at the home of the Clerk. Records include historical correspondence, minute books and copies, deeds and leases for land or property, records such as personnel, insurance, salaries etc. Recent materials are in a metal filing cabinet, older and more historical records (of less importance) in the attic. The Parish Council's electronic records are stored on the Clerks computer. Back-ups of the files are taken at regular intervals and supplied to the Chair for safe keeping.	Existing procedure adequate.	

Reviewed at the meeting of: 15 September 2011

Signed by the Chairman: