



East Boldre Parish Council

RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY

East Boldre Parish Council is committed to identifying and managing risks, using the following procedures, and to ensuring that risks are maintained at an acceptable level. Any action that is felt necessary will be taken by East Boldre Parish Council.

The Clerk (who is also the responsible financial officer) will review risks on a regular basis, including any newly identified risks, and will report to Council. The review will include identification of any unacceptable levels of risk.

The Local Councils Governance and Accountability Guidance – a Practitioners Guide 2010 edition makes the following observations regarding risk management.

The focus of good risk management is to identify what can go wrong and take steps to avoid this or successfully manage the consequences. Risk management is not just about financial management: it is about setting objectives and achieving them in order to deliver high quality public services.

It goes on to make the point that Members are ultimately responsible for risk management because risk threatens the achievement of policy objectives. Members should, therefore –

- a. take steps to identify key risks facing the Council
- b. evaluate the potential consequences to the Council if an event identified as a risk takes place
- c. decide upon appropriate measures to avoid, reduce or control the risk or its consequences.
- d. record any conclusions or decisions reached.

To identify the risks facing a council, the Guidance recommends beginning by grouping the three main types of decisions that have to be taken into the following areas:

- i. Areas where there may be scope to use insurance to help manage risk
- ii. Areas where there may be scope to work with others to help manage risk
- iii. Areas where there may be need to self-managed risk.

1. Areas where there may be scope to use insurance to help manage risk`

1 RISK IDENTIFICATION- Insurance cover for risk is the most common approach to certain types of inherent risk:

a. Protection of physical assets

All physical assets are insured.

b. Public Liability

EBPC has a Public Liability Insurance of £10,000,000. It has also personal accident liability cover for employees, members and volunteers under the above policy.

There is a separate policy for the allotment plots.

c. Employers Liability

EBPC has an Employers Liability Insurance of £10,000,000

d. Loss of cash

e. Fidelity guarantee

f. Libel and Slander

g. Commercial legal protection

h. Office equipment

i. Personal accident

2 INTERNAL CONTROLS

a. Maintain an up-to-date register of Assets and Investments

The Asset Register is reviewed annually by the Clerk and members receive a regularly updated list.

b. Regular maintenance for physical assets

Seats, bus shelter and notice board are monitored by clerk and councillors. Inspection of allotments are on a regular basis by clerk and councillors

c. Annual Review of risk and the adequacy and robustness of insurance cover

The Clerk reviews the insurance cover annually, makes recommendations for approval by Council and updates cover as agreed

3 INTERNAL AUDIT ASSURANCE

a. Review of internal controls in place and their documentation

Internal controls are reviewed as necessary by the Clerk, finance group and Internal Auditor. Recommendations are submitted to Council.

2. Areas where there may be scope to work with others to help manage risk

1 RISK IDENTIFICATION

a. Security for vulnerable buildings, amenities or equipment

The Clerk's home is insured and council equipment secure. Allotment users are aware of security. Other security measures are not appropriate in a rural situation

b. Maintenance for vulnerable buildings, amenities or equipment

In-house maintenance is undertaken where possible and contractors used as needed. Annual inspection carried out on amenities.

c. Banking Services

Reviewed not less than every 4 years by Council. All cheques require two signatures. Council review all payments. Authority delegated to Clerk to transfer between accounts and check balances by internet banking.

d. Provision of amenities/facilities

Allotments are leased on an annual basis.

e. Professional services, contractors etc.

The Council endeavours to ensure that wherever possible it has the opportunity to select (from several) providers of any professional service it requires.

2 INTERNAL CONTROLS

a. Standing Orders and financial regulations dealing with the award of contracts for services or purchases

The Council has Standing Orders and financial regulations that govern the awarding of contracts/purchases.

b. Arrangements to detect and deter fraud and/or corruption

Invoices are subjected to scrutiny by both the Clerk and the cheque signatories. Variation in salary payments is fully justified before payment. Staff overtime is only approved by full Council. Expenses are only approved after submission of fully detailed claim form.

c. Regular bank reconciliations, independently reviewed

Bank statements are received monthly and are reconciled by the Clerk. These are initialled by the Chairman. Bank reconciliation is included at every meeting.

3 INTERNAL AUDIT ASSURANCE

a. Review of internal controls in place and their documentation

Recommendations from the Clerk, finance group and Internal Auditor are submitted to Council.

b. Review of minutes to ensure legal powers are available and the basis of the powers recorded and correctly applied

Where appropriate, legal powers bestowed on the Council will be recorded in the minutes against decisions taken. The minutes of meetings are also reviewed during the internal audit process.

c. Review of arrangements to prevent and detect fraud and corruption

The use of Standing Orders, Finance Regulations, internal controls and consideration by Council are all methods which contribute to prevent and deter fraud and corruption.

3. Areas where there may be a need to self-manage risk

1 RISK IDENTIFICATION

a. Keeping proper financial records in accordance with statutory regulations

Financial records are kept in accordance with the statutory requirements and are reviewed as part of the Audit process

b. Ensuring all business activities are within legal powers applicable to Parish Councils

See Section 2 Internal Audit Assurance (b.)

c. Complying with restrictions on borrowing

There is currently no borrowing.

d. Ensuring that all requirements are met under employment law and Inland Revenue regulations

Inland Revenue calculations are made by HMRC Real Time Information and are subject to the audit process. Salary forecasts are undertaken as part of the budget setting process.

e. Ensuring all requirements are met under Customs and Excise regulations

All such requirements are met by the Clerk and the Internal Audit process

f. Ensuring the adequacy of the annual precept within sound budgeting arrangements

The budget is reviewed and approved by Council annually.

g. Ensuring the proper use of funds granted to local community bodies under specific powers or Section 137

Grant applications are considered by Council within the parameters of the grants policy. Section 137 grants are listed separately in the annual accounts

h. Proper, timely and accurate reporting of the Council business in the minutes

Council minutes are distributed to Members well in advance of the subsequent meeting who check the draft for accuracy and then verify as a correct record as one of the first items of business of that meeting and signed at the meeting. Failure to do so is recorded. Any working party notes are presented to full Council for information and ratification and are included in the minutes.

i. Responding to electors wishing to exercise their rights of inspection

The Council has adopted the publication scheme under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and has its own written policy.

j. Proper document control

Paperwork is retained in accordance with national guidelines and shown in Council's 'Retention of Documents' policy. Relevant documents are available for viewing on request. The council is registered for data protection.

k. Register of members' interests and gifts and hospitality in place, complete, accurate and up-to-date

The members' register of interest is held by the Clerk and a copy is held by the Monitoring Officer at New Forest District Council. It is the responsibility of Members to notify the Clerk of changes. The entries are reviewed annually.

2 INTERNAL CONTROLS

a. Regular scrutiny of financial records and proper arrangements for the approval of expenditure

Monthly payment schedules are submitted to Council for approval prior to payments being made.

b. Recording in the minutes the precise powers under which expenditure is being approved

See Section 2 Internal Audit Assurance (b.)

c. Regular returns to the Inland Revenue; contracts of employment for all staff; systems of updating records for any changes in relevant legislation reviewed by Council

Inland Revenue Returns are completed and submitted by the clerk. Salaries are calculated by HMRC Real Time Information and are subject to internal audit. Staffing issues are referred to the Chairman for recommendation to Council.

d. Regular returns of VAT

The Clerk is responsible for completion and submission of VAT returns and these are submitted at least annually or more frequently according to level of expenditure.

e. Developing system of performance measurement

In accordance with legislation, staff appraisal for the clerk will be undertaken annually, by Chairman.

f. Minutes properly numbered with a master copy kept in safekeeping

All Council, Committee and Working Party minutes are correctly numbered. These are loose leaf and signed. Original copies are kept in the Clerk's office. They are also kept as computer files which are backed up locally and remotely.

g. Documented procedures to deal with enquiries from the public

Calls, letters and e-mails are dealt with as soon as practicable unless referred to Council. In such cases, acknowledgement of the enquiry is made. All contacts are recorded.

h. Documented procedures for document receipt, circulation, response, handling and filing

The Clerk receives all mail.(Including email) All relevant mail is listed for consideration of information. Mail for action by administration is dealt with accordingly and filed when actions are completed. All mail is date stamped upon receipt. A list of all information received is kept with a copy sent to each councillor each month.

i. Adoption of Codes of Conduct for members.

The Council has adopted the Code of Conduct.

3 INTERNAL AUDIT ASSURANCE

a. Review of internal controls in place and their documentation

Internal controls are reviewed as necessary by the Clerk, Chairman and Internal Auditor. Recommendations are submitted to Council

b. Review of minutes to ensure legal powers in place, recorded and correctly applied

See Section 2 Internal Audit Assurance (b.)

c. Computer data safety

All necessary procedures and documents are computerised and all relevant areas of Clerks computer is backed-up daily to external hard drive and to remote storage.

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