STURMER PARISH COUNCIL

RISK REGISTER JULY 2026

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RISK REGISTER

The assessment of the risk attached to any and all of the Council's actions and responsibilities forms an essential part of all Council decisions. Risk mitigation (the reduction in the level of risk where it is deemed to be too high) is integral to many of the Council's policies. This is seen most obviously in the Finance Policy and the Emergency Plan, but it also forms an important part of the detailed Standing Orders which govern the way in which the Council carries out its business, and the Code of Conduct which applies to all members of the Council.

There are two aspects of Risk that need to be considered: the probability of the occurrence of an event and the impact of that occurrence. It is the combination of these two that determines the level of the perceived risk. In the tables that follow, these two aspects are assessed separately, and their combined effect used to indicate the level of risk.

For example, if the probability of an event happening is very low, (eg, if procedures are in place to minimise the chances of it happening) then the overall risk level is low, even if the impact would have been high if that event had happened. It is unlikely to happen.

But if the probability of occurrence is high, and the impact of that occurrence is also high, there is a very real risk associated with that event, and mitigating action should be undertaken. In the following tables, the higher the number of ticks in the 'Risk' column, the higher the perceived risk, and the greater the need to address the issues raised promptly.

The second table summarises the items with the highest perceived levels of Risk. Sturmer Parish Council needs to address these issues at the earliest opportunity.

In drawing up this Risk Register, a very wide range of topics have been considered; but such a list is unlikely ever to be completely comprehensive. And there will also, inevitably, always be some issues outside the terms of reference of the Parish Council that may have a large impact on the community. The Register requires many Council policy documents to be reviewed annually. It is recommended that the Risk Register itself should also be reviewed and updated annually.

	IDENTIFIED RISKS	PROBABILITY OF OCCURRENCE	IMPACT OF OCCURRENCE	RISK	RISK MITIGATION / CONTINGENCY
1	**AIMS & OBJECTIVES**				
1.1	The Council's aims & objectives do not match the needs of the community	LOW	LOW	LOW	Currently no Parish Plan in place.
1.2	Aims & objectives are not understood within the community	MEDIUM	HIGH	LOW	Communicate aims and objectives regularly: regular meetings, village magazine, website, meetings with councillors, contact with Clerk
1.3	Aims & objectives not regularly reviewed	LOW	LOW	LOW	Regular meetings, precept reviewed annually to meet reasonable level of community needs.
2	**LAW & REGULATION**				
2.1	Council's decisions and resolutions are not within the legal powers provided to local councils	LOW	MEDIUM	LOW	Latest edition of "Local Council Administration" held on file and used as reference for applicable statutes when necessary. Clerk constantly monitors resolutions and liaises with EALC/SLCC/NALC. Ongoing Councillor training required.
2.2	Breach of statutory requirements (e.g. LGA, VAT Notice 749	LOW	MEDIUM	LOW	Maintain and deliver training budget for Clerk, comprehensive independent internal Audit at year end.
2.3	Failure to meet statutory reporting requirements (Annual Report and Accounts, Annual Return, etc.)	LOW	MEDIUM	LOW	Clerk advised at all times of statutory reporting requirements by local, District, County and National authorities.
3	**GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT**				
3.1	Councillors insufficiently aware of the Council's objectives and it's legal powers	MEDIUM	HIGH	LOW	Maintain and deliver training budget for Councillors, Clerk maintain register of Cllr training
3.2	Structure of Committees inappropriate	N/A	N/A	N/A	No committees at present
3.3	Decisions of the Council not adequately recorded	LOW	LOW	LOW	Resolutions passed by members recorded in minutes
3.4	Councillors' and Clerk's skills insufficient	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	LOW	Maintain and deliver training, Identify gaps and where possible provide instruction / guidance.
3.5	Responsibility of individual Councillors not clearly established	LOW	LOW	LOW	Monthly reports to Council, annual report to APA

3.6	Council's effectiveness not reviewed	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	Community feedback sought in advance of APA., improve interaction with community and review expectations.
3.7	Failure of Councillors' compliance with Code of Conduct.	MEDIUM	HIGH	MEDIUM	Members to review Register of interests and declare interests at meetings, council to review code annually.
3.8	Quorum not maintained for Council meetings	LOW	HIGH	LOW	Maintain Councillors' records of attendance for possible members' exclusion from office, Clerk to advise if quorate and proceed accordingly.
3.9	Clerk's performance not appraised	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	Operate annual appraisal of Clerk's performance. Chair/Clerk review. Structure and format of appraisal to be agreed

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3.10	Dominance of key individuals: Councillors & Clerk	LOW	MEDIUM	LOW	Chair to include all in discussions equally and to ensure all views are heard, Clerk to monitor events during meetings.
3.11	Council business is not reported in a proper, timely and accurate way in the minutes	LOW	MEDIUM	LOW	Minutes reviewed and approved by Members each month prior to conducting new business,
3.12	Not responding to electors wishing to exercise their rights to inspect Council's records	LOW	MEDIUM	LOW	Freedom of Information Act procedures in place, Clerk readily contactable.
3.13	Not meeting required timescales for requests for consultation from BDC Planning	LOW	MEDIUM	LOW	Regular review of planning applications and calling of Planning Committee meeting as required, Clerk ensures responses as statutory consultee are submitted in a timely fashion.
3.14	Conflicts of interests, receiving of gifts and hospitality by Members	LOW	HIGH	LOW	Maintaining Members' Register of Interests and Members' Declaration of Interests at full council meetings. Members abiding by Code of Conduct and Standing Orders, annual review of Interest.
3.15	Adequate strategic plans not prepared/updated	LOW	MEDIUM	LOW	Emergency Plan reviewed annually and submitted by Clerk to District Council.
3.16	Progress against strategic plans and actions are not monitored	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	!	Consider creation of Neighbourhood Plan and 3Yr business/action plan.
4	**EXTERNAL INFLUENCES**				
4.1	Revision to VAT regulations	LOW	LOW	LOW	VAT recoverable, minimal effect on budgets as recovered amount generally low.
4.2	Demographic changes	LOW	MEDIUM	LOW	Unlikely short-term changes, actual current position unknown.LOW
4.3	Acts of God/Major Disasters	LOW	HIGH	!	Emergency Plan in place: review annually and TEST

4.4	Decline in public perception of Council	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	Annual report to all households, APA reports, magazine reports; proactive inclusion of community in Council matters. Parish groups report/update at council meetings.
4.5	Economic changes	HIGH	HIGH	MEDIUM	Maintain essential services and where possible ensure public health and safety. (PC remit)
4.6	Impact on Council's reputation of event, fraud, accident, media coverage, etc.	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	Training, identify sources for advice; Clerk or Chair to act as press contact as appropriate.
4.7	Vandalism - Minor	MEDIUM	LOW	LOW	Council to maintain adequate insurance.
4.8	Vandalism - Major	LOW	HIGH	LOW	Council to maintain adequate insurance; Clerk to deal with promptly and involve police & Neighbourhood Watch.
5	**OPERATIONAL PROCESSES**				
5.1	Contractual difficulties with key suppliers or service providers	LOW	MEDIUM	LOW	Finance Regs require formal tenders for contracts. Maintain list of preferred suppliers for smaller contracts. Clerk to monitor.
5.2	No fixed asset register	LOW	HIGH	LOW	Asset Register in place and reviewed annually
5.3	Legal title to assets unclear	LOW	LOW	LOW	Assets properly recorded

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6	**HUMAN RESOURCES**				
6.1	Poor recruitment procedures	LOW	MEDIUM	LOW	Clerk only paid position, guidance and support from Essex Association of Local Councils
6.2	Difficulties in recruiting staff/unreliable references	LOW	MEDIUM	LOW	Clerk only paid position
6.3	Difficulties in retaining staff	LOW	HIGH	MEDIUM	Monitor staffing conditions, Chair to review situation regularly
6.4	Failures in staff vetting procedures	HIGH	HIGH	LOW	Rigorous recruitment procedures as advised by EALC to be followed
6.5	Poor staff morale	LOW	MEDIUM	LOW	Implement appraisals, Chair regularly reviews situation
6.6	Staff stress or ill-health	LOW	MEDIUM	LOW	Locum support available from EALC

6.7	Inadequate staff appraisal and development	LOW	MEDIUM	LOW	Instigate structured annual review followed by written report.
6.8	Lack of formal employment contracts	LOW	HIGH	LOW	T&C & CoE agreed, guidance from EALC & NALC
6.9	Adequacy of written job descriptions	LOW	MEDIUM	LOW	Job Description to be reviewed at annual appraisal.
6.10	Dependence on key individuals	LOW	LOW	LOW	Back up / Locum support in place
6.11	Inadequate disciplinary or grievance procedures	LOW	HIGH	LOW	Complaints Policy and Standing Orders reviewed annually, access to VINE HR services Grievance Procedure adopted in 2016, review 2019
6.12	Failure to operate equal opportunities	LOW	HIGH	LOW	Training for Chairman, Councillors and Clerk and maintaining access to information resources. Equal Opportunities Policy adopted in 2016, review 2019
6.13	Breaches of employment rights, Health and Safety at Work, Working Time Directive, Minimum Wage, etc.	LOW	HIGH	LOW	Training for Clerk and maintaining access to information resources. Health & Safety General Policy Statement in place, adopted 2016, review 2019
6.14	Clerk and Councillors lack experience or training	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	Maintain and deliver training budget and Councillor record of training, provide access to training modules.
7	**ENVIRONMENTAL**				
7.1	Impact on local neighbourhood	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	Remain vigilant and aware of local environmental issues
7.2	Increased regulation regarding waste management	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A at present
7.3	Impact of a major building project	LOW	HIGH	LOW	Currently no known projects but the impact assessment would increase if became a reality, council remains vigilant
8	**TECHNOLOGICAL**				
8.1	Failure of key software/hardware	MEDIUM	HIGH	LOW	Maintain minimum contingency budget for key hardware replacement, Clerk to ensure monthly backups made onto external hard drive and kept secure.
8.2	Increased need to invest in new technology for Clerk	LOW	LOW	LOW	Council will seek suitable IT grant funding to replace obsolete hardware.

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9	**FINANCIAL**				
9.1	Robust Financial Controls	LOW	HIGH	LOW	Financial Regulations reviewed annually, Internal and External Audits
9.2	Formal reserves policy not established or infrequently reviewed	LOW	HIGH	MEDIUM	Maintain and review Reserves Policy, forms part of budgeting process, for annual review with Financial Regulations
9.3	Annual precept does not meet Council's planned financial commitments	MEDIUM	HIGH	MEDIUM	Annual budgeting process. Monthly review/audit of finances by Members. Where necessary increase precept. Limited Reserves requires tight budgetary control.
9.4	Loss/ reduction in regular grants	HIGH	HIGH	MEDIUM	Build up Reserves. Prepare scenario showing where cuts would be made if necessary or action taken, seek alternative sources of funding.
9.5	Contested election of members	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	Build up Reserves (£1500 - £2000 cost of contested election)
9.6	Loss/damage of assets owned by the Council or for which it has custodial responsibility through flood, fire, vandalism or theft.	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	Annual review of both Asset Register, any security arrangements and insurance cover.
9.7	Loss of assets through general wear and tear	HIGH	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	Build up Reserves to provide funds to replace assets when necessary, seek grant funding
9.8	Damage to third party property or persons as a consequence of the Council providing services or amenities to the public	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	Minimum Public Liability Insurance £5,000,000
9.9	Loss of cash through theft or dishonesty	LOW	HIGH	LOW	Fidelity Insurance up to £25,000. Dual authorisation required on all payments.
9.10	Legal liability as a consequence of employment	LOW	HIGH	LOW	Employer's Liability Insurance up to £10,000,000
9.11	Proper financial records not kept to meet statutory requirements	LOW	HIGH	LOW	Finance Policy and Standing Orders require monthly finance reports to members. Annual Internal and External Audits. Annual Policy reviews.
9.12	Council is not complying with requirements for recording of VAT reclaim.	LOW	HIGH	LOW	Auditable records maintained for VAT reclaim
9.13	Failure to comply with employment tax requirements (tax, NIC, etc.)	LOW	LOW	LOW	Clerk's responsibility. Inclusion in monthly Finance Report. Training and email notices from HMRC, Council employs HMRC Basic Tools rti Software
9.14	Incorrect tax or deduction rates used	LOW	LOW	LOW	Training and email notices from HMRC, HMRC rti Basic Tools software in use
9.14	Failure to implement auditors' management report recommendations	MEDIUM	HIGH	LOW	Auditor's report reviewed, minuted, published and actioned,

9.15	Lack of financial supervision by Council	LOW	HIGH	MEDIUM	Financial Regulations reviewed and updated annually, bank statements readily available, online access to bank account for mandate signatories, payments under Transparency Code required to be published on website.
9.16	Weak procurement policies and procedures	LOW	MEDIUM	LOW	Financial Regulations reviewed and updated annually
9.17	Lack of formal tendering policy where appropriate	LOW	MEDIUM	LOW	Tendering Policy incorporated into Financial Regulations, procurement requirements discussed by council, resolutions documented in minutes.

Review Annually