Doddington Parish Council

General Risk Assessment Policy

Date reviewed: 12th November 2025 Next review date: Nov 2027

Risk assessment is the process whereby the council methodically address the risks associated with what they do and the services they provide. The focus of good risk assessment is to identify what can go wrong and take steps to avoid it or successfully manage the consequences. It is not just about financial management: it is about achieving the objectives of the organisation to deliver high quality public services. The failure to manage risks effectively can be expensive in terms of litigation and reputation, the ability to achieve desired targets, and eventually, the local communities tax bills.

Members are ultimately responsible for risk management because risks threaten the achievement of policy objectives. As a minimum, members should at least once a year:

- Take steps to identify and update key risks facing the council
- Evaluate the potential consequences to the council if an event identified as risk takes place
- Decide upon appropriate measures to avoid, reduce or control the risk or its consequences.

RISK IDENTIFICATION

The use of insurance to minimise risk

- The protection of physical assets of the council - buildings, furniture, equipment
- The risk of damage to third party property or individuals as a consequence of the council providing services or amenities to the public (Public Liability)
- The risk of consequential loss of income or the need to provide essential services following critical damage, loss or non-performance by a third party (Consequential loss)
- Loss of cash through theft or dishonesty (fidelity Guarantee)
- Legal liability as a consequence of asset ownership (Public Liability)

Risk Management Support via the Parish Councils Insurance Company

- Clear Councils Insurance provide town and parish councils with a comprehensive toolkit containing helpful information and guidance on the risks that require assessing and managing.

Councils internal control

- An up to date register of assets and investments
- Regular maintenance arrangements for physical assets
- Annual review of risk and the adequacy of cover
- Ensuring all robustness of insurance providers

Scope to work with others to help manage risk

- Security for buildings, amenities or equipment
- Maintenance of buildings, amenities or equipment
- The provision of services being carried out under agency/partnership agreements with principal authorities.
- Banking arrangements, including borrowing or lending.
- Ad hoc provision of amenities or facilities for events to local community groups
- Vehicle or equipment lease or hire.
- Trading units - playing fields, burial grounds etc.

- Professional services - planning, architects, accountancy etc

Councils internal controls

- Standing orders, financial regulations dealing with awards of contracts for services or the purchase of capital equipment
- Regular reporting on performance by suppliers/providers/contractors
- Annual review of contracts
- Clear statements of management responsibilities for each service
- Regular scrutiny of performance against targets
- Adoption of and adherence to codes of practice for procurement and investment
- Arrangements to detect and deter fraud and/or corruption
- Regular bank reconciliation, independently reviewed

Need to self-manage risk

- The keeping of proper financial records
- Ensuring all business activities are within legal powers applicable to local councils
- Complying with restrictions on borrowing
- Ensuring all requirements are met under: customs and excise, employment law, inland revenue, use of funds granted to local community bodies, reporting of council business, proper document control.
- Meeting the laid down timetables when responding to consultation invitations
- Register of members interests and gifts and hospitality in place, accurate and up to date

Councils internal controls

- Regular scrutiny of financial records and proper arrangements for approval of expenditure.
- Recording in the minutes the precise powers under which expenditure is being approved.
- Regular - returns to inland revenue, updated contracts for all employed staff, returns of VAT, training of responsible officer in matters of VAT, tax etc, budgeted monitoring statements.
- Developing systems of performance measurement
- Procedures for dealing with and monitoring grants, loans etc.
- Minutes properly numbered.
- Documented procedures when: dealing with the publics enquiries, responding to consultation requests, receipt-circulation-responses-handling & filing.
- Monitoring arrangements by the council regarding quality council status.
- Adoption of codes of conduct for members and employees