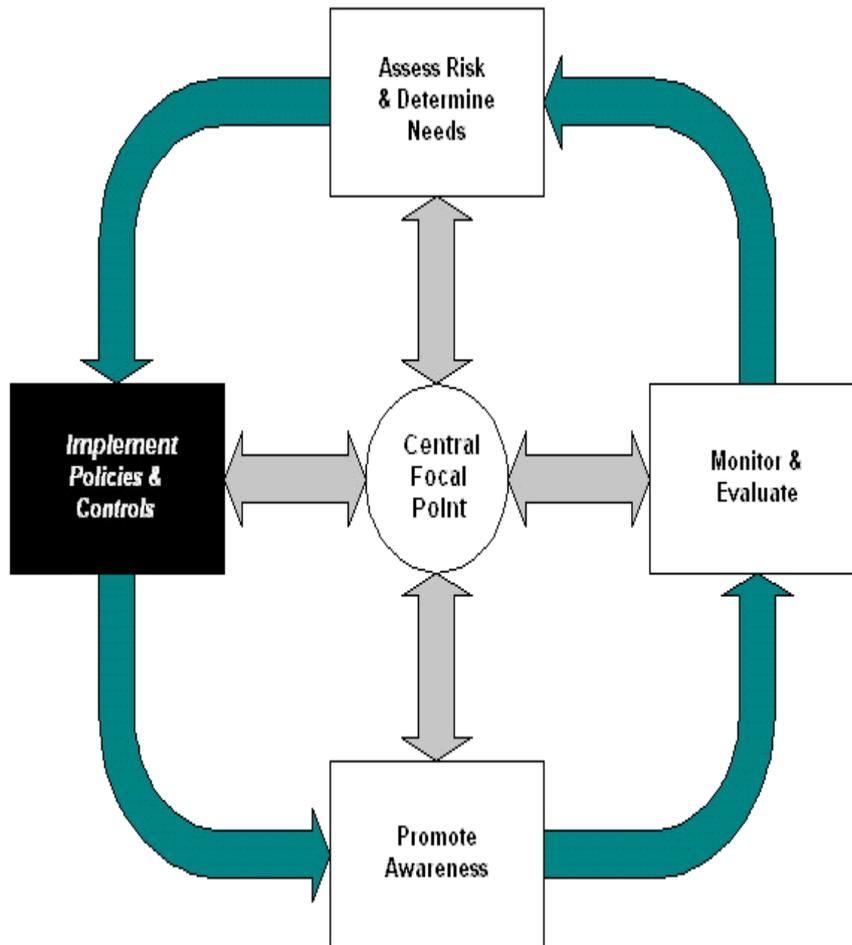


**FERRYHILL TOWN COUNCIL**



**RISK MANAGEMENT  
POLICY**



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## HOW RISK MANAGEMENT WILL BE MANAGED

A Risk Management team of officers has been developed to oversee risk management supported by the corporate Governance Sub Committee and ultimately full council.

## RISK MANAGEMENT TEAM;

- Town Clerk
- Finance and Administration Manager
- Works manager
- Accountant
- Reception Administration and Communications officer ( minute taker)

This Group will meet on a quarterly basis or as and when required.  
The meetings will be held each year in:

- March
- June
- September
- December

## **REVIEW PROCESS**

This policy will be reviewed in line with the planned policy review for all town council policies or as required to take account of urgent actions, changing legislation, government initiatives, best practice and experience gained within the Council.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Ferryhill Town Council provides a wide and varied range of services to local residents and works with other public, private and voluntary bodies to make Ferryhill a better place for people to live and work.

The past and future years have and will present many challenges for the Council in delivering its services, in particular with having to respond to the major cuts in funding from central government that is affecting Parish and Town Councils. Whilst these changes create opportunities; they also create significant risks and uncertainty. The Council has to manage the risks and opportunities associated with the delivery of our outcomes, by adopting good risk and opportunity management principles. This policy is focussed on providing the risk management principles, tools, techniques, advice and support for a successful transition from the organisation we currently are, to where we need to be.

Risk is unavoidable. It is an important part of life that allows us all to move forward and develop. Successful risk management is about ensuring that we have the correct level of control in place to provide sufficient protection from harm, without stifling our development. The Council's overriding attitude to risk is to operate in a culture of creativity and innovation, in which all key risks are identified in all areas of the business, are understood and proactively managed, rather than avoided. Risk management therefore needs to be taken into the heart of the Council and our key partners. We need to have the structures and processes in place to ensure the risks and opportunities of daily Council activities are identified, assessed and addressed in a standard way. We do not shy away from risk but instead seek to proactively manage it. This will allow us not only to meet the needs of the community today, but also be prepared to meet future challenges.

## OBJECTIVES

The following objectives set out clearly how we will unify our activities to improve and develop as a successful organisation in the understanding and management of risk.

- 1** Adopt a strategic approach to risk management to make better informed decisions which is vital to successful transformational change;
- 2** Set the 'tone from the top' on the level of risk we are prepared to accept on our different service delivery activities and priorities;
- 3** Acknowledge that even with good risk management and our best endeavours, things can go wrong. Where this happens we use the lessons learnt to try to prevent it from happening again;
- 4** Develop leadership capacity and skills in identifying, understanding and managing the risks facing the Council;
- 5** Integrate risk management into how we run Council business/services.
- 6** Sound risk management processes help us to achieve our core purpose, priorities and outcomes;
- 7** Support a culture of well-measured risk taking throughout the Council's business, including strategic, programme, partnership, project and operational. This includes setting risk ownership and accountabilities and responding to risk in a balanced way, considering the level of risk, reward, impact and cost of control measures;
- 8** Ensure that the Council continues to meet all statutory and best practice requirements in relation to risk management;
- 9** Ensure risk management continues to be a key and effective element of our corporate governance arrangements.

The objectives will be met by maintaining a robust and consistent risk management approach that will:

- identify and effectively manage strategic, operational and project risks
- focus on those key risks that, because of their likelihood and impact, make them priorities;
- Ensure accountabilities, roles and responsibilities for managing risks are clearly defined and communicated;
- Consider risk as an integral part of business planning, service delivery, key decision making processes, and project and partnership governance;
- Communicate risk information effectively through a clear reporting framework;
- Increase understanding and expertise in risk management through targeted training and the sharing of good practice.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the risk management approach outlined in this document is to:

- Provide standard definitions and language to underpin the risk management process;
- Ensure risks are identified and assessed consistently throughout the organisation through the clarification of key concepts;
- Clarify roles and responsibilities for managing risk;
- Implement an approach that meets current legislative requirements and follows best practice and relevant standards.

## DEFINITIONS

Risk can be defined as “an uncertain event that, should it occur, will have an effect on the Council’s objectives and/or reputation.” It is the combination of the probability of an event (**likelihood**) and its effect (**impact**).

Risk management generated opportunities can arise as a consequence of effectively managing risks, for example additional grant funding or improved working practices. Risk management is the “systematic application of principles, approach and processes to the identification, assessment and monitoring of risks.” By managing our risk process effectively we will be in a better position to safeguard against potential threats and exploit potential opportunities to improve services and provide better value for money.

Risk management is applied at all levels of service delivery and include:

- Corporate Strategic Risks – Risks that could have an effect on the successful achievement of our long term core purpose, priorities and outcomes. These are:
  1. risks that could potentially have a council-wide impact and/or
  2. risks that cannot be managed solely at a business unit level because higher level support/intervention is needed.
- Business Unit Risks – Risks at a service level that could have an effect on the successful achievement of that service outcomes / objectives. Potentially these risks could have a significant financial, reputational and/or service delivery impact on the Council as a whole.
- Contract Risks – Risks that could have an effect on the successful achievement of the contract’s outcomes / objectives in terms of delivery, outcomes and value for money. Contract risks are managed throughout the contracting process including contract management/business as usual.

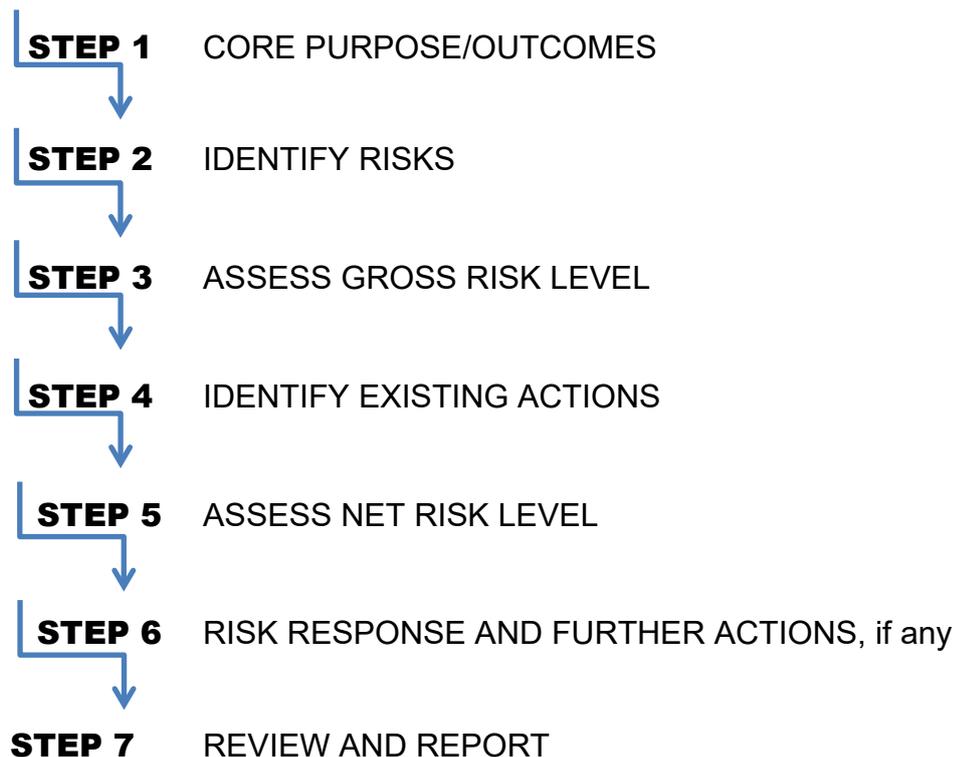
- Programme/Project Risks – Risks that could have an effect on the successful achievement of the programme or project’s outcomes / objectives in terms of service delivery, benefits realisation and engagement with key stakeholders (service users, third parties, partners etc.) and financial demand on the taxpayer of Ferryhill.
- Partnership Risks – Risks that could have an effect on the successful achievement of the partnership’s outcomes / objectives including engagement with key stakeholders (service users, third parties, partners etc.). These can be strategic and/or operational depending on the size and purpose of the partnership.

## APPROACH

For a number of years the Council has in place a basic approach to risk management and this policy will help to work towards a comprehensive and integrated approach to risk management where:

- staff are clear about what risk management is intended to achieve;
- significant risks are being identified and managed effectively;
- training and guidance on risk management are easily accessible;
- a consistent corporate approach is followed using a common ‘risk language’;
- it is seen as an integral part of good corporate governance.

This section details the agreed arrangements that are needed to ensure the effective management of risk across the organisation. The Council’s approach to risk management is based on best practice and involves clear communication and consultation with all involved in the processes and a number of key steps as follows;



Effective communication and consultation is critical to the successful management of risk. These are not one off standalone events but important factors at every point of the process and it is vital that staff at all levels across the organisation are involved if risk management is to be truly embedded and a useful management tool.

### **Step 1: Core Purpose / Outcomes**

Before we can identify our risks we need to establish the context by looking at what we are trying to achieve and what our proposed outcomes are. Depending on the area under review, the relevant objectives and outcomes will usually be detailed in existing documents.

### **Step 2: Identify Risks**

There are a number of different types of risks that an organisation may face including financial loss, failure of service delivery, physical risks to people, and damage to the organisation's reputation.

A checklist, not exhaustive, of risk categories are:

- Assets
- Customers / Citizens
- Economic
- Environment
- Financial
- Management
- New Partnerships / Projects / Contracts
- Opportunities / Outcomes
- Political
- Regulatory
- Reputation

Examples of risks from each category are detailed in the Risk Identification Checklist; (Appendix 1).

Describing the risk is equally important to ensure that risks are fully understood, and to assist with the identification of actions, the cause and effect of each risk must also be detailed. Typical phrases used to do this include:

<b><u>DESCRIPTION</u></b>	<b><u>CAUSE</u></b>	<b><u>EFFECT</u></b>
Risk of ...	Due to ...	Leads to ...
Failure to ...	Because ...	Results in ...
Failure of ...		
Lack of ...		
Loss of ...		
Uncertainty of...		
Delay in ...		
Inability to ...		
Inadequate ...		
Partnership with ...		
Development of ...		
Opportunity to ...		
Damage to...		

Once identified, all risks are recorded in a 'Risk Register'.

A risk owner must be allocated and recorded against each risk on the risk register. Such accountability helps to ensure 'ownership' of the risk is documented and recognised. A risk owner is defined as a person with the accountability and authority to effectively manage the risk.

At this stage there may well be a long list of possible risks. The next step will help to prioritise these in order of importance.

### **Step 3: Assess Gross Risk Level**

To ensure resources are focused on the most significant risks, the Council's approach to risk management is to assess the risks identified in terms of both the potential likelihood and impact so that actions can be prioritised.

The risk management process requires each risk to be assessed twice – gross and net risk levels.

The first assessment (the 'gross' risk level) is taken on the basis that there is no action being taken to manage the identified risk and/or any existing actions are not operating effectively. In other words, the worst case scenario if the risk were to occur.

To ensure that a consistent scoring mechanism is in place across the Council, risks are assessed using the agreed criteria for likelihood and impact detailed in Appendix 2.

When assessing the risk, the highest measure identified in each table is the score taken to plot the risk level on the risk matrix.

Where likelihood and impact crosses, determines the risk level.

For example, Possible Likelihood (2) and Very High Impact (4) would result in a risk level of 8.

The matrix uses a "traffic light" approach to show high (red), medium (amber) and low (green) risks.

The gross risk is considered to ensure that:

- informed decisions can be made about the consequences of stopping risk actions that are currently in place; and
- resources are not wasted over-controlling risks that are not likely to happen and would have little impact.

### **Step 4: Identify Existing Risk Actions**

Existing actions, which are helping to minimise the likelihood and/or impact of the risk occurring, are identified for each risk. These actions are specifically those in place or completed.

### **Step 5: Assess Net Risk Level**

The second assessment (the 'net' risk level) re-evaluates the risk, taking into consideration the effectiveness of the identified existing actions. In other words, the reality if the risk were to occur in the immediate future.

Net risks are prioritised by applying the same criteria and matrix used for assessing the gross risk level (Step 3). It is the risk owner's responsibility to ensure that the agreed

net risk level for each risk is an accurate reflection of the likelihood and impact measures detailed in Appendix 2.

The net risk is considered to ensure that:

- identified risks are prioritised in terms of their significance as it is not practical or possible to manage every risk all of the time; and
- existing actions are relevant and effectively managing and/or reducing the likelihood or impact of the identified risks.

### **Step 6: Risk Response and Further Actions**

Not all risks can be managed all of the time, so having assessed and prioritised the identified risks, cost effective action needs to be taken to manage those that pose the most significant threat.

Risk may be managed in one, or a combination of, the following ways:

- **Avoid** - A decision is made not to take a risk.
- **Accept** - A decision is taken to accept the risk.
- **Transfer** - All or part of the risk is transferred through insurance or to a third party.
- **Reduce** - Further additional actions are implemented to reduce the risk.
- **Exploit** - Whilst taking action to mitigate risks, a decision is made to exploit a resulting opportunity.

These are described in more detail in Appendix 3.

### **Step 7 – Review and Report**

Risk management should be thought of as an ongoing process and as such risks need to be reviewed regularly to ensure that prompt and appropriate action is taken to reduce their likelihood and/or impact.

Ferryhill's approach is one where such reviews:

- are where possible part of existing performance monitoring timetables;
- focus on those risks that, because of their likelihood and impact, make them priorities.

Regular reporting, through the Corporate Governance Sub Committee enables senior managers and Members to be more fully aware of the extent of the risks and progression being made to manage them. Net red risks on risk registers will be reported with the corporate risks in regular reports. Appendix 4 details the agreed reviewing and reporting arrangements aimed at providing the most appropriate and up to date information.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

To ensure risk management is effectively implemented, all Ferryhill Town Council Members and officers should have a level of understanding of the Council's risk management approach and regard risk management as part of their responsibilities:

### All Employees

- a) Manage day to day risks and opportunities effectively and report risk management concerns to their line managers.
- b) Attend training and awareness sessions as appropriate

### All Members

- a) Support and promote an effective risk management culture
- b) Constructively review and scrutinise the risks involved in delivering the Council's core purpose, priorities and outcomes.
- c) Attend training and awareness sessions as appropriate

### **COUNCIL;**

- a) Risk manage the Council in delivering its core purpose, priorities and Outcomes
- b) Approve the risk management framework
- c) Consider and challenge the risks involved in making any 'key decisions'

Some individuals have specific leadership roles or responsibilities and these are identified below:

### **INTERNAL AUDITOR;**

Provides independent assurance to the Council on the overall adequacy of the risk management framework including review of proposed amendments to the Risk Management Framework prior to its presentation to Council

### **CORPORATE GOVERNANCE SUB COMMITTEE;**

- a. Champion an effective Council-wide risk management culture
- b. Ensure members receive relevant risk information
- c. Responsible for owning and managing corporate strategic risks

**TOWN CLERK;**

- a. The Town Clerk is the Corporate Champion for Risk Management. The Corporate Champion promotes the adequate and proper consideration of risk management to senior managers and more widely within the Council.
- b. Responsible for the effective leadership and management of risk to meet group / business objectives / outcomes in line with the Council's risk management framework and confirming annually that this is done as part of the annual governance statement process.

**RISK MANAGEMENT TEAM;**

- a. Risk manages their group in delivering the Council's core purpose, priorities and outcomes.
- b. Constructively review and challenge the risks involved in decision making.
- c. With the appropriate risk owner, maintain the relevant risk registers ensuring all key risks are identified, managed and reviewed in line with the corporate risk management approach.
- d. Promptly escalate risks appropriately.
- e. Encourage staff to be open and honest in identifying risks and opportunities.
- f. Ensure risk management process is an explicit part of transformation programmes and all significant projects.

**LINE MANAGERS;**

- a. Responsible for the effective leadership and management of risk in their area of responsibility in line with the Council's risk management framework and, if the manager of a corporate significant project, confirm annually they have done this as part of the annual governance statement process
- b. identify, assess and appropriately document significant risks
- c. clearly identify risk ownership
- d. manage risks in line with corporately agreed timescales/policies
- e. escalate risks appropriately.

## **EMBEDDING RISK MANAGEMENT**

For risk management to be effective and a meaningful management tool, it needs to be an integral part of key management processes and day-to-day working. As such risks and the monitoring of associated actions should be considered as part of a number of the Council's significant business processes, including:

- Corporate Decision Making – significant risks, which are associated with policy or action to be taken when making key decisions, are included in appropriate committee reports.
- Business/Budget Planning – this annual process includes updating the relevant risk registers to reflect current aims/outcomes.
- Project Management – all significant projects should formally consider the risks to delivering the project outcomes before and throughout the project. This includes risks that could have an effect on service delivery, benefits realisation and engagement with key stakeholders (service users, third parties, partners etc.).
- Partnership Working – partnerships should establish procedures to record and monitor risks and opportunities that may impact the Council and/or the Partnership's aims and objectives.
- Procurement – Contract Standing Orders clearly specify that all risks and actions associated with the purchase need to be identified and assessed, kept under review and amended as necessary during the procurement process.
- Contract Management – all significant risks associated with all stages of contract management are identified and kept under review
- Insurance – the Council's Finance and Administration Manager manages insurable risks and self-insurance arrangements.
- Health and Safety – the Council has a specific risk assessment policy to be followed in relation to health and safety risks.

### **Culture**

The Council will be open in its approach to managing risks and will seek to avoid a blame culture.

Lessons from events that lead to loss or reputational damage will be shared as well as lessons from things that go well. Discussion on risk in any context will be conducted in an open and honest manner.

### **Training and Awareness**

Having developed a robust approach and established clear roles and responsibilities and reporting lines, it is important to provide Members and officers with the knowledge and skills necessary to enable them to manage risk effectively.

Full training will be provided and members and officers should make every effort to attend the training provided.

**Check List for Risk Identification**

<b>ASSETS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Property - land, buildings and equipment,</li> <li>• Information – security, retention, timeliness, accuracy, intellectual property rights</li> <li>• ICT – integrity, security, availability, e-government</li> <li>• Environmental - landscape, countryside, historic environment, open space</li> </ul>
<b>CUSTOMERS/ CITIZENS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changing needs and expectations of customers - poor communication/consultation</li> <li>• Poor quality / reduced service delivery - impact on vulnerable groups</li> <li>• Crime and disorder, health inequalities, safeguarding issues</li> </ul>
<b>ECONOMIC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demographics</li> <li>• Economic downturn - prosperity of local businesses / local communities</li> </ul>
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recycling, green issues, energy efficiency, land use and green belt issues, noise, contamination, pollution, increased waste or emissions,</li> <li>• Impact of planning or transportation policies</li> </ul>
<b>FINANCIAL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budgetary pressures</li> <li>• Loss of/reduction in income/funding, increase in energy costs</li> <li>• Cost of living, interest rates, inflation etc.</li> <li>• Financial management arrangements</li> <li>• Investment decisions, Sustainable economic growth</li> <li>• Affordability models and financial checks</li> <li>• Inadequate insurance cover</li> <li>• System / procedure weaknesses that could lead to fraud</li> </ul>

<b>MANAGEMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of key staff, recruitment and retention issues</li> <li>• Training issues</li> <li>• Lack of/or inadequate management support</li> <li>• Poor communication/consultation</li> <li>• Capacity issues - availability, sickness absence etc</li> <li>• Emergency preparedness / Business continuity</li> <li>• Bullying and harassment of officers</li> <li>• Time wasting of officers from malicious correspondence from residents and members</li> </ul>
<b>NEW PARTNERSHIPS/ PROJECTS/ CONTRACTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New initiatives, new ways of working, new policies and procedures</li> <li>• New relationships – accountability issues / unclear roles and responsibilities</li> <li>• Monitoring arrangements</li> <li>• Managing change</li> <li>• Current and new sub groups/organisations developing and working against each other and/or the Town Council, not as a whole for the town</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITIES / OUTCOMES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add value or improve customer experience/satisfaction</li> <li>• Reduce waste and inefficiency</li> <li>• Raising educational attainment and improving the lives of children, young people and families</li> <li>• Maximising independence for older people with disabilities</li> <li>• Developing sustainable places and communities</li> <li>• Protecting the community and making Ferryhill a safer place to live</li> </ul>
<b>POLITICAL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change in Government policy</li> <li>• Member support / approval</li> <li>• Political personalities</li> <li>• New political arrangements</li> </ul>

<b>REGULATORY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legislation and internal policies/regulations including: Health &amp; Safety at Work Act, Data Protection, Freedom of Information, Human Rights, Equalities Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty 2011, Employment Law, TUPE, Environmental legislation etc.</li> <li>• Grant funding conditions</li> <li>• Legal challenges, legal powers, judicial reviews or public interest reports</li> </ul>
<b>REPUTATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negative publicity, increase in complaints</li> <li>• Political infighting</li> <li>• Councillor breach of code of conduct</li> </ul>

## Measures of Likelihood and Impact

<b>Very high (4)</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>High (3)</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Medium (2)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Low (1)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
	<b>Unlikely (1)</b>	<b>Possible (2)</b>	<b>Likely (3)</b>	<b>Very likely (4)</b>

### LIKELIHOOD MEASURES

	<b>Unlikely 1</b>	<b>Possible 2</b>	<b>Likely 3</b>	<b>Very Likely 4</b>
<b>Probability</b>	Less than 10% chance of circumstances arising	10% to 40% chance of circumstances arising	41% to 75% chance of circumstances arising	More than 75% chance of circumstances arising
<b>Timescale</b>	Is <b>unlikely</b> to occur.	Possible in the <b>next 3 or more years.</b>	Likely to occur in the <b>next 1-2 years.</b>	Occurred in the <b>past year</b> or is very likely to occur in the <b>next year.</b>

**IMPACT MEASURES**

	<b>Low 1</b>	<b>Medium 2</b>	<b>High 3</b>	<b>Very High 4</b>
<b>People / Duty of Care</b>	Low level of foreseeable minor injuries	High level of foreseeable minor injuries. Low level of foreseeable serious injuries	High level of foreseeable severe injuries	Foreseeable long-term injury, illness or fatality
<b>Financial Impact</b>	Less than 5% over project budget	5-10% over project budget	11-25% over project budget	More than 25% over project budget
<b>Legal Impact</b>	Minor civil litigation	Major civil litigation and/or local public enquiry	Major civil litigation and/or national public enquiry	Legal action certain Section 151 or government intervention or criminal charges
<b>Service Impact</b>	Short term service disruption	Noticeable service disruption affecting customers	Significant service failure but not directly affecting vulnerable groups	Serious service failure directly affecting vulnerable groups
<b>Project Delivery</b>	Minor delay to project	Significant delay to project	Project fails to deliver target impacting on the Business Unit's performance	Project fails to deliver target impacting on Council's performance
<b>Intervention Required</b>	Intervention by Service Manager, Project Manager or equivalent	Intervention by Head of Service or equivalent.	Intervention by Town Clerk or equivalent	Intervention by Members
<b>Reputation Impact</b>	Short term negative local media attention	Significant negative local media attention	Sustained negative local media attention and/or significant national media attention	Sustained negative national media attention

## Risk Response Categories

	<b>Description</b>
<b>Avoid</b>	<p>A decision is made not to take a risk.</p> <p>Where the risks outweigh the possible benefits, avoid the risk by doing things differently e.g. revise strategy, revisit objectives or stop the activity.</p>
<b>Accept</b>	<p>A decision is taken to accept the risk.</p> <p>Management and/or the risk owner make an informed decision to accept that existing actions sufficiently reduce the likelihood and impact of a risk and there is no added value in doing more.</p> <p><b><i>Net red risks are outside of the level of risk the Council's should be prepared to accept.</i></b></p>
<b>Transfer</b>	<p>Transfer all or part of the risk through insurance or to a third party e.g. contractor or partner, who is better able to manage the risk.</p> <p><b><i>Although responsibility can be transferred, in most cases accountability remains with the Council, so this still needs to be monitored.</i></b></p>
<b>Reduce</b>	<p>Implement <u>further additional action(s)</u> to reduce the risk by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• minimising the likelihood of an event occurring (e.g. preventative action)</li> </ul> <p>and/or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reducing the potential impact should the risk occur (e.g. business continuity plans)</li> </ul> <p>Further actions are recorded in the risk register and regularly monitored. Once they have been completed, where appropriate a resultant action should be recorded as an existing action and the net risk level re-assessed.</p>
<b>Exploit</b>	<p>Whilst taking action to mitigate risks, a decision is made to exploit a resulting opportunity.</p>

## Reviewing and Reporting Framework

<b>Net Risk Level and Score</b>	<b>Frequency of Risk Reviews (applies to all risk registers)</b>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>High</b> <b>12-16</b></p>	<p>There are significant risks, which may have a serious impact on the Council and the achievement of its objectives if not managed. Immediate management action needs to be taken to reduce the level of net risk. Any net red risks will be monitored by the Corporate Governance Sub Committee as required.</p> <p><b>As a minimum review monthly.</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Medium</b> <b>4-9</b></p>	<p>Although usually accepted, these risks may require some additional mitigating to reduce likelihood if this can be done cost effectively. Reassess to ensure conditions remain the same and existing actions are operating effectively.</p> <p><b>As a minimum review quarterly</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Low</b> <b>1-3</b></p>	<p>These risks are being effectively managed and any further action to reduce the risk would be inefficient in terms of time and resources. Ensure conditions remain the same and existing actions are operating effectively.</p> <p><b>As a minimum review 6-monthly</b></p>