

# Arborfield & Newland Parish Council

## Risk Management Policy

### 1 STATEMENT

- 1.1 For the purposes of this strategy, risk is defined as something happening, or not happening, that might have an impact on the achievement of the Council's objectives and affect service delivery to the community.
- 1.2 We believe that risk needs to be managed rather than avoided and consideration of risk should not stifle innovation.
- 1.3 The Council recognises that it has to deliver services in an increasingly litigious and risk-averse society. However, risk management is regarded as a tool for exploiting opportunities as well as a safeguard against potential threats. The Council will therefore use risk management to promote innovation as well as to help secure existing objectives.
- 1.4 A systematic and consistent approach to identifying and analysing risks will be an integral part of all key management processes, rather than a separate initiative and will be developed using the simplest possible means.
- 1.5 Our aims are to:
  - Embed risk management as an integral part of service, strategic and project planning and decision-making;
  - Establish an effective and explicit system of risk identification, analysis and control;
  - Be able to demonstrate that we use risk management to facilitate innovation.
- 1.6 Achieving these aims will:
  - Contribute to sustainable improvements in services and the achievement of best value;
  - Reduce the number and cost of claims arising and improve our ability to defend them.
- 1.7 High impact risks which the Council faces include:
  - Anything that poses a threat to the achievement of effective service delivery;
  - Inability to respond to, or manage change.
  - Anything that could damage the Council's reputation and undermine community confidence;

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- Failure to guard against impropriety, malpractice, waste, or poor value for money;
- Failure to comply with regulations such as those covering governance, financial management, the environment, health and safety, employment practice, and human rights;

## 2 ORGANISATION

- 2.1 The Parish Council will approve the Council's Risk Management Policy and on an annual basis, monitor and review the effectiveness of risk management measures put in place by staff.
- 2.2 The Parish Chairman as Chairman of the Executive Committee has overall responsibility for risk management.
  - a) The Council and all Committees will advise and support in the context of risks likely to have a significant impact on the achievement of the Council's objectives. The Council has established an Executive Committee comprising the Council chairman, Vice Chairman and the chairmen of each Committee and convened when required, who will be responsible for the provision of advice and guidance on risk management matters.
  - b) The Executive Committee will provide the Council with an annual report on the implementation of risk management.
- 2.4 The Executive Committee will champion the risk management process within their areas of operation.
- 2.5 Primary responsibility for identifying and managing significant strategic and operational risks arising from their service activities lies with individual Committee chairmen, who should ensure that their teams carry out risk assessments where appropriate as a routine part of service planning and management activities.
- 2.6 Team and Service risk assessments will be coordinated by the Committee Chairmen who will be responsible for advising the Executive Committee of significant risks.
- 2.7 All Chairmen should notify the Clerk of any significant changes in service provision in order to enable him/her to ensure that appropriate and adequate insurance is in place.
- 2.8 The clerk is responsible, on advice from the Parish Council Chairman and the Council's Insurers, for:
  - Minimising the overall cost of inevitable claims which do arise;
  - Supporting the risk management programme by supplying any advice and data, both statistical and anecdotal, to the Main Committee.

- 2.9 The Parish Council Chairman in conjunction with the Risk Management Committee and the Clerk is responsible for monitoring the implementation and the effectiveness of the risk management strategy and for monitoring compliance with controls introduced or recommended by the Executive Committee and approved by the Council as part of the ongoing audit programme.

### **3 ARRANGEMENTS**

- 3.1 The Executive Committee will provide an annual report to the Council summarising significant risks arising and reviewing the effectiveness of risk management measures.
- 3.2 Risk Management training will be provided to the Parish Council Chairman/Clerk and other delegated Councillors, with the aim of ensuring that they have the skills necessary to identify, evaluate and control the risks associated with the services they provide.
- 3.3 All Committee Chairmen will include a risk analysis and a control action plan. The Executive Committee will draw together annually a high-level risk management action plan based on Group Chairmen's risk analysis and action plans and will present this for approval to the Council.
- 3.4 The Council should incorporate best value considerations in assessing strategic and operational risks associated with options considered. Risk Management information and advice, for this purpose, should be sought from the Executive Committee.
- 3.5 This strategy will be clearly communicated to Council members and employees and will be subject to review on an annual basis by the Executive Committee.

### **4 HEALTH & SAFETY**

- 4.1 The Council has adopted a Health & Safety Policy as good practice although it is recognised that with only two employees it is not a legal requirement under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974.