



# Newark

TOWN COUNCIL

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## **Newark Town Council**

### **Risk Management Strategy**

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**September 2024 supersedes May 2010**

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# **The Council's Risk Management Strategy**

## **1. Introduction:**

1.1 The purpose of the Council's Corporate Risk Management Strategy is to effectively manage potential opportunities and threats to the Council achieving its objectives.

1.2 Newark Town Council has adopted the Audit Commission definition of Risk: 'Risk is the threat that an event or action will adversely affect the organisation's ability to achieve its objectives and to successfully execute its strategies'.

1.3 The Council's Town Clerk will be responsible for the Council's overall Health and Safety policy and will report to the SQAP Sub- Committee

1.4 Strategic risk is best managed by the Service Quality and Performance Sub-Committee (SQAP) who will report to the Council.

## **2. Risk Management Strategy Statement**

2.1 The Council believes that risk is a feature of all businesses. Some risks will always exist and can never be eliminated: they therefore need to be appropriately managed.

2.2 The Council recognises that it has a responsibility to manage hazards and risks and supports a structured and focused approach to managing them by the application of a Risk Management Strategy.

2.3 In this way the Council will improve its ability to achieve its strategic objectives and enhance the value of services it provides to the community.

## **3. The Council's Risk Management objectives are to:**

- Embed risk management into the culture and operations of the Council
- Adopt a systematic approach to risk management as an integral part of service planning and performance management
- Manage risk in accordance with best practice
- Anticipate and respond to changing social, environmental and legislative requirements
- Ensure all employees have clear responsibility for both the ownership and cost of risk and the tools to effectively reduce / control it

3.1 These objectives will be achieved by:

- Establishing clear roles, responsibilities and reporting lines within the organisation for risk management
- Incorporating risk management in the Council's decision making and operational management processes
- Reinforcing the importance of effective risk management through training
- Incorporating risk management considerations into Service / Business Planning, Project Management, Partnerships & Procurement Processes
- Monitoring risk management arrangements on a regular basis

### 3.2 The benefits of Risk Management include:

- Safer environment for all
- Improved public relations and reputation for the organisation
- Improved efficiency within the organisation
- Protect employees and others from harm
- Reduction in probability / size of uninsured or uninsurable losses
- Competitive Insurance Premiums (as insurers recognise the Council's as being a "low risk")
- Maximise efficient use of available resources.

## 4. Skills and Expertise

4.1 Having established roles and responsibilities for risk management, the Council must ensure that it has the skills and expertise necessary. It will achieve this by providing Risk Management Training for Executive Officers and where appropriate providing awareness courses that address the individual needs of both the manual workforce and office staff.

4.2 Training will include seminars focusing on best practice in risk management and awareness courses will also focus on specific risks in areas such as the following:

- Partnership working
- Project management
- Operation of Council vehicles and equipment
- Manual labour tasks e.g. Health and Safety issues

## 5. Embedding Risk Management

5.1 Risk management is an important part of the service planning process. This will enable both strategic and operational risk, as well as the accumulation of risks from a number of areas to be properly considered. Over time the Council aims to be able to demonstrate that there is a fully embedded process.

## **6. Supporting Innovation and Improvement**

6.1 Risk Management will be incorporated into the business planning process for the Council with a risk assessment of all business aims being undertaken as part of the annual Estimates process.

6.2 The Council's internal auditor will have a role in reviewing the effectiveness of control measures that have been put in place to ensure that risk management measures are working.

## **7. Risk Management Policy Document**

7.1 In all types of undertaking, there is the potential for events and consequences that may either be opportunities for benefit or threats to success. Council's are no different and risk management is increasingly recognised as being central to their strategic management. It is a process whereby Councils methodically address the risks associated with what they do and the services which they provide. The focus of good risk management is to identify what can go wrong and take steps to avoid this or successfully manage the consequences.

7.2 Risk management is not just about financial management; it is about achieving the objectives of the organisation to deliver high quality public services. Failure to manage risks effectively can be expensive in terms of litigation and reputation, the ability to achieve desired targets, and, ultimately, the local community's rate and council tax bills.

7.3 Councils need to keep under review and, if need be, strengthen their own corporate governance arrangements, thereby improving their stewardship of public funds and providing positive and continuing assurance to taxpayers.

7.4 The Council already looks at risk as part of their day to day activities but there is now a need to look at, adapt, improve where necessary and document existing processes.

7.5 The importance of looking afresh at risk comes in the wake of a more demanding society, bold initiatives and more challenges when things go wrong. It also arises because of the significant changes which may take place as a result of the change of government. Councils currently face pressures that potentially give rise to a range of new and complex risks and which suggest that risk management is becoming an increasingly vital aspect of governance.

7.6 Members are ultimately responsible for risk management because risks threaten the achievement of policy objectives. As a minimum, the members should, at least once each year:

- take steps to identify and update key risks facing the Council;

- evaluate the potential consequences to the Council if an event identified as a risk takes place; and
- decide upon appropriate measures to avoid, reduce or control the risk or its consequences.

7.7 This Risk Management Policy document is designed to be a living document which will be continually updated when new risks are identified or when existing risks change.

7.8 The assessment of potential impact will be classified as high, medium or low. At the same time it will assess how likely a risk is to occur and this will enable the Council to decide which risks it should pay most attention to when considering what measures to take to manage the risks.

7.9 After identifying and evaluating risks the responsible officer will need to decide upon appropriate measures to take in order to avoid, reduce or control the risks or their consequences.

## Risk Register

<b>Risk Identified</b>	<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>Tolerate</b>	<b>Treat</b>	<b>Transfer</b>	<b>Terminate</b>	<b>Details of how risk will be managed</b>	<b>Review Date</b>	<b>Officer</b>
Protection of office equipment. ( loss or damage)	1	Y				Annual inspection, electrical testing and insurance	April annually	
Loss of cash through theft or dishonesty (fidelity guarantee)	1		Y			Insurance and sound systems and audited processes	Annually at renewal time	
Computer Programming services	1	Y				Contractor employed as required	Apr-25	
Banking arrangements, including borrowing or lending	1	Y				Limits set by Council, financial regulations, audited processes	Oct-24	
Keeping proper financial records in accordance with statutory requirements	1	Y				Internal Auditor employed & External Audit required. Finance Officer employed. Financial Regulations	Monthly	
Complying with restrictions on borrowing	1	Y				Monitored by Finance Officer and Internal Auditor. Internal and External Audits	Monthly	
Proper, timely and accurate reporting of Council's business in the minutes	1	Y				Town Clerk's responsibility.	quarterly	
Regular review of policies	1	Y				Town Clerk to produce schedule at Annual meeting	annually	
Protection of buildings (loss or damage)	2	Y				Regular recorded asset inspections, Buildings and assets insured	April annually	
Protection of plant and equipment. (loss or damage)	2	Y				Weekly inspections, insurance	Annually at renewal time	

<b>Risk Identified</b>	<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>Tolerate</b>	<b>Treat</b>	<b>Transfer</b>	<b>Terminate</b>	<b>Details of how risk will be managed</b>	<b>Review Date</b>	<b>Officer</b>
Ensuring all business activities are within legal powers applicable to Town Council's	2	Y				Town Clerk's advice taken - expected to use specialist advice where appropriate. Finance Officer ensures activities comply with Finance Regulations	Ongoing	
Ensuring that all requirements are met under employment law and HM Revenue & Customs regulations	2	Y				Town Clerk's responsibility seeking advice where necessary from Finance Officer	Ongoing	
Ensuring the adequacy of the annual precept within sound budgeting arrangements	2	Y				Annual Estimates recommended for approval by the SQAP Sub- Committee. Council approves at precept setting meetings; following regular monitoring at Council Meetings	quarterly	
Meeting the laid down timetables when responding to consultation invitations	2	Y				Town Clerk's responsibility	annually	
Responding to those wishing to exercise their rights of inspection	2	Y				Notices posted in accordance with Legislation – Town Clerk's responsibility	annually	
Register of Members' Interests and Gifts and Hospitality in place	2	Y				Maintained by Town Clerk	annually	
The Risk of damage to third party property or individuals as a consequence of the Council providing services (public liability)	3		Y			Risk Assessments and insurance	April annually	

Risk Identified	Risk Level	Tolerate	Treat	Transfer	Terminate	Details of how risk will be managed	Review Date	Officer
Critical incident loss of office	3		Y			Back up computer facility data stored off-site for emergency use	October and April annually	
Corporate Manslaughter Legislation for employees	3		Y			Seek specialist advice	April annually	
Maintenance of all Council property	3		Y			Routine operations	Quarterly inspections	
Vehicle or equipment lease or hire	3		Y			Insure	annual	
Professional Services (Engineering)	3		Y			Consultant employed	Apr-11	
Complying with Health and Safety Law	3		Y			H & S Officer appointed. Town Clerk	Ongoing	
Regular budget monitoring	3		Y			Town Clerk and Finance Officer's responsibility	monthly	
Flood inundation by actions of others ie failure of raised embankments	3		Y			Environment Agency in conjunction with Newark & Sherwood District Council's Engineer. Annual meetings	annually	
Legal liability as a consequence of asset ownership (public liability)	6			Y		Insure	Annually at renewal time	
Legal liability as an employer (employers' liability)	6			Y		Insure	Annually at renewal time	
Legal liability as the owner of motor vehicles (motor insurance)	6			Y		Insure	Annually at renewal time	
Professional Services (Legal)	6			Y		Solicitors instructed as required	Apr-11	
Professional Services (Personnel Consultants)	6			Y		Solicitors instructed as required	Apr-11	

<b>Risk Identified</b>	<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>Tolerate</b>	<b>Treat</b>	<b>Transfer</b>	<b>Terminate</b>	<b>Details of how risk will be managed</b>	<b>Review Date</b>	<b>Officer</b>
Mechanical & Engineering Asset Inspections	6			Y		Annual inspection by insurance provider. Quarterly in house inspections	Apr-11	
Monitoring of performance against agreed standards under partnership agreements	N/A						Apr-11	

## INTERNAL RISKS

Definition: An internal risk is any factor within the control of the Council that might prevent the Council from continuing to provide an effective service to the public, its employees and its suppliers.

Timing: As managers and staff go away on holiday for say 2 weeks at a time, their duties are covered during their absence. So when assessing the risk to the Council from the absence of managers and staff, we are addressing situations where the absence is for one month or more, arising from long term sickness or resignation etc.

Resources: People, machinery and other physical materials and intellectual knowledge upon which the Council depends for the continuation of its services.

People: Councillors, Officers, clerical staff, operatives and contractors.

Machinery: Computer equipment, copiers, telephones, Cemetery equipment (Mowers etc), lift, cleaning equipment etc

Intellectual knowledge: specialist knowledge regarding the operations of the Councils, eg payroll, books of accounts, Council agendas and minutes, Curatorship etc.

The table below sets out identified risks within the Council, together with the outcome, the risk factor, ie the seriousness of the effect it would have on the Council, the probability factor, ie the likelihood of the risk occurring, and the measures that have been taken or can be taken to manage the risks, ie steps to prevent the risk happening or in the event of an occurrence, ways of dealing with it.

In the event of a complete catastrophe, ie the Town Hall being destroyed etc, refer to the Business Contingency Plan.

Note: The following list of inherent risks was first established 2 years ago, was revised in 2009 and again in 2010.

<b>Internal risk</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Risk Factor 1 (low) – 5</b>	<b>Probability Factor 1 (low) - 5</b>	<b>Measures to Manage Risk</b>	<b>Action Needed to Manage Risk</b>	<b>Appropriate Action Taken?</b>
<b>PEOPLE</b>						
Insufficient elected Councillors to form a quorum	No decisions made	5	1	By-elections to be held. If no candidate is forthcoming co-option to be considered.	Any precedent?	Policy on co-option needed.
No Town Clerk	No strategic decisions made	5	3	DTC would step in but help would be needed to cover the duties of the DTC	Council to agree that in these circumstances, staff resources would need to be augmented	Has Council agreed in principle to obtaining extra human resources to cover loss of Town Clerk?
No Operations Manager	No supervision of the Cemetery or Allotments.  No supervision of the PCs  No supervision of the Town Hall and Caretakers.	4	3	Clerical Support within Central Support Team will cover.  Cemetery Foreman will cover PCs supervision.  Curator and Central Support Team would cover the Town Hall and Caretakers.		

<b>Internal risk</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Risk Factor 1 (low) – 5</b>	<b>Probability Factor 1 (low) - 5</b>	<b>Measures to Manage Risk</b>	<b>Action Needed to Manage Risk</b>	<b>Appropriate Action Taken?</b>
No Office Manager	No support for the TC.  No admin support for the Mayor  Loss of IT expertise  No supervision of Reception	4	3	Town Clerk to cover supported by Central Support Team.  Admin support provided by Curator and Central Support Team.  The OM is also trained as IT expert.  Town Clerk would supervise the Reception.	Ensure OM is up to speed re IT.  Curator may need training in Mayor's admin procedures.	No. The OM is Ok with desktop applications but no experience of the "Server" or web package.  OM OK with XP Office 2003 but not Vista or Office 2007
Central Support Team No Senior Finance Assistant	No major support for payroll and other accounting functions.	3	3	Finance Assistant to be trained to run payroll. Payroll software provides its own support.	Training and experience given. Standby arrangements to be put in place.	Has Finance Assistant been trained - re payroll?
Central Support Team: No Finance Assistant	Clerical support would be lost.  No support for	2	4	Other members of Team and Reception would cover.		

<b>Internal risk</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Risk Factor 1 (low) – 5</b>	<b>Probability Factor 1 (low) - 5</b>	<b>Measures to Manage Risk</b>	<b>Action Needed to Manage Risk</b>	<b>Appropriate Action Taken?</b>
	bookings					
Central Support Team: Clerical Support	No support for Cemetery and Allotments.  No support for Events	2	4	Operations Manager would take over duties for the Cemetery and Allotments. Other members of the Central Support Team would cover Events.		
No Curator	No management of museum or retention of MLA accreditation and Volunteer Guides.  No support for Mayor's civic duties	5	3	The Museums Development Officer, Nottinghamshire (Mark Laurie) has said that he would support any Town Council decision making and find temporary museum help short-term until such a time as the Town Council advertises the post.  Mayor's Civic duties would be covered by the Office Manager.	For day-to-day and short-term items such as the essential Volunteers daily rota, a brief guide will be produced and available in the museum office (for Sept. 09)  Office may need training in civic duties.	Yes.

<b>Internal risk</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Risk Factor 1 (low) – 5</b>	<b>Probability Factor 1 (low) - 5</b>	<b>Measures to Manage Risk</b>	<b>Action Needed to Manage Risk</b>	<b>Appropriate Action Taken?</b>
No Caretakers	No support for lettings.	3	3	Enough caretakers for adequate cover – stand-by caretakers available	Have stand-by caretakers in place.	None required
No Cemetery Foreman	Lack of leadership and decision making.	3	3	The remaining Operatives would carry out the Foreman’s duties.	None	None required
No Cemetery Operatives	No work carried out in Cemetery	2	2	Operations Manager would engage temporary staff from his list of prospective Operatives.		
No Senior PC Attendant	No supervision of PC attendants	1	5	Other Attendants would cover with supervision from Cemetery Foreman.		
No Public Conveniences Attendants	PCs would be closed or not cleaned	3	2	Existing operatives could cover with overtime.	None	None required
No Receptionists	No customer service in Reception. Poor telephone answering service	3	2	Internal and relief cover already exists	Maintain existing complement	None required

<b>Internal risk</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Risk Factor 1 (low) – 5</b>	<b>Probability Factor 1 (low) - 5</b>	<b>Measures to Manage Risk</b>	<b>Action Needed to Manage Risk</b>	<b>Appropriate Action Taken?</b>
No Town Hall Cleaners	Cleaning might not be carried out in the very short-term, working conditions might therefore deteriorate. Unclean toilet facilities for hirers	2	2	Utilise caretakers and WC operatives.	Make necessary contingency arrangements with local agency or have standby cleaners available	Yes. WC operatives may not cooperate
No Mayor's Officer	No support for Mayoral functions	2	2	Hire chauffeur from outside to drive and act as officer		
No Bar staff	No provision of drinks for events in Town Hall	4	3	Relief staff available and then use agency staff if necessary.	Emergency agency arrangements in place	Yes
<b>CONTRACTORS</b>						
No Grave Diggers	No graves available for burials	5	3	Operatives to be trained/prepared to provide temporary cover	Training given, contractual agreement. Seek alternative grave diggers for stand-by.	Contract GD's are available in Lincoln and Nottingham. Existing staff contracted to carry out grave digging at the expense of other tasks.

<b>Internal risk</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Risk Factor 1 (low) – 5</b>	<b>Probability Factor 1 (low) - 5</b>	<b>Measures to Manage Risk</b>	<b>Action Needed to Manage Risk</b>	<b>Has the appropriate Action Been Taken?</b>
No Internal Auditor	Unable to satisfy obligation to have independent internal audits carried out	3	3	Audit programme up to date. Alternative resources available	Arrange for stand-by internal auditor.	Has a list of alternative IAs been drawn up?
No Local Government, East Midlands Personnel support	No independent advice on personnel matters available	3	1	N/A Contractor's responsibility	N/A	None required
No Accounting Advisor	No professional financial advice available	5	3	Employ a professionally qualified public accountant	Establish continuity planning programme for the Accounts	Has the continuity planning been established?
<b>MACHINERY</b>						
No Computer Equipment	No access to records, no processing of new data, no reports etc	5	2	Rely on IT contingency plan	IT Contingency plan to be completed, agreed and tested.	Has the IT contingency plan been completed and tested?

<b>Internal risk</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Risk Factor 1 (low) – 5</b>	<b>Probability Factor 1 (low) - 5</b>	<b>Measures to Manage Risk</b>	<b>Action Needed to Manage Risk</b>	<b>Appropriate Action Taken?</b>
No Telephone equipment	No incoming or outgoing communication with public, councillors, suppliers etc	5	2	Use of mobile phones, messengers to deliver councillors, suppliers etc	Signage outside Town Hall to advise public of the situation	None required
No Photocopying equipment	No facility to mass produce papers, reports etc.	3	3	Use outside copying services, print copies from computer, end copies electronically	Make contingency arrangements with local copying services.	None required
No Cemetery gardening equipment & machinery	No machinery to maintain the Cemetery etc	3	2	Use other machinery, hire equipment.	Have standby arrangements with suppliers etc	Nothing formal we would rely on local hire companies and outside contractor
No Town Hall Lift	Lift could not be used to reach the top floors	2	1	Service agreement with suppliers.	Signage to indicate lift out of action	None required

INTELLECTUAL KNOWLEDGE						
Operations of the Councils	No officer support for Councillors	5	2	As long as either the TC or DTC are available, knowledge would be available Support in terms of knowledge from other local authorities.	Procedures to be in place	Have procedures been put in place?
Council agendas and minutes	No or inferior agendas and minutes of Council and Committee meetings. Members could be misled by poor reports etc.	5	2	Preparation of papers etc could be done by other staff members or temps Draft in a minuting secretary from other local Town Council	Procedures to be in place	Have procedures been put in place?
Curatorship	No expertise in running museum and treasures or the retention of museum status.	3	3	Solicit assistance from local museums. Some knowledge available from web, library etc.	Recruit replacement curator	None required
Civic Protocol	Civic functions not properly arranged – poor publicity	5	3	Ensure civic protocol is clearly documented.	Have other staff familiar with protocol.	Has it been documented and are staff familiar with it?