

Yateley Town Council

Risk Management Policy



1. Introduction & Purpose

Yateley Town Council recognises its responsibility to identify, evaluate and manage risks to deliver services, safeguard its assets, protect staff, volunteers and residents, and maintain its reputation. This policy provides the framework to ensure risk management is embedded in all decision-making processes.

2. Scope & Objectives

This policy applies to all areas of Council operations, including governance, finance, projects, events, staffing, and asset management. The objectives of the policy are to:

- Embed risk management into Council culture and decision-making;
- Ensure compliance with statutory duties;
- Protect public funds and Council assets;
- Enable proactive, informed decision-making;
- Ensure effective reporting and accountability.

3. Legislative & Governance Framework

This policy aligns with the following regulatory and best practice frameworks:

- Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015;
- Local Government Act 1972;
- Governance & Accountability Practitioners' Guide;
- NALC and SLCC model policies and recommendations.

4. Risk Management Principles

Risk management at Yateley Town Council is based on the following principles:

- Risks will be identified, assessed, and controlled in a structured way;
- Risk management will support achievement of Council objectives;
- Risk-taking will be proportionate, controlled, and transparent;
- Risks will be reviewed regularly and reported openly.

5. Roles & Responsibilities

- Full Council: Approves the Risk Management Policy and annual Risk Register.
- Finance & Policy Committee: Monitors risks quarterly and recommends actions.
- Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer (RFO): Maintains the risk register and reports changes.
- Internal & External Auditors: Provide independent assurance on risk controls.
- All Councillors & Staff: Are responsible for identifying and managing risks in their areas.

6. Risk Management Process

Yateley Town Council follows a four-stage risk management cycle:

1. Identification: Risks are identified by councillors, staff, committees and stakeholders.
2. Assessment: Each risk is scored based on likelihood and impact.
3. Mitigation: Controls are put in place to manage risks.
4. Monitoring: Risks are reviewed quarterly and updated annually.

7. Risk Categories

Risks are grouped into the following categories:

- Strategic – affecting long-term objectives;
- Financial – impacting budgets, income, investments or reserves;
- Operational – linked to service delivery, staff or contractors;
- Compliance – relating to legislation, regulations or policies;
- Property & Infrastructure – assets, buildings, and equipment;
- Environmental, Health & Safety – protecting residents, visitors and staff;
- Reputational – protecting Council credibility.

8. Risk Appetite & Tolerance

The Council adopts a balanced approach to risk, recognising that some risk-taking is necessary to achieve objectives. High-level financial, legal and reputational risks will be avoided wherever possible, while controlled operational risks may be accepted where there is clear benefit to the community.

9. Training & Awareness

Councillors and staff will be supported with appropriate training to ensure they understand their responsibilities for managing risk and maintaining effective controls.

10. Review & Reporting Cycle

- The Finance & Policy Committee will review the Risk Register quarterly.
- Full Council will approve the Risk Management Policy and Risk Register annually.
- The Policy will be formally reviewed every 12 months or earlier if significant changes occur.

11. Approval & Document Control

This policy was adopted by Full Council on 08.09.25 and will be reviewed annually in March.

Document Owner: Town Clerk

Next Review Date: March 2027

Subject		Risk(s) Identified	Control Measures		Risk Level	Review/Access/Revise
	Financial					
Precept	Adequacy of precept	Sound budgeting to underlie the annual precept. The Council receives bi-monthly budget update information and detailed budgets in late Autumn. The precept is an agenda item at the January meeting.		M	Existing procedure adequate.	
Cash	Loss through theft or dishonesty	The Petty Cash is receipted, checked and paid by two members of staff. It is reconciled monthly. Cash payments received are fully receipted and a log kept of all receipts. The Petty Cash is kept securely in a different location from Tennis Cash and access is approved by the Town Clerk. Cash taken for casual tennis bookings is receipted, logged and reconciled each month (this is minimal with new booking system). Cash deposits taken for hall bookings are receipted logged and kept in a secure safe. Cash deposits are returned as cash to reduce risk of money laundering. Cash is deposited into the bank at regular intervals and before it reaches a significant amount. Very minimal cash is left on the premises.		M	Existing procedures adequate.	
Insurance	Adequacy Cost Compliance Fidelity Guarantee	An annual review is undertaken of all insurance arrangements in place at budget time. Employers Liability, Public Liability and Fidelity Guarantee are a statutory requirement. Fidelity Insurance has been increased to £2M. The Council now also has separate Cyber Insurance.		L	Existing procedure adequate.	
Banking & Credit Card	Inadequate checks Fraud and data security	The Council has Financial Regulations (updated annually) which set out the requirements for banking, cheques and reconciliation of accounts. Credit card policy introduced in December 2019 detailing the responsibilities and procedures to safeguard the Council against card misuse. Town Clerk has access to a live		L	Existing procedures adequate.	

Subject	Risk(s) Identified	Control Measures		Risk Level	Review/Access/Revise
		credit card statement online and monitors transactions. Card receipts are stored securely.			
Financial Controls and Records	Inadequate checks	A monthly reconciliation is prepared by the Finance & Admin Officer and checked by the Town Clerk. The bank reconciliations are checked by the Chair of the Finance & Policy Committee against the original bank statements at each meeting. Each cheque and cheque stub must have two signatories. In the online banking system, each payment requires 2 approvals. Internal and external audits are carried out. Financial obligations must be resolved and clearly minuted before any commitment as detailed in the Finance Regulations. Payments must be resolved and clearly minuted as detailed in the financial regulations. Any grant payments must be recorded at time of approval.		L	Existing procedures adequate.
Annual Governance & Accountability Return	Not submitted within time limits	Annual return is completed and signed by the Council, submitted to the Internal Auditor for completion and signing, then checked and sent to the External Auditor within the time limit. Timings for signing off AGAR are included in Council's Forward Plan for future meetings.		M	Existing procedures adequate.
SANG Investments	Loss of capital sum through poor investment performance	Annual review of Investment Policy & Strategy at Full Council. Regular review of investment performance data by Finance & Policy Committee and via Town Clerk meeting with the Investment Managers.		M	Full Council and Finance & Policy control.
VAT	Re-claiming / charging	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements.		L	Existing procedures adequate.

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		All submissions are now submitted electronically and the software does not allow month end closure until the relevant return has been submitted.			
Election Costs	Risk of election cost	A contingency fund exists to meet election costs.		L	Existing procedures adequate.
Grants to other Organisations	Reduction of grant in future years – reputational risk	The Council clearly states to all applicants that a grant in one year does not imply ongoing support in future years. Where any ongoing agreements are made, Members must be assured that the agreement can be fully financed. Groups receiving any such grant must be kept informed if the grant situation changes. Grant applicants are required to present their application to the Council and to subsequently submit an update report. A list of grants awarded is shown on the Council's website.		L	Monitored through Finance & Policy Committee.
Staff	Loss of Clerk/RFO	The current Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk are both CiLCA qualified. A contingency fund should be established to enable training for the CiLCA qualification in the event of the Clerk resigning.		L	Existing procedures adequate.
	Fraud	The requirements of the Fidelity Guarantee insurance must be adhered to. The Insurance Fidelity Cover has been increased to £2M from Feb 2026.		L	Existing procedures adequate.
	Actions undertaken	Town Clerk should be provided with relevant training, reference books, access to assistance, legal advice and membership of professional bodies.		L	Existing procedures adequate.

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		Salary paid incorrectly	Salary input is performed by two members of staff who double check inputs. Monthly payroll figures are reported to the Council and minuted.		L	Existing procedures adequate.
	Policy & Procedure					
Lone Working		Injury, physical harm or abuse whilst at work	Policy in place and all staff will sign that they have read the Lone Working Policy. Risk assessment performed for Buildings & Facilities Officer's role.		L	Existing procedures adequate.
Safeguarding		Risk of injury	The Council will ensure that the groups we work and hire facilities to have adequate safeguarding procedures and insurance in place (included in Conditions of Hire) The Council has a Health & Safety policy in place, which is reviewed annually. Volunteer policy is in place for Council activities involving volunteers. Volunteers are covered by Council's insurance.		L	Copies of safeguarding procedures to be requested for bookings.
Data Protection		Policy Provision	Data Protection & Privacy Policy in place and reviewed annually.		L	Existing procedures adequate.

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Freedom of Information Act		Policy Provision	The Council has a model publication scheme for Local Councils in place. Monitor for updates to legislation.		L	Existing procedures adequate.
Data Storage		Loss of data	Back up EARNIE (payroll) at monthly intervals and kept in fire safe. Also regular back up taken by IT supplier Back up Omega (finance software) carried out at monthly intervals and memory stick. Also backed up by IT supplier. All computer data is stored in Sharepoint and backed up by IT supplier. PC data secured in case of fire. Cemetery records, leases land registry and wayleaves kept in fire safe, digital records stored in sharepoint. Recently purchased larger fire safe to enable secure paper document storage. Cemetery records are also held electronically in Epitaph application. Cyber Insurance in place from Feb 2026		L	Existing procedures adequate.
	Environment					
Buildings		Damage to buildings either direct or via delay in maintenance	Regular inspections and information displayed on what to do in an emergency. Weekly and monthly inspection of buildings by Buildings & Facilities Officer. Damage to buildings reported to council.		M	Existing procedures adequate.

Subject	Risk(s) Identified	Control Measures		Risk Level	Review/Access/Revise
Buildings Cont.	Venues not attractive to hirers	10 year Cap-ex surveys are planned – these will enable the Council to plan and fund maintenance over a longer period.		M	10-year cap-ex surveys would inform long term work programme. Monitored by Environment and Finance & Policy Committees
	Stairs in office are very narrow	Ring doorbell with video at bottom for those who are less able. Oak Room can be used instead of upstairs office to see those who have accessibility needs. Staff to ensure good lighting.		L	
	Acquisition of new buildings – income not covering operating costs	Budget planning and exploring usage options that enable a regular income. Full review of building condition and budgeting for ad hoc maintenance.		M	
Playgrounds	Risk of injury	Weekly inspections carried out by external contactor, reviewed by the Buildings & Facilities Office for work required. Three full inspections are completed by RoSPA Playsafety per year.		M	Existing procedures adequate.
Waste Compound	Risk of site being filled up	The waste compound is kept free of rubbish and the skip on site is managed by the grounds maintenance contractor.		L	Monitored by Officers.
Market (Not currently in operation)	Stalls not being set up properly	Inspection by Council Officers periodically. Members sometimes attend the markets and report any issues they find to the Council office.		L	Monitored by Officers.
	Trader uninsured				

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	Risk to public health	Log of trader's public liability insurance kept on file and checked annually. Check food suppliers have appropriate food hygiene certification and verify annually. Hart District Council also complete inspections. Investigate any hygiene reports made by residents.		L L	Maintain trader list and monitor. Maintain trader list and monitor.
Events Programme	Risk of injury	Risk assessments to be completed for all Council run events. Volunteers will be provided with risk assessment and full operational support. Volunteer policy is in place.		L	Monitored by Officers.
	Financial loss if event is cancelled	Check contractual obligations for cancellation clauses and payments due prior to booking with suppliers. Investigate event insurance (does not cover cancellation for infectious diseases and only covers extreme weather events). Plan back-up date, where possible.		M	Monitored by Officers.

Subject	Risk(s) Identified	Control Measures	Risk Level	Review/Access/Revise
Wildflower Verges (on YTC and HCC land)	Unexpected financial costs	Plan conversion projects and obtain costings / quotes in advance of budget setting. Negotiate licence costs.	L	Projects approved by relevant Committee.
	Incomplete project (contractor issues)	Monitor activity by third party organisers and provide appropriate assistance. Agree action required by Council to fulfil liabilities under cultivation licence for ongoing maintenance.	L	Monitored by Officers.
	Public liability	Ensure volunteer policy and risk assessments are in place for any volunteer-led projects. Council organised projects will be covered by usual procedures. All activity under Council umbrella will be insured.	L	Monitored by Officers.
Tree Stock	Risk to life and damage to property from diseased trees	Insurance covers all liabilities, if active tree management in place. Full tree inspections regularly completed by specialist consultant. Removal of affected tree limbs. If whole tree needs to be removed, look to replace with specimen suited to environment (subject to budget).	M	Monitored by Officers.

Amendment Record

Version 1: agreed by Full Council 14.03.22

Version 2: agreed by Full Council 13.03.23

Version 3: agreed by Full Council 11.03.24

Version 4: agreed by Full Council 03.03.25

Version 5: agreed by Full Council 02.03.26

Next due for Review: March 2027