

Copdock & Washbrook Parish Council

RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2026

INTRODUCTION

This document forms the Council's Risk Management Strategy. The objectives of the strategy are to:

- Develop risk management and raise its profile within the Council
- Manage risk in accordance with best practise
- Anticipate and respond to changing social, environmental and legislative requirements.

POLICY STATEMENT

Risk management is the process used by the Parish Council to address risks associated with an event or action which will adversely affect its ability to achieve its objectives to deliver high quality public services. The failure to manage risks effectively can be expensive in terms of litigation and reputation, the ability to achieve desired targets and, eventually, on the local community's council tax bills.

The Council is aware that some risks can never be eliminated fully, and it has in place a strategy that provides a structured, systematic and focussed approach to managing risk. The emphasis should always be on eliminating or reducing the risk before costly steps to transfer risk to another party are considered.

IMPLEMENTING THE RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Risk Control – is the process of taking action to minimise the likelihood of the risk occurring and/or reducing the severity of the consequences should it occur.

Methods used will include:

- Elimination – circumstances from which a risk arises are removed so the risk no longer exists
- Reduction – control measures are implemented to reduce the impact/likelihood of the risk
- Transfer – the financial impact is passed to others
- Sharing – the risk is shared with another party
- Insuring – insure against some or all of the risk to mitigate financial impact
- Acceptance – documenting a conscious decision after assessment of areas where Council accepts or tolerates risk

Risk Monitoring – the risk management process must be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that any changes to the nature of any risk has been taken into account and the risk control procedures adapted accordingly.

Risk Management System – is the process by which risk will be managed:

- Risk Identification – informed decisions can only be taken by the Council if it has identified and understood the hazards and risks facing the policies and decisions it has undertaken. Risks will be identified in the Annual Risk Assessment.
- Risk Analysis – once risks have been identified, analysis should be undertaken as to the potential frequency of the risk and its consequences. If a risk is seen to be unacceptable then steps should be taken to ensure that the risk is controlled or a response is taken to the risk.
- Risk Prioritisation – an assessment should be made of the impact and likelihood of risks occurring and prioritised as low, medium or high.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Risk management is seen as a key part of the Council's role which will include:

- Establishing clear roles, responsibilities and reporting lines within the Council for risk management
- Providing opportunities for shared learning on risk management across the Council
- Providing risk management training and awareness sessions
- Incorporating risk management considerations into the Council's management processes
- Effective communication with, and the active involvement of, employees
- Monitoring arrangements on an on-going basis
- Ensure that Internal Audit provides a scrutiny role to provide independent assurance to the Council that the necessary risk management systems are in place and all significant risks are being managed effectively
- Ensure that feedback from Internal and External Audit is fed into the Council's risk management strategy
- Ensure that the Risk Management Strategy Policy and the Insurance Schedule are reviewed annually.

MONITORING

- Risk Management Strategy – reviewed and adopted by the Parish Council annually. **Next review due February 2027**
- Risk Management Register – reviewed and adopted by the Parish Council annually. **Next review due February 2027**
- Annual Insurance Review – reviewed by the Parish Council annually. **Next review due April 2026**
- Financial Risk Assessment and Management – reviewed by the Parish Council annually. **Next review due February 2027**
- Internal Control's – reviewed by the Council annually. **Next review due February 2027**