



## Risk Management Strategy and Policy Statement 2025/26

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| Owner                       | John Harrison, Town Clerk   |
| Reviewer                    | Responsible Finance Officer   |
| Previous versions           | Risk Management Strategy and Policy Statement 2024/25                   |
| Templates used/adapted      |   |
| Approver                    | Finance & Governance Committee  |
| Date approved               | 22.10.25  |
| Date of next review         | Annually  |
| Related policies/procedures |   |
| Policy covers               | Hailsham Town Council<br>Hailsham Youth Service<br>Hailsham Post Office |

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### 1 Introduction to Risk Management

1.1 In all types of undertaking, there is the potential for events and consequences that may either be opportunities for benefit or threats to success. Corporate risk management is defined as the threat that an event or action will adversely affect the Council's ability to achieve its objectives or to successfully execute its strategies.

1.2 Risk management is the process whereby local councils methodically address the risks associated with what they do and the services which they provide. The Council recognises that it has a responsibility to take all reasonable steps and practical measures to manage risk, safeguard its employees, the people it works with and

provides services for and to protect the natural environment and buildings/assets for which it is responsible for.

## **2 The objectives of Risk Management**

2.1 Risk management is regarded as an essential element of good governance and as an integral part of internal control. It provides the foundation for effective management throughout the Council and focuses attention on the achievement of corporate objectives together with a consistent and structured approach to risk.

2.2 The objectives of the risk management policy are to:

- Integrate risk management into the culture of the council.
- Manage risk in accordance with best practice and legislative requirements.
- Minimise loss, disruption, injury and damages.
- Inform policy and operational decisions by identifying risks and their likely impact.
- Raise awareness of the need for risk management.

## **3 Risk Management Policy Statement**

3.1 Hailsham Town Council provides a range of services to the community and visitors to the area. To secure these services, some amount of risk-taking is inevitable. However, the Council recognises that effective risk management will improve strategic, operational and financial management by helping to maximise opportunities, minimise losses and maximise resources for the services it provides.

3.2 It is the policy of the Council to adopt a risk process that supports better decision making through understanding of risks, whether a positive opportunity or negative threat and their likely impact.

3.3 The policy seeks to confirm the commitment of the Council to a risk managed culture by ensuring that every member and employee has regard for the management of risks in the decision-making process and everyday work situations. The Council is committed to the management of risks to:

- Achieve its Aims and Objectives.
- Ensure compliance with statutory obligations.

- Safeguard its employees, members, service users and all other persons to whom the Council has a duty of care.
- Protect its assets, including property, equipment, vehicles, other resources and reduce associated losses and claims.
- Maintain effective control of public funds.
- Improve performance and service delivery.
- Minimise waste, fraud, and poor value for money.
- Support better project management.
- Promote the reputation of the Council.

3.4 This policy statement has the support of the Council, which recognises that achievement of these identified risk management objectives will benefit the whole community.

## Hailsham Town Council Risk Register

| Number | Area of Risk | Risk   | Level of Risk | Control Measures   | Review and Comments   |
|--------|--------------|--|---------------|--|---|
| A1     | Assets       | Inability to maintain existing services            | Medium        | Previous budget cuts have meant that ongoing maintenance hasn't happened<br>Conditional surveys happened so all required works are known<br>5 year budgets to cover annual maintenance works<br>A planned maintenance schedule is in place | Reserves to be used to bring buildings up to standard               |
| A2     | Assets       | Protection of physical assets                      | Medium        | All assets are insured. Insurance provider to be reviewed every three years<br>All leases and land registration details documented   | A schedule of leases to be created with a review of all by April 26 |
| A3     | Assets       | Encroachment on Public Land                        | Low           | Work closely with ESCC and Neighbourhood Policing Team   |   |
| A4     | Assets       | Security of buildings, equipment                   | Low           | Most buildings have alarm systems. All offices locked routinely overnight. Planned programme of testing electrical and safety equipment is in place  |   |
| R1     | Reputation   | Contractors may fail to deliver required standards | Low           | Only well established contractors used<br>Checks / references made before contract<br>Tender process used for all jobs over £10k<br>Procurement scoring matrix in place  |   |

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| I1 | Information | Lack of Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plans  | Low    | IT systems all in the cloud<br>Alternative office space available in The Church and also staff have the capacity to work remotely  | Disaster Recovery Plan to be created by April 26                                   |
| I2 | Information | Possible Cyber Attacks or Reliability of firewall and security of IT systems could compromise security | Medium | Firewall and security on IT equipment are regularly updated. Regular updates provided from outside IT consultants  | Regular training for all staff and members to be included on the training schedule |
| F1 | Financial   | That the Council's finances are run effectively and efficiently  | Medium | SMT to review and discuss budgets monthly<br>Full Council to review all current income and expenditure at each meeting<br>Each committee to review their budget at each meeting<br>Internal and external audits<br>Staff to have regular training if required  |  |
| F2 | Financial   | Risk of consequential loss of income   | Low    | Insurance cover in place for insurable risks<br>Aim for bank account reserves to be 50% of precept<br>All electronic records kept on the cloud<br>Committees consider budgets and income and expenditure<br>Regular bank reconciliations which are approved by committee<br>Earmarked reserves are in place for contingent liabilities |  |
| F3 | Financial   | Financial Controls and Records   | Low    | Experienced staff in place<br>Strict internal controls are in place to separate functions. Dual authorisation for all payments is in place.<br>All audit reports taken to committee to review  |  |

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|    |         |   |        | Financial regulations regularly reviewed<br>Internal controls reviewed annually   |   |
| F4 | Finance | Comply with outside body regulations  | Low    | Experienced staff in place<br>VAT returns completed quarterly<br>Internal auditors reviews HMRC returns   |   |
| F5 | Finance | Bad Debts   | Low    | A regular review of aged debts by Officers<br>Finance Committee review at each meeting<br>Any decisions to write off debts taken by Full Council  | Debtor policy created<br>Robust review of all leases currently in place   |
| P1 | People  | Inability to recruit and retain staff may result in the non-delivery of services  | Medium | Regular review of staffing structures and responsibilities.<br>All staff to partake in an annual appraisal system<br>Budget allocated to a training program<br>Council to ensure 'best practice' to always strive for excellence  | Review of the staff restructure to take place.<br>Staff morale to be considered and action plan put in place to help improve this if required |
| P2 | People  | Council has in place sufficient qualified or experienced staff to operate and manage its activities and structures are in place to protect operations against loss of a key member of staff | Low    | Key staff have assigned duties<br>Managers to have shared knowledge of roles to ensure continuation of operations<br>Written procedure notes to be produced for key duties<br>Training program in place<br>All contracts have been reviewed and updated<br>Schemes of delegation to be made | Review of staffing review   |

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| P3  | People                | Inability to manage during periods of change and/or absence                         | High   | Update Strategic Plan to include staff development and training schedule   | Process notes / maps to be created   |
| P4  | People                | Inability to meet increasing demands/ expectations within available resources       | Low    | Staff restructure taken place<br>Annual review to happen<br>5 year Budget review annually to make the best use of resources<br>5 year Strategic plan reviewed quarterly by strategy committee<br>Adequate reserves held to meet unforeseen expenditure |  |
| P5  | People                | Risk of violence to staff   | Low    | Regular review of lone working policy<br>Risk assessment for vulnerable staff  | Panic button in place  |
| P6  | People                | Protection of Staff<br>Absence  | Medium | Risk of staff abusing benefits of Local Government contracts<br>Sickness policy in place   | Return to work interviews in place<br>Monitoring of absence and reasons behind it<br>Possible review of contracts for new starters |
| RC1 | Regulatory Categories | Failure to maintain the required standards for the proper governance of the Council | Low    | 3 CiLCA qualified staff.<br>SMT members to train to this qualification<br>Member of NALC – receive regular updates   | 3 audits undertaken during the year  |

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| RC2 | Regulatory Categories | Failure to comply with relevant legislation                                       | Low | Policies in place and on a rolling review cycle<br>Risk assessments carried out regularly<br>Annual audits undertaken   | Schemes of delegation to be written                     |
| RC3 | Regulatory Categories | Council's business is protected against loss, damage and claims made upon it      | Low | Council has a combined insurance for buildings, property, employers and public liability<br>Insurance cover to be thoroughly reviewed every three years going through the quote/tender process<br>Insurance provider to be an expert in council insurance<br>Major assets to be valued regularly to ensure insured values are correct |   |
| RC4 | Regulatory Categories | Failure to comply with Health & Safety legislation                                | Low | Council has a comprehensive health and safety risk assessment process<br>Regular ROSPA checks by trained staff<br>IOSH qualified Operations Manager   |   |
| RC5 | Regulatory Categories | Protection of Council against theft by officers or former officers of the council | Low | The council's insurance includes a fidelity guarantee in respect of staff fraud or theft  |   |
| RC6 | Regulatory Categories | Data protection and freedom of information – risk of being non-compliant          | Low | The Council has a publication scheme for freedom of information requests on its website and is registered with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) for data protection requirements<br>Conducting yearly audit compliance reviews  | Council to conduct thorough data review audit by Mar 26 |

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| RC7 | Regulatory Categories | Ensuring activities are within legal powers | Medium | Town Clerk to clarify legal position of any new proposal taking outside legal advice where necessary |  |
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