

RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY



January 2024

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The risk management strategy of Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council (the Council) is to adopt best practices in the identification, evaluation, and cost-effective control of risks. This is intended to ensure that risks are reduced to an acceptable level or, where reasonable eliminated, thereby safeguarding the Council's assets, employees and customers and the delivery of services to the local community.
- 1.2. The Council endeavours to pursue a forward-looking and dynamic approach to delivering services to the local community and will not be averse to taking a degree of commercial risk. However, it will always exercise a prudent approach to risk taking and decisions will be made within the parameters of the Council's internal control arrangements, i.e. Constitution, Procedural Rules, etc. These arrangements will serve to ensure that the Council does not expose itself to risks above an acceptable level.

2. Mandate and commitment

- 2.1. This strategy is supported and endorsed by the Management Team and Members of the Audit Committee who will ensure that:
 - The risk management objectives are aligned with the objectives and strategies of the Council
 - The Council's culture and risk management strategy are aligned
 - The necessary resources are allocated to risk management
 - There is a commitment to embedding risk management throughout the organisation, making it a part of everyday service delivery and decision making
 - The framework for managing risk continues to remain appropriate

3. Applicability

- 3.1. This strategy applies to the whole of the Council's core functions. Where the Council enters into partnerships the principles of risk management established by this strategy and supporting guidance should be considered as best practice and applied where possible. We would also expect that our significant contractors have risk management arrangements at a similar level, and this should be established and monitored through procurement processes and contract management arrangements.

4. Objectives

- 4.1. The risk management objectives of the Council are to:
 - Embed risk management into the culture of the Council
 - Apply best practice to manage risk using a balanced, practical and effective approach
 - Manage risks in line with its risk appetite, and thereby enable it to achieve its objectives more effectively

- Integrate the identification and management of risk into policy and operational decisions, anticipating and responding proactively to social, environmental and legislative changes and directives that may impact on delivery of our objectives
 - Eliminate or reduce the impact, disruption and loss from current and emerging events
 - Harness risk management to identify opportunities that current and emerging events may present and maximise benefits and outcomes
 - Ensure effective intelligence sharing and collaboration between risk management disciplines across all Council activities
 - Ensure fraud risks are proactively considered and embedded into the organisation's risk management arrangements
 - Benefit from consolidating ongoing learning and experience through the collation and sharing of risk knowledge; demonstrate a consistent approach to the management of risks when embarking on significant change activity
 - Ensure sound and transparent risk management arrangements are operated in partnership and commissioner / provider situations, underpinned by a culture that supports collaboration and the development of trust, ensuring clear effective lines of communication and the management of relationships.
- 4.2. The delivery of this strategy is the collective responsibility of officers, Service Management Teams, Management Team, the Council's partners and Members, with delivery being assured by the Management Team.

5. Roles and responsibilities

- 5.1. Responsibility for risk management runs throughout the Council; everyone has a role to play. Managers and staff that are accountable for achieving an objective are accountable for managing the risks to achieving it. To ensure that risk management is successful, the roles and responsibilities of key groups and individuals must be clearly identified, see table at 5.3 below.
- 5.2. Other officer groups' deal with related risk specialisms such as Health and Safety; Treasury Management; Emergency Resilience and Business Continuity; Insurance; Information Security; Anti-fraud, bribery and corruption, etc. These groups are linked into the governance arrangements of the Council so that their work is co-ordinated within the Council's overall risk management framework.
- 5.3. In order to support Members and Officers with their responsibilities, risk management guidance is available.

Group or Individual	Responsibilities
Full Council / Cabinet	Approval of the Risk Management Strategy will be witnessed by the signature of the Leader of the Council.
Audit Committee	The Chairman of the Audit Committee will take a lead role in promoting the application of sound risk management practices across the Council. Training will be provided periodically for all Audit Committee members.

	<p>The Audit Committee will consider the Risk Management process as part of the assurance evidence in support of any Corporate Governance Statement.</p> <p>The Audit Committee will provide independent assurance of the adequacy of the risk management framework and will monitor the effective development and operation of risk management in the Council.</p>
Committees	<p>Responsibility for considering risk when making decisions on behalf of the Council.</p> <p>Promote and demonstrate the behaviours and values that support well-informed and considered risk taking, while maintaining accountability.</p> <p>Encourage open and frank conversations about risks, ensuring appropriate reporting and escalation as required.</p>
Chief Executive	<p>Responsibility for the overall monitoring of strategic risks across the Council, including the endorsement of priorities and management action. Responsible for ensuring that risk management resources are appropriate.</p> <p>Also responsible for counter-signing the Risk Management Strategy.</p>
Section 151 Officer	<p>Active involvement in all material business decisions to ensure immediate and longer term financial implications, opportunities and risks are fully considered.</p>
Management Team (MT)	<p>To ensure the Council manages risks effectively and actively consider, own and manage key strategic risks affecting the Council through the Strategic Risk Register.</p> <p>Keep the Council's risk management framework under regular review and approve and monitor delivery of the annual risk work programme.</p> <p>Promote and demonstrate the behaviours and values that support well-informed and considered risk taking, while maintaining accountability.</p> <p>Encourage open and frank conversations about risks, ensuring appropriate reporting and escalation as required.</p> <p>Delegate the development and delivery of appropriate training to support the implementation of this policy for Members and Officers.</p>
Service Management Teams (SMT)	<p>Responsibility for the effective management of risk within the directorate, including risk escalation and reporting to the Management Team as appropriate.</p> <p>Briefing sessions will be provided on an as and when basis to senior management.</p>
Internal Audit	<p>Assesses the effectiveness of the risk management framework and the control environment in mitigating risk.</p> <p>Review and challenge risk management arrangements through its audit and fraud prevention activities.</p>
All elected Members and staff	<p>Identify risks and contribute to their management as appropriate. Report inefficient, unnecessary or unworkable controls. Report loss events or near-miss incidents to management.</p>

6. Review of this strategy

- 6.1. It is the responsibility of the Audit Committee to: 'On behalf of the Council ensure that Risk Management and Internal Control systems are in place that are adequate for purpose, and are effectively and efficiently operated.' Internal Audit will support their role in assuring its effectiveness and adequacy.
- 6.2. Information from Internal Audit and from other sources will be used to inform recommended changes to the strategy and framework at least annually. Any changes will be presented to the Audit Committee for approval before publication. The Strategy was last reviewed in January 2024 and will be reviewed next in January 2025.

7. Approval

Signed:

Print Name: Matt Boughton

Date:

Position: Leader of the Council

Signed:

Print Name: Adrian Stanfield

Date:

Position: Interim Chief Executive

Document Review History

Version	Reviewed	Reviewer	Approver	Date Approved
Current	December 2023	Chief Financial Services Officer	Audit Committee and Full Council	