

### **Dedham Parish Council Risk Management Policy**

The Parish Council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The Clerk (with the Chair or other Councillors) shall prepare, for approval by the Council, risk management policy and assessment in respect of activities of the Council. Risk policy statements and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the Council at least annually.

When considering any new activity, the Clerk (with the Chair or other Councillors) shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration and adoption by the Council.

#### **Strategic Risks and major threats**

The greatest risk facing the Council is not being able to deliver the activity or services expected by Parish residents.

This risk assessment is a strategic examination of working conditions, workplace activities and environmental factors that enable the Parish Council to identify potential risks inherent in the place or practices. Based on a recorded assessment the Council should then take all practical and necessary steps to reduce or eliminate the risks, insofar as is practicable, making sure that all employees and members 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 main points have been followed and the register constructed accordingly.

- Identify the areas to be reviewed.
- Identify what any risks and document
- Assess the risk and document the findings
- Evaluate the management and control of the risk and record all findings.
- Review, assess and revise where required.

Risk control is the process which is taken to reduce the likelihood of a risk event occurring or mitigates the effects that risk should it occur. This risk control approach is to use the four T's Process:

- Transferring Risk can be achieved through the use of various forms of insurance, or the payment to third parties who are prepared to take the risk on behalf of the Council.
- Tolerating Risk is where no action is taken to mitigate or reduce a risk. This may be because the cost of instituting risk reduction or mitigation activity is not cost-effective, or the risks of impact are at so low that they are deemed acceptable to the Council.
- Treating Risk is a method of controlling risk through actions that reduce the likelihood of the risk occurring or minimize its impact prior to its occurrence. Also, there are contingent measures that can be developed to reduce the impact of an event once it has occurred.
- Terminating Risk is the simplest method of dealing with risk. It involves risk elimination. This is done by altering an inherently risky process or practice to remove the risk. If an item presents a risk and can be changed or removed without it materially affecting the business, then removing the risk should be the first option considered; rather than attempting the treat, tolerate or transfer it.

Points and areas identified are dealt with in the table that follows and assessed and recorded accordingly. The aim is to proactively address the risks especially where the likelihood of occurrence or resulting impact (or a combination of the two) is assessed as high.

## Dedham Parish Council Strategic Risk Register

Strategic Risk	Consequence/ comment	Risk Likelihood /impact or consequences See key below	Established management action and control of risk	Key documents and further resources, guidance and/or evidence.	Further actions or review
1) Financial impropriety or irregularities, failure to meet legal requirements and/or governance and accountability expectations.	Fraudulent, careless or poor use of Council funds, not in line with Council objectives. Insufficient funds available for unexpected costs (eg elections)	Rare/Major  <b>Low risk overall</b>	The Council has Financial Regulations and procedures, based on NALC Model. The system of internal control clearly sets out the financial controls. Annual budget agreed (at or before January meeting each year) and regular management accounts produced. Bank reconciliation completed regularly. Quotes gathered for work/ contracts to ensure best value. Fidelity insurance	Financial Regulations/System of Internal Control/ Budget and Precept setting (minutes) Financial reports to the Council Insurance policies Internal auditor report & papers External Audit / Governance and Accountability Return. Minutes of, and papers to, meetings showing payments authorised and made. Payroll, pension, HMRC returns. VAT claims. Contracts with third parties.	Two step authorisation process is needed for online banking payments to be made. Payments are approved by councillor(s) at meetings

<p>2) Failure to progress business of Council. Insufficient and/or suitably skilled Councillors and/or staff members.</p>	<p>Meetings inquorate. Members and officers not sufficiently skilled to discharge duties effectively. Poor relationships between Council members and /or officers. Conflicts of interest.</p>	<p>Possible/Moderate <b>Medium risk overall</b></p>	<p>Formal documents in place and followed. Membership of NALC and Essex CALC with access to information, advice, training and legal briefings. Clerk advises Council and seeks external guidance as necessary. All Councillors are expected to attend New Councillor training and other potentially beneficial training is available to staff and Councillors.</p>	<p>Standing Orders Code of Conduct Councillors Declarations of Acceptance of Office and Declarations of Interests Training records Regular updates from EALC and NALC circulated to members. Declarations of Pecuniary or nonpecuniary interest at each meeting.</p>	<p>Review arrangements to provide back up to Clerk and improve support to Councillors. <b>Conduct skills audit of Councillors to inform allocation of responsibilities.</b></p>
<p>3) Formal complaints and/or litigation as a result of council decisions or actions of individual members/ staff.</p>	<p>Decisions or lack of action challenged. Complaints. Meetings not conducted lawfully. Decisions made out with the powers of the Council. Breach of employment law.</p>	<p>Rare/Major <b>Low risk overall</b></p>	<p>All resolutions are minuted at Full Parish Council Meetings. Insurance cover. Membership of professional bodies and networks.</p>	<p>Written Job Descriptions and Contracts for staff Complaints Policy Insurance policies Personnel Committee</p>	<p>Consider vexatious complainant policy</p>

4) Health and Safety, Asset management Risk of injury from as part of organised or approved Council activities	Personal injury and/or legal claim on the Council from members of the public, employees or others.	unlikely/ catastrophic  <b>High Risk overall</b>	Ensure Council Insurance includes public liability insurance. Annual review of risk register (safety of said assets should also be checked and reported). Annual safety report of play equipment by RoSPA certified contractor. Weekly visual checks of play equipment and other assets to meet requirements of insurance policy. All new activities should be accompanied with Risk Assessment and checked with insurers. Contractors have insurance/licenses. PLI Certificates of contractors on file	Annual inspection report Safety inspection checklist record of play equipment) Asset register Insurance policies Risk assessments for organised activities Annual tree survey/ urgent works	Confirm risk assessments in place for all current activity. Review process and responsibility for all safety checks and other routine and annual inspections. Review safety of items on asset register
5) Failure to deliver residents expectations	The work of the Council may be misunderstood leading to negative feedback or dissatisfaction. Problems with stakeholder management/ liaison with relevant statutory bodies when DPC is not empowered to act.	Possible/Minor  <b>Low risk overall</b>	Local Borough and County Councillors are invited to meetings All Councillors are active members of the community, and use a range of methods to keep abreast of residents' opinions and concerns.	Public participation at every meeting Information on website/newsletter/noticeboards	Consider social media/ communications policy Consider strategic/ longer term plan for Council

6) Business Continuity eg during periods of lockdown or loss of key people.	Single points of failure should Clerk or Chair be incapacitated. All online payments are processed by Councillors who are signatories at bank	Possible/moderate  <b>Medium risk overall</b>	Electronic records are kept of key documents and processes, these are held securely on shared drives or uploaded to website.	Standing Orders Financial regulations Minutes of relevant meetings	Consider setting up standing orders for other contractual requirements.
7) Inadequate records management. Data breaches or loss of data.	Breach of FOI or data protection legislation. Loss of records or access to key online documents or emails. Running out of storage. Councillors required use only DPC email address for DPC council work	Possible/moderate  <b>Medium risk overall</b>	Use of Dedham parish council email address for council business. Back up of files on external drive weekly by clerk.	Website holds all key policies and documents including agendas and minutes Council registered with the ICO FOI policy published Key passwords held by Clerk and kept secure	Improvements to IT systems, security and training Review accessibility of website to ensure compliance.
8) Changes to legislation or Local Plan which impact on Dedham or functioning of its Parish Council	Plans and activities or ability to influence impacted by factors which are outside the control of the Council. Changes to the powers of Parish Councils or the 'shape' of Dedham.	Possible/moderate  <b>Medium risk overall</b>	Regular updates from other tiers of Local Government and NALC. Consideration of / engagement with Local Plan and Garden Community at full Parish Council meetings. Development needs of the Parish to be considered.	Minutes of meetings NALC and other briefings	Keep abreast of and feed into plans for Colchester/ Tendring Borders Garden Community