



HAWKHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Corporate Risk Register

Adopted December 2023 - Review by January 2024

Introduction

The aim of a risk register is identified, assess and mitigate risk. It is important to consistently consider risk and take action when new risks emerge. This register should be reviewed annually.

The matrix below considers severity and probability. Red risks require urgent action. Amber risks require short-term action. Green risks require ongoing monitoring.

		Probability		
		Low	Medium	High
Scale of severity	Ruinous	Amber	Red	Red
	Major	Green	Amber	Red
	Minor	Green	Green	Amber

Ref	Risk	Description	Probability	Severity	RISK	Action to minimise risk
1	Fraud	Misuse of Council finances / improper invoice payment	Low	Major		Follow financial regulations – Council, Cttee authority, delegation limits, and two cllrs approve payments.
2	Inadequate income to provide services	Missed deadline for precept, inadequate budget, emergency drives council towards deficit.	Low	Ruinous		Budget setting and precept timetable understood by officers and councillors. Committed to start financial year with reserves of 25%-50% of annual budget.
3	Overspend	Spending exceeds budget and denudes reserves - risk to service provision.	Low	Minor		Quarterly reports to Committees and Council.
4	Late payment to staff and suppliers.	Faulty / late payments lead to withdrawal or services.	Medium	Minor		Salaries paid via professional payroll company, use of direct debit where possible, minimise the number of payments by moving to annual or quarterly bills, adoption of on-line rather than cheques, using the Council debit card, increase the number of councillors authorised to make payments.

5	Failed audit or qualified accounts.	A failed audit or qualified account will harm the reputation of the Council.	Low	Minor		RFO leads audit process, ensuring annual audit is submitted on time. Council considers audit recommendations and has option of additional bespoke audit if issues emerge.
6	Valuation of Council assets.	If we do not know the value of council assets we will not be able to properly maintain and insure them.	Medium	Major		Maintain an asset register and agree to triannual revaluation.
7	Ultra vires decisions.	If we do not follow Council procedures, then policy decisions taken may not be lawful.	Low	Major		The Council will follow its Standing Orders, and listen to the advice of the Proper Officer who may refer to the Kent Association of Local Councils.
8	Council payments.	Payments that are not in line with policy or made without proper process could be challenged.	Medium	Major		Council follows its procurement and financial regulations, and these are reviewed annually.
9	Council contracts.	Contracts may be out of date and not reflect Council service/cost requirements.	Medium	Major		Contracts will be re-tendered regularly and Committees given sufficient time to specify service and consider providers.
10	Out of date policies and strategies.	Out of date policies may not reflect the intentions of the Council, or national guidelines.	High	Low		SAP, FAS and the Council regularly reviews policies, regulations, and strategies. The five year strategy is no longer appropriate and needs revision.
11	Councillors exceeding their authority.	Councillors might behave in way that creates a liability with staff, stakeholders, or suppliers.	Medium	Major		Councillors are reminded on election and at other times of their responsibilities, and limits to their powers, and the Code of Conduct.
12	Failure to comply with law or regulations.	Through error or ignorance, we may break the law or regulations – from data protection to H&S - and thereby create a liability for the Council.	Low	Major		The Council employs a Clerk and provides them with training and access to advice from KALC and other professional advisers – such as a data protection officer, employment law and health and safety advisors to ensure that we act appropriately and have the right policies in place.

13	Accidents / incidents at Council properties.	Staff or the public might have accidents at our facilities. Liabilities might be accentuated through absence of plan and action to correct issues.	Medium	Ruinous		Annual Risk Assessments done for each facility along with ROSPA, fire, electric and maintenance checks. Council has resolved that proper maintenance and H&S actions take priority over all other expenditure and are the first call on reserves if unbudgeted. Recent H&S report covered actions required for Copt Hall, KGV Pavilion and Playgrounds, Heartenoak playground and playing field, and other items
14	Cemetery issues.	Incorrect burial records or plots create emotional harm, as does inadequate care of the cemetery and war memorial.	Medium	Major		Checking records before transfer to scribe. Double check and mark burial plots prior to burial and liaising with funeral directors. Ensuring proper maintenance and reinstate removed kerbs.
15	Poor or inaccurate print or online comms.	A poor impression with stakeholders will impair our ability to represent and serve the community; and, inaccurate comms could create a reputational and/or legal liability.	Medium	Minor		Clerk ensures that communication is straightforward, timely and accurate. The Clerk is the person authorised to publish things on line and in print on behalf of the Council.