

Finance & Audit (Financial Management) Risk Assessment 2024.25

RISK	Probability H/M/L	Impact H/M/L	Who might be affected	Existing control measures	Additional measures required
1.Failure to maintain an effective payments system	L	H	Council	All payments are supported by an invoice and approved by Council before payment. Emergency payments within the Clerks limit are reported to a future meeting. All cheques are signed by two Council members and one officer. Signatories are required to initial cheque counterfoils. Any payments made via BACS including salaries are authorised at the Full Council meeting and future payment schedule checked and signed Urgent payments required between meetings are signed by two councillors (cheque signatories) and one officer Bank payments are dual authorised (1 Officer and 1 Councillor)	
2. Failure to ensure proper use of funds under S.137 of the LGA Act 1972	L	M	Council	The council currently has the General power of competence so does use s137.	
3. Incurring expenditure without proper legal authority	L	M	Council	The Clerk (RFO) is responsible for ensuring Council have power for expenditure, and recording in Minutes which power is being used.	

				The council are currently eligible to use the general power of competence.	
4. Failure to set a Precept within sound budgeting arrangements.	L	H	Council	Town Clerk (RFO) is responsible for preparing draft budget for each Committee, in consultation with other members of the senior management team. These are presented to spending committees for approval, then to Finance & Audit Committee before final Council approval is sought. Meetings are arranged to comply with the VWHDC timetable for the Precept request.	
5. Poor financial management	L	H	Council	Management of the Council's financial affairs is the responsibility of the Clerk (RFO). Quarterly financial reports are submitted to each Committee to maintain effective budgetary control. Review of Financial Regulations carried out in May 2022– will be reviewed annually or when legislative changes require. Review of Standing orders was completed on May 2022. Reviewed annually. A Treasury and Investment Policy was reviewed in May 22 and reviewed annually .	
6. Failure to keep proper financial records	L	H	Council	Town Clerk has been appointed as Responsible Financial Officer. An internal audit is carried out annually by an independent and qualified auditor, whose report is submitted to Finance & Audit Committee. An interim internal audit is carried out mid financial year.	

				Bank recs checked and countersigned by nominated councillor quarterly.	
7. Loss of money through theft/misappropriation	L	M	Council	Receipts are issued for all income and all monies held pending banking are kept in a locked safe in the Clerk's office. Council has adequate fidelity guarantee insurance, which is reviewed by the RFO regularly to ensure it is adequate to cover sums held by the Council.	
8. Failure to maintain record of Council assets	L	M	Council	RFO is responsible for keeping record of assets – all acquisitions and disposals are recorded and submitted to the external auditor as part of the Council's Annual Return.	Carry out periodical inventory checks.
9. Failure to comply with HM Revenue & Customs regulations	L	M	Council	RFO is responsible for the calculation of salaries, and prompt payments of PAYE & NIC to Inland Revenue and pension contributions to the OCC Pension Fund. RFO also responsible for the proper recording of VAT input and output tax and the prompt completion and submission of VAT claims.	
10. Management of Council Funds	L	M	Council	The Clerk (RFO) in conjunction with the Finance and Audit Committee is responsible for ensuring that Council funds are distributed evenly across various banks and the Public Sector Deposit Fund. The Clerk (RFO) is responsible for ensuring there are sufficient funds in any one account to cover outgoings.	

Finance & Audit (Bye Laws, Code of Conduct, Computing, Council Meetings, Council Property& Documents, Data Protection, Employment of Staff, Provision of office accommodation, Newsletters and Website)

RISK	Probability H/M/L	Impact H/M/L	Who might be affected	Existing control measures	Additional measures required
11. Bye Laws – failure to maintain register	M	M	Council		Ensure register is up to date and properly maintained.
12. Code of Conduct	L	M	Council	New Councillors, whether elected or co-opted, are given Code of Conduct before making their declaration. Register of Interest/Register of Gifts forms sent to VWHDC Monitoring Officer – copy kept in Clerk’s office. New Code of Conduct, recommended by VWHDC, adopted 13 th June 2022. Reviewed and adopted annually in May. Register of Interest/Register of Gifts forms at Annual Council Meeting.	
13. Computing – Loss/damage arising from unauthorised use	M	M	Council	Access is restricted by use of passwords. Passwords can be reset by Cloudy IT to	

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				block access or maintain access if someone leaves.	
14. Computing – Crash of IT system	L	H	Council	Cloud computing is used so all records are kept on secure data bases off site. Anti-virus software installed on all computer equipment and only approved software is installed by IT technician.	
15. Computing – Loss arising from theft/misappropriation	M	H	Council	Users are responsible for security of laptop. Laptops are password protected. All data is password protected. Data is securely kept on a Cloud system.	
16. Council meetings – Failure to meet statutory duty	L	M	Council	Officers are responsible for ensuring all members are notified of meeting by way of summons and agenda, ensuring that meeting is quorate and completion of minutes of proceedings. Minutes of meetings are checked for accuracy and signed at next meeting	
17. Council meetings - Access	L	L	Council	Access is available to all including disabled members/members of the public. An area is set aside for the Press and members of the public. Meetings are open to all and link distributed. Hybrid meeting equipment in place to allow members of the public to attend virtually	
18. Council meetings – Personal injury	L	M	Council	Controls are in place to minimise the risk of injury to officers, members and public.	

				Council has appropriate insurance cover.	
19. Council Property and Documents – legal liability as a result of asset ownership			Council	Public Liability Cover of £10m is in place. Asset Register is maintained by the Clerk who carries out annual review with insurers to ensure adequate and appropriate insurance cover is held. This is reviewed and approved by the Finance and Audit Committee	
20. Council property and documents – loss of assets	L	M	Council	Register of assets is maintained and updated by the Clerk, approved by the F&A Committee and submitted to external auditor with Annual Return.	
21. Council property – loss/damage to civic regalia	L	L	Council	Council has adequate insurance against damage/loss. Regalia is covered by Royal Mail insurance during transit.	
22. Council documents – failure to effectively process	L	L	Council	All Post is opened by the Town Clerk (Allocated Officer in the Town Clerk’s absence) Post is distributed to appropriate member of staff for stamping and action. If no action is required, correspondence is filed. Councillors distributed a copy either via email or hard copy at next Council meeting for information only.	
23. Data Protection – Breach of Confidentiality	M	M	Council	Council is registered under Data Protection Act. GDPR policies adopted and in place reviewed annually in May	

				Privacy statement in place reviewed annually in May	
24. Employment of staff Failure to comply with employment law.	L	M	Council/Staff	Council employ the services of Ellis Whittam to advise on employment law and HR issues. Contracts of employment and job descriptions are reviewed annually. New employees receive contracts within 3 months of commencement of employment.	
25. Employment of Staff Lack of motivation/efficiency	L	H	Council/Staff	Each employee has a job description and personnel records. One to one meeting are held frequently with line managers. Annual Appraisals take place in Sept / Oct Policies on appraisals and pay reviewed Jan 2021 Employment policies reviewed in May annually	
26. Employment of Staff Lack of training	M	M	Council/Staff	The Clerk is responsible for ensuring appropriate training is given and is kept up to date and for maintaining training records. The Council are responsible for ensuring the Clerk receives adequate training.	
27. Employment of Staff Inability to Recruit	M	H	Council/Staff	The Clerk, in consultation with Council's Staffing Sub-Committee and HR advisors, is responsible for drawing up recruitment policy. Reviewed annually in May	

28. Employment of Staff Inability to Retain Staff	L	H	Council/Staff	The Clerk is responsible for ensuring staff appraisals are carried out regularly. The Staff Sub Committee are responsible for ensuring the Town Clerk's appraisal is carried out	
29. Employment of Staff Loss of key staff	M	H	Council/Staff	Computer records are held on a cloud system and accessible by the Town Clerk (or Deputy in the Clerks absence) Key staff should document their key functions to avoid disruption to Council business	
30. Meetings of the Council Disability & Discrimination Act	L	L	Council/Members of Public	All meetings of Council/committees are held in rooms/venues accessible by the disabled. Members of the public can also attend online	
31. Provision of Office Accommodation Fire Risk Security Risk	L	H	Staff/Members of Public/Councillors	The LS Team are responsible for ensuring that fire alarms and firefighting equipment are checked and that fire drills are carried out on a regular basis. Security review undertaken in November 2017.	Security review to be undertaken in 2023
32. Provision of Office Accommodation Poor/Faulty Office Furniture	L	L	Staff/Members of Public/Councillors	Periodical inspection of office furniture and fittings is carried out, and replacements purchased when required.	
33. Provision of Office Accommodation and Information Centre	L	L	Staff/Members of Public/Councillors	Periodical inspection of office is carried out to ensure that no slip/trip hazards are present.	

Poor Office Conditions				Staff should be vigilant to ensure that no slip/trip hazards are present.	
34. Provision of Office and Information Centre Accommodation Defective Electrical Equipment/Machinery	M	H	Staff/Members of Public/Councillors	Access to equipment is restricted to members of staff. Maintenance contracts are in place where appropriate. PAT testing is carried out annually and on all new items. PAT testing machine calibrated annually	
35. Meetings of the Council Failure to respond to the elector's wish to exercise his/her rights	M	M	Council/Members of Public	Members and staff are aware of the rights of the elector. Enquiries made under the Freedom of Information Act are dealt with promptly. Each Council or committee meeting agenda includes Public Participation Time.	
36. Meetings of the Council Failure to comply with new legislation	M	M	Council	The Council subscribe to the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils, and the Society of Local Council Clerks. They are also members of the Larger Council Clerks group and subscribe to various appropriate publications. The Clerk is CiLCA trained and holds a Degree in Community Governance. Officers in the process of completing liLCA training and will progress to CiLCA on completion All newly appointed clerks should undertake appropriate training to ensure they are qualified	Clerk undertaking a Masters in Public Leadership.
37. Meetings of the Council	M	M	Council/Members of Public	The Clerk's team are responsible for the accurate recording of the Minutes of all	

Failure to report Council business in the Minutes				Council, Committee, Sub-Committee and Working Party meetings. These are signed off at the next meeting of the Council, Committee, Sub-Committee or Working Party. A master copy of the Minutes is kept in a file specifically for the purpose and is available for members of public to inspect by appointment.	
38. Meetings of the Council Failure to meet statutory duty on meetings	L	M	Council/Members of Public	All Councillors are notified of meetings by way of a summons and agenda, which is posted to their given address at least 3 clear working days before the meeting. Notices of meetings are posted on the Council notice board, and on the Council website at least 3 working days before the meeting. A schedule of meeting dates for the following fiscal year is posted on the Council notice board in February of each year.	
39. Newsletters Failure to meet statutory obligation re non-political content	M	L	Members of Public	Newsletter is prepared by Council staff and the content is approved by the Town Clerk or an appropriate officer appointed by the Clerk	
40. Newsletters Defamation	L	M	Council/Members of Public	Content is subject to careful check and is approved by Town Clerk or an appropriate officer appointed by the Clerk. Adequate insurance cover is in place.	

41. Newsletters Failure to deliver and litter	L	L	Council/Members of Public	Newsletter to be distributed via an email distribution list and available in hardcopy in the council office Published monthly in local magazine	
42. Newsletters Non-Production of newsletter	L	L	Members of Public	The Council aims to produce a monthly newsletter. This is not always possible and is dependent on other work pressures. However, the Council does not have a legal obligation to produce a newsletter.	
43. Website Failure of Website Provider	L	L	Council/Members of Public	Council staff have developed close links with the website provider, and as a result early reinstatement of the service has always taken place. A back up copy of the website is kept by the provider.	
44. Website Poor Site Maintenance	M	L	Members of Public	Training has been given to members of staff and they have the ability to undertake all website activity. A regular review of the site content undertaken to ensure it is up to date and relevant.	
45. Website Confusion arising from links to external websites and Compromise of copyright by inclusion of website links	L	M	Members of Public	Council website should contain clear statement that it is not responsible for the privacy practices of the content of external web-sites. Links to external websites will only be included when absolutely necessary for public information and the site has been checked and is secure.	.

46. Website Placing of Information on the site which may put people at risk	L	L	Council/Members of Public	Ensure all website trained staff are aware of the risks involved when publishing information regarding individuals or groups of individuals.	
47. Website Non-conformance with Data Protection Act	L	M	Council/Members of Public	Staff who post on the website are aware of the regulations under GDPR	
48. Website Non-compliance with Freedom of Information Act	M	M	Council/Members of Public	All information, as declared in the Council Model publication scheme, is available via the Clerk to the Council and on the Council website. Model Publication Scheme updated May 2019 and reviewed annually. Privacy notice is available on the website and reviewed annually in May.	
49. Website Loss of Data/Inability to access backup Insurance Accessibility	L	M	Council/Members of Public	Website is maintained by outside provider and a copy of web content is kept by them. Appropriate insurance cover is held by Council. The Council's website is reviewed regularly. Comments regarding the website are addressed by Council staff.	
50. information Centre – Cash Handling Theft Danger to staff	L	M	Council / Staff	Cash up takes place in locked Information Centre office Only relevant staff have access to till keys and safe Cash kept in locked till or in safe Till is only opened during transactions Weekly banking done at irregular times	

				Staff advised to hand over any cash during a robbery and not to confront assailant	
51. information Centre / cinema – stock theft	M	L	Council / Staff	Staff to remain vigilant Centre not left unattended Thieves should not be approached – staff should call for assistance References sought for all staff Daily stock sales recorded Stock sheet kept up to date weekly Stocked checked periodically and at least monthly Incoming stock checked and recorded Stock not on display stored in locked cupboard Building alarmed when closed Councillor and Town Clerk checks end of year sheet Manager and Town Clerk carry out periodic checks	
52. information Centre Accounting errors Misappropriation of funds Staff dishonesty	L	M	Council /Staff	Procedures in place to ensure cash balances at end of day to record book and till Z2 Segregation of duties: 1. Different staff balance each day 2. Info manager periodically checks float and daily records 3. Town Clerk checks weekly sheets Only relevant staff have access to till keys Two members of staff must be present to void or refund	

				Two members of staff must be present to undertake a Z2 reading References sought for all staff	
53. Information Centre – Credit Cards Data protection Theft	L	M	Council / Staff/Public	Card machine reconciled at end of day Credit card slips kept in locked till or safe Slips shredded after 6 months PCI DSS compliance renewed annually Staff to be vigilant - watch out for repeated, small transactions and same card being used by different people Only relevant staff access details References sought for staff	
54. Cinema Cash Handling Theft Danger to staff Accounting errors Misappropriation of funds Staff dishonesty				Staff to remain vigilant Cash not to be left unattended when public present Refreshment float to be locked in back bar during showing Other cash kept in locked till, cash box or safe Only relevant staff have access to till keys Takings to be left in locked ash box in locked area behind bar. Cash up takes place in Council Office on following working day Staff advised to hand over any cash during a robbery and not to confront assailant Takings checked and put through information Centre till after balancing.	

				Info Manager to carry out periodic checks of balancing and float Town Clerk to check float annually References sought for all staff	
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