

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

Document No.24

WELLS CITY COUNCIL GENERAL AND FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENTS REVIEWED FEBRUARY 2025. TOWN CLERK/RFO H WILKINS / C WOODLAND

1. FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT

RISK	CONTROL	Risk Level
Cash or Receipts misappropriated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Petty cash held in secure locations, receipts issued, weekly. Petty cash reconciliation to RFO. ➤ Cheques or cash received are held in a safe and banked promptly within 7 days of receipt. ➤ All payments are received by electronic transfer wherever possible. 	L
Payments misappropriated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Payments agreed by Finance Committee, or by Officers as laid out in Financial Regulations and Committee delegation scheme. ➤ NO blank cheques are signed. ➤ Cheques are signed or electronic payments authorised, by Councillors and checked at Finance scrutiny meeting. ➤ BACS payment procedures remain in place and Financial Regulations updated February 2025. ➤ Expenses claims and overtime claims authorised by line managers. ➤ Clerk and RFO are bank signatories for management purposes only, not authorised to make cheque payments. ➤ Corporate debit/charge card account maximum £1,500 authorised for use by RFO and Senior Officers; to avoid staff having to make personal online payment for Council purchases. 	L
Loss of / insufficient Bank Reserves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Bank reserves are checked by the Finance committee at monthly scrutiny. ➤ Comply with best practice where possible of, a minimum 3 months' expenditure reserve provision in the annual budget. 	L
Financial management failure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ An annual budget is agreed before the Precept is set. ➤ Salaries, HMRC, NI and Pension payments are made monthly. ➤ VAT returns are made quarterly. ➤ Accounts are scrutinised monthly by Councillors. ➤ Bank statements and reconciliations checked monthly by Councillors. ➤ An independent Internal Auditor is appointed and carries out regular inspections. ➤ Controls and internal audit are reviewed annually. 	L
Council or personal, financial or other Liabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Council's insurance cover includes Fidelity Guarantee, Officials' Indemnity (Management Liability), Employers Liability, Public Liability. ➤ Insurance reviewed annually. Annual review meeting held with the provider prior to renewal. 	L
Material Assets lost/damaged	<p>Material assets are listed in the Asset Register, valued and insured as appropriate and reviewed annually.</p> <p>Buildings Insurance for leased properties is included and then recharged to the leaseholder. The following are included within insurance cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Properties. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Civic Assets, robes and regalia. - Street furniture. - Open Spaces equipment. - Office equipment. 	
Short or long term loss of key staff members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Council has reduced the risk of loss of the Clerk by having a management structure of 4 Officers who can cover duties as Proper Officer, with support from other staff. ➤ Management procedures ensure all staff roles have sufficient flexibility to reduce impact of temporary loss to a minimum. ➤ Cross skill training and recruitment across the management team allows for resilience should a key officer be absent. 	L
Loss of Electronic Records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Electronic records are remotely 'cloud'-hosted; further backed up at a second, separate, remote site. Hard disc back-up copy is held locally in a secure facility. ➤ All key documents are also stored in paper copy; see next section 'Loss of Documents'. 	L/M
Loss of Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Title to all independent, freehold, properties, and long leases, have been registered with the Land Registry. Deeds are with the Council's solicitor; copies and other key documents are locked in the Town Clerk's office. ➤ Recent Council records are sorted; subject to the document retention policy they may be stored in the council office or in secure cells at the Town Hall. ➤ Archived material is on long-loan to Wells Museum in modern storage facility. ➤ Photographic records have been taken of historic charters and other key historic records; the original charters etc. are in the secure archive storage at Wells Museum. ➤ Separate retention, security and storage policies are in place at the Museum. 	L/M
Data Protection Regulations - compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Council is aware of its duties as a controller and processor of personal data, under the General Data Protection Regulations 2018; training is on-going. The Council's schedule of data and appropriate related procedures is kept under review. 	M
Liability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All Councillors are informed of their responsibilities and have completed Registrations of Interests. ➤ Code of Conduct training has been made available to all councillors. ➤ The Council has insurance cover to include Fidelity Guarantee, Officials' Indemnity (Management Liability) and Employers' Liability and cyber security 	L/M

INSURANCE

The Council holds insurance covering the following risks:

Public Liability	Employers Liability	Legal Protection
Personal Accident	Business Travel	Money
Fidelity Guarantee	Property	Loss of revenue
Officials Indemnity	Libel and Slander	Cyber Security/attack

See annual insurance schedule for details. Covers are checked in detail annually at a meeting with the provider, prior to renewal.

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2. INTERNAL FINANCIAL CONTROLS

RISK	CONTROL	RISK LEVEL
Monthly Accounts not completed	<p>The RFO produces monthly accounts, detailing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reconciliation of all the Council's bank accounts, including investment and petty cash accounts - Income and expenditure including payment of salaries - Income and expenditure against annual budget <p>The regular check of bank statements and scrutiny of the accounts by Councillors is recorded on the signing schedule.</p>	L
Authorisation of payments		
a. Salaries Inaccurate/unauthorised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Following annual staff appraisals, any increases above annual increment rises are approved by the Staffing Committee for inclusion in the Council's Budget. ➤ Annual salaries are notified to the RFO by Senior Officers. ➤ The Pay Roll is operated by the RFO and checked by another officer of the Council. ➤ Payments of salaries are made by BACS. See 2.b ➤ Payments of PAYE, NI, etc. are made by BACS. See 2.c 	L
b. BACS payments Inaccurate/unauthorised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Electronic transfer payments are checked by Councillors' presented to scrutiny by the RFO. 	L
c. Cheques Inaccurate/unauthorised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cheques are signed by two authorised Councillors who also examine the invoice and check the payment voucher. ➤ No Councillor or member of staff may authorise a payment to him/herself. 	L
Internal Audit Not completed/not compliant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Finance Committee appoints an independent Internal Auditor to act on behalf of the Council, having regard to the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, current legislation and NALC guidance on best practice. 	L
Annual Review Not completed/not compliant	<p>Internal Financial Controls are reviewed annually in accordance with Standing Order 18: <i>The Council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The accounting records and systems of internal control.</i> <i>The assessment and management of financial risks faced by the Council.</i> <i>The work of the Internal Auditor and the receipt of regular reports from the Internal Auditor, which shall be required at least annually.</i> 	L

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3. OPEN SPACES: GENERAL RISK ASSESSMENT

RISK	CONTROL	RISK LEVEL
Cemetery		
a. Memorial Safety	➤ Memorial testing is carried out annually by trained staff, and remedial action taken.	M
b. Inaccuracies	➤ Meticulous recording and mapping procedures are kept; with back-up copies.	M
c. Public safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All paths are kept clear and clean ➤ All grassed areas are kept mown and tidy in line with local schedule ➤ Vehicle routes and parking are clearly indicated. ➤ Funeral groups are advised and supported by staff. ➤ Signage is applied to notify of any works being carried out during cemetery operating times. 	L/M
d. Theft / vandalism	➤ Security procedures, lights & alarms.	M
e. Vehicles/equipment	➤ Regular servicing and maintenance; drivers' licences checked; all appropriate insurances in place.	L
f. Claim against Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Proper reporting and recording of inspections and of any Incidents. ➤ Council Insurance. 	M
Skate Park		
a. Accident / injury	➤ Regular inspection by trained staff.	H
b. Vandalism	➤ Annual inspection by independent provider.	H
c. Claim against Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Proper reporting and recording of inspections and of any incidents. ➤ Council Insurance. 	M
Highways delegated functions/partnership working		
a. Accident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provision of appropriate equipment and protective clothing to staff. ➤ Provision of appropriate training for staff. (Roadside Working; Chainsaw Use) 	M/H
b. Acting ultra-vires	➤ Works are carried out exercising the Council's Power of General Competence, in partnership with the relevant bodies. Written partnership agreements with Somerset Council / / other	L
c. Claim against Council	➤ Council's Insurer is kept informed of all functions.	M
Street Furniture		
a. Accident/injury	Litter Bins, Grit Bins, Seats, Notice Boards, Bollards, Signs, Cycle Racks, Wells in Bloom planters & poles. Operation of Speed Indicator Device. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Installed with agreement of SCC Highways ➤ Listed on asset register ➤ Regular inspections, recording and reporting. 	L
b. Vandalism	➤ Annual maintenance program carried out during winter.	M
c. Claim against Council	➤ Council Insurance.	M

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4. PROPERTIES: GENERAL RISK ASSESSMENT

RISK	CONTROL	RISK LEVEL
Loss of title	➤ Title to Council's freehold properties has been registered with the Land Registry.	L
Loss of rental income	➤ Council reserves; insurance cover.	M
Damage / destruction	➤ Buildings insurances; regular revaluation.	M
Town Hall - See separate risk assessments:		
a. Hirers – Indoor markets etc.	➤ Risk Assessment, controls and Insurances.	L
b. Fire risk assessment	➤ Security & Alarm	L
Business continuity in emergency	➤ <u>Business Continuity Plan</u> In the event that access to the Town Hall offices should be lost, temporary displacement would be to an appropriate room(s) at the Portway Annexe/Cemetery lodge. All functions can continue from there and via home-working. All records are with the Council's cloud-hosting provider. The provider has secure storage and separate secure back-up location.	L
	➤	
Public Toilets		
a. Accident	➤ Cleaning and maintenance schedules.	M
b. Vandalism	➤ Locked at night or as advised.	M
c. Injury	➤ British Standards compliant equipment. ➤ Regular inspections and reporting.	M

5. EVENTS: GENERAL RISK ASSESSMENT

Regular events are listed on the Council's Public Liability Insurance cover. Additional events are notified separately, in advance.

RISK	CONTROL	RISK LEVEL
Fun Fair		
a. Risks to public safety	➤ Land Use Licence (Somerset Council)	M
b. Damage to property	➤ Operator's Agreement. ➤ Operator's Insurance. ➤ Risk Assessments May and November submitted to Somerset Council with Road Closure applications.	L/M
Wells in Bloom	See separate Risk Assessment.	
Christmas Lights	See separate Risk Assessment.	
Civic Processions	See separate Risk Assessment.	
Other City Events	Risk assess as required.	