

**A REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK TO  
A MEETING OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
MALVERN TOWN COUNCIL**

to be held remotely via Zoom on Wednesday 31 March 2021, at 6.00 pm

**ASSESSMENT OF MALVERN TOWN COUNCIL'S SIGNIFICANT RISKS  
IN ACHIEVING ITS SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES**

**1. Purpose of Report**

1.1. For decision.

**2. Recommendation**

2.1. The Committee considers the assessment of significant risks to achieving its short-term objectives as detailed in Appendix A to this report and recommends that this is forwarded to Full Council for acceptance.

**3. Background**

3.1. The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 state that a council with income or expenditure over £200,000 but less than £6.5 million per annum be subjected to an Intermediate Assurance Audit Review.

3.2. Malvern Town Council is required to complete the Annual Return which comprises:

- Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement
- Section 2 – Accounting Statements
- Section 3 – External Auditor's Report and Certificate
- Annual Internal Audit Report

3.3. The final page of the Annual Return is completed by the Internal Auditor based on his findings and one of the specific requirements is that the Council should assess the significant risks to achieving its objectives and review the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.

3.4. The Council's aims and objectives are reviewed annually. This year a more in-depth review was undertaken by a task and finish group specially set up for the task. The task and finish group reviewed and amended both long term and short term objectives. These were then agreed by Policy and Resources Committee before final ratification at Full Council on 9 March.

3.5. Significant changes were made to both long-term and short-term objectives and therefore a complete review of the risk assessment process was required.

3.6. Due to the amount of detail involved, Officers have initially completed the risk assessment for short-term objectives as attached at appendix A to this report. This includes

- a) Identification of the hazards/problems which may prevent these objectives being achieved.
- b) Assessment of the level of risk.

- c) Review of the consequences of failing to achieve these objectives.
- d) Identification of the ways that these risks can be managed.
- e) Assessment of whether adequate procedures are in place to ensure these objectives are achieved.

**4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1. None pertaining to this report.

**5. Legal Implications**

- 5.1. The Town Council is subject to an Intermediate Assurance Audit Review which is carried out annually by the External Auditor.
- 5.2. Every smaller authority in England with an annual turnover above £25,000 but not exceeding £6.5 million must complete an annual return at the end of each financial year in accordance with proper practices summarising its activities.
- 5.3. As part of Section 1 of the Annual Return, the Annual Governance statement asks the Town Council to confirm that it has carried out an assessment of the risks facing the authority and to take appropriate steps to manage these risks including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where necessary.
- 5.4. As part of the final page of the Annual Return, the Internal Auditor will confirm whether the Council has assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.

End

Linda Blake  
Town Clerk

	Objective	Threats to achieving objective	Level of risk	Consequences of failing to achieve objective	Management procedures to achieve objective	Procedure in place?
<b>1.</b>	<b>Performance of Statutory Powers and Duties</b>					
1.1.	To enhance the current good working relationship with Malvern Hills District Council (MHDC), Worcestershire County Council (WCC) and other appropriate bodies to provide efficient and effective services in Malvern.	Lack of co-ordinated partnership working. Inability to agree desired outcomes. Poor communication. Lack of clear information. Lack of commitment from other bodies. Pressure on staff resources.	Med	Negative public opinion. Inefficient service delivery for the taxpayer of Malvern. Resource wastage. Breakdown in stakeholder/partner relationships. Increase in complaints.	Regular liaison meetings. Effective communication with partnership organisations. Invitation to MHDC/WCC councillors to town council meetings. Foster good officer contacts and working relationships with MHDC and WCC.	YES
1.2.	To carry out benchmarking to ensure services provided under Council contracts are as efficient as possible.	Lack of resources. Lack of staff knowledge. Current policies/ procedures being weak or unclear. Poor management.	Low	Inefficient service delivery and failure to achieve best value. Resource wastage. Unnecessary increases in council tax. Negative public opinion.	Regular contract reviews reported to P&R committee. Staff training. Annual timetable for contract review. Strong budgeting/ correct procurement procedures.	Yes
1.3.	To regularly review suppliers and expenditure by supplier to ensure that the Town Council continues to obtain the best value for money on its purchases, this to be carried out by the Policy and Resources Committee.	Lack of resources. Lack of staff knowledge/expertise. Poor management. Poor reporting procedures.	Low	Inefficient service delivery and failure to achieve best value. Resource wastage. Unnecessary increases in council tax. Negative public opinion.	Regular reporting to P&R committee as part of annual timetable. Management of staff to ensure regular reviews take place.	Yes

	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Threats to achieving objective</b>	<b>Level of risk</b>	<b>Consequences of failing to achieve objective</b>	<b>Management procedures to achieve objective</b>	<b>Procedure in place?</b>
1.4.	To establish a Community Engagement Strategy setting out how Malvern Town Council can better engage with the local community to ensure issues of concern are communicated and addressed.	Lack of resources. Lack of interest/ commitment from other parties. Lack of knowledge/ expertise.	Med	Negative public opinion. Failure to represent electorate in a competent and effective manner.	Research into engagement strategies used in other areas. Strategy document to be considered and adopted by council in 2021.	New objective
<b>2.</b>	<b>Improvement of operational standards</b>					
2.1.	To encourage the improvement and better maintenance of pavements, highways, footpaths and PROWs within the town through liaison with WCC and to encourage the public to report any issues to the Town Council so that these can be forwarded to the appropriate County or District Councillor for action to be taken.	Ineffective administration and poor reporting structure. Lack of co-ordinated partnership working. Lack of resources. Lack of clear information. Poor communication.	Low	Negative public opinion. Increase in complaints. Inefficient service delivery and failure to achieve best value.	Adoption of work policies and procedures to report issues using the correct channels. Effective communication with MHDC and WCC. Invitation to MHDC/WCC councillors to town council meetings. Town council staff easily accessible via telephone and email.	Yes
2.2.	To improve the amenities at Victoria Park including leisure facilities, public toilets, pavilion and take appropriate action to reduce anti-social behaviour.	Lack of resources. Weak planning. Lack of council commitment. Funding issues. Failure to identify and action a workable concept.	Med	Negative public opinion. Vandalism and anti-social behaviour. Increase in repair and maintenance costs. Increase in complaints. Low staff morale.	Project to redevelop pavilion approved by Full Council with task and finish group appointed. Effective liaison with police. Employment of a park keeper during the summer months. Review of security measures in place.	Yes
2.3.	To ensure that all Town Council operations and practices are	Lack of resources.	Low	Legal proceedings.	Regular engagement with CALC/NALC/other bodies to	Yes

	Objective	Threats to achieving objective	Level of risk	Consequences of failing to achieve objective	Management procedures to achieve objective	Procedure in place?
	carried out in a Covid-safe manner and in accordance with the government guidelines current at that time.	Lack of staff training/ knowledge/ support services. Poor management.		Fines. Negative public opinion. Low staff morale. Spread of Covid-19.	ensure information is up to date. Completion of risk assessments. Staff training and briefings. Social distancing measures. Appropriate PPE and hygiene available at all times.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Promotion of Malvern and its Events</b>					
3.1.	To continue to investigate ways of making certain events more cost-effective through increased involvement of volunteers and exploring sponsorship links.	Lack of staffing resources/ expertise. Lack of commitment. Lack of public interest.	Med	Increased costs. Need to scale down events due to lack of volunteers.	Annual review of sponsorship. Use of various engagement methods to involve and retain volunteers for events.	Yes
3.2.	To continue to promote the Town Council's work through the production and distribution of at least three newsletters per year.	Lack of staff resources. Lack of creativity and input. Poor planning.	Low	Lack of effective community engagement, Lack of public awareness of town council achievements/ events.	Timetable put in place for newsletter dispatch. Staffing resources allocated for production of newsletter.	Yes
3.3.	To relaunch Town Council events in a Covid-safe manner, with the first event to be held to mark and celebrate the end of Covid restrictions.	Government regulations/ changes to Covid-19 roadmap. Lack of resources. Public perception and opinion.	Med	Possible negative public opinion. Spread of Covid-19.	Regular engagement with CALC/NALC/other bodies to ensure information is up to date. Robust risk assessment procedures. Trained events staff.	Yes
3.4.	To continue the following annual events as agreed at Full Council on 5 August 2020,	Government regulations in relation to Covid-19/ changes to roadmap. Lack of resources.	High	Possible negative public opinion. Loss of popular public events.	Regular review of Government regulations with advice taken from CALC/NALC.	Yes

	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Threats to achieving objective</b>	<b>Level of risk</b>	<b>Consequences of failing to achieve objective</b>	<b>Management procedures to achieve objective</b>	<b>Procedure in place?</b>
	<p>government guidelines permitting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. 22 April 2021 Earth Day event</li> <li>ii. 1 May 2021 Health and Wellbeing Fair and Mayor’s Peaks Challenge</li> <li>iii. May to September 2021 17-week Bands in the Park programme</li> <li>iv. 27 June 2021 Armed Forces Day event in Priory Park</li> <li>v. July to August 2021 Alternative Bands in the Park performances</li> <li>vi. 1 August 2021 The Mayor’s Bonanza.</li> </ul>	Failure to plan adequately or respond to changes.		<p>Loss of charity fundraising opportunities.</p> <p>Spread of Covid-19.</p>	<p>Robust risk assessment procedure.</p> <p>Change to virtual online events where possible and practical.</p> <p>Adequate staffing measures.</p> <p>Briefing of staff and volunteers ahead of all events.</p>	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Consideration of planning and development matters</b>					
4.1.	To set up a new Task and Finish Group to finish the ‘light touch’ review of the Neighbourhood Plan, following the SWDP review.	<p>Lack of commitment.</p> <p>Lack of resources.</p>	Med	<p>Negative public opinion.</p> <p>Failure to achieve long term commitment to Neighbourhood Plan.</p>	Task and finish group to be set up in May 2021.	New objective
4.2.	To find ways to encourage councillors to participate in training on planning matters to assist all in understanding planning policy.	<p>Lack of councillor commitment.</p> <p>Inability to enforce councillor training.</p>	Med	<p>Lack of councillor engagement/resignations.</p> <p>Poor decision making due to lack of knowledge.</p> <p>Negative public opinion due to lack of appropriate comments.</p>	<p>Training available from CALC.</p> <p>Subscription to relevant outside bodies.</p> <p>Scheduling of training.</p> <p>Sharing of relevant information.</p>	New objective

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4.3.	To work with MHDC and community groups to take the lead in establishing a community design group that can be involved in the planning process, engaging the wider community.	Lack of interest/ commitment. Lack of resources. Inability to agree desired outcome.	Med	Possible negative public opinion. Failure to represent local electorate in the planning process.	Discussions with possible stakeholder groups. Research into similar design groups.	New objective
4.4.	To strongly encourage MHDC to introduce a simplified process to ensure that properties can be placed on a local list to provide protection for appropriate buildings.	Lack of resources/ commitment/ engagement from MHDC.	Med	Lack of acceptable procedures for listing of local buildings so buildings remain unprotected.	Lobbying of MHDC through liaison meetings.	Yes
4.5.	To secure the future of Malvern Hills College as a continuing educational and community asset.	Lack of resources. Lack of co-ordinated partnership working. Lack of funding. Inability to have big impact on the final decision.	High	Loss of local education facility. Possible negative public opinion.	Secure asset as an asset of community value. Town councillors working as part of the pressure group. Lobbying of appropriate bodies.	New objective
<b>5.</b>	<b>Training and accessibility</b>					
5.1.	To continue an annual appraisal process and allow opportunities for officers to speak to the Policy and Resources Committee as necessary.	Lack of resources. Lack of engagement. Weak policies/ procedures.	Low	Performance related failures. Low staff morale. Higher turnover of staff.	Delegations for staffing issues to be considered by P&R committee. Appropriate policies and procedures agreed and regularly reviewed. Management training.	Yes

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5.2.	To review Whistle-Blowing Policy (last carried out in May 2018).	Lack of staff resources.	Low	Outdated policy. Low staff morale.	Management plan to regularly review policies.	Yes
5.3.	Any councillor taking on the role of Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Council or one of its Committees should undertake appropriate training as soon as is reasonable.	Lack of commitment to training. Lack of resources/ funding.	Low	Poor decision making/ chairmanship due to lack of knowledge. Low morale. Ineffective meetings.	Training policy adopted and regularly reviewed. Membership of Worcestershire CALC and engagement with their training programmes. Annual training budget.	New objective
5.4.	Whilst training for all councillors should not be mandatory, all councillors should be given the opportunity and encouraged to undertake training on how the Council works (e.g. Standing Orders, Code of Conduct etc) as soon as is reasonable.	Lack of councillor commitment to training. Lack of resources. Inability to enforce councillor training.	Low	Lack of councillor engagement. Lack of awareness of changes in the law. Poor decision making. Ineffective meetings.	Member's handbook provided to all councillors. Availability of relevant training Annual training budget. Membership of Worcs CALC.	Yes
5.5.	To continue to update and develop the Member's Handbook, focusing on useful information for new members and a useful synopsis of all the main information points.	Lack of resources. Poor planning.	Low	Failure to provide useful and up to date information to councillors. Poor decision making. Lack of councillor knowledge/ engagement.	Regular review of policies. Effective communication with councillors. Annual review of handbook.	Partly
5.6.	To use the new council website to help support provision of clear and timely information to all councillors.	Lack of knowledge. Absence of appropriate IT skills/ training.	Low	Lack of councillor engagement. Poor attendance at meetings. Poor decision making.	New user friendly and more accessible website. Trained staff to manage website. Support contract with website contractor. Regular website reviews.	Yes



	Objective	Threats to achieving objective	Level of risk	Consequences of failing to achieve objective	Management procedures to achieve objective	Procedure in place?
<b>6.</b>	<b>Environmental impact on Town Council operations</b>					
6.1.	To uphold the Town Council’s declaration of a climate emergency and consider the environmental impact of Town Council operations by taking action to reduce carbon emissions where practical.	Lack of commitment/ engagement. Lack of expertise/ training. Inappropriate targets/ ineffective strategy. Lack of resources.	Med	Negative public opinion.	Town council environmental policy and strategy in place. Active environmental panel. Staff training/use of consultants where appropriate.	Partly
6.2.	To work to provide recycling bins in suitable locations throughout the town where practical and to encourage use of these recycling bins.	Lack of funding. Lack of partnership working. Lack of public engagement.	Med	Low levels of recycling within the town. Negative public opinion. Negative environmental impact.	Liaison with MHDC to facilitate partnership working. Review of litter bin locations in Malvern.	New objective
6.3.	To provide new bike racks in suitable locations to encourage increased use of bikes.	Lack of public interest. Availability of suitable sites.	Low	Negative environmental impact. Negative public opinion. Loss of public facilities.	Funding secured. Use of ‘Park that bike’ scheme. Engagement with local businesses and interest groups. Town council to take responsibility for new bike racks.	New objective
6.4.	To consider, and use wherever possible, energy saving and efficient practices in the development of new Town Council buildings and the refurbishment of current buildings.	Suitability of town council sites. Funding. Insufficient staff knowledge/ expertise. Inappropriate targets/ ineffective strategy.	Low	Negative environmental impact.	Adoption of environmental policy and strategy. Staff training/ use of consultants.	New objective

**APPENDIX A**

	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Threats to achieving objective</b>	<b>Level of risk</b>	<b>Consequences of failing to achieve objective</b>	<b>Management procedures to achieve objective</b>	<b>Procedure in place?</b>
6.5.	To continue to rewild suitable areas of Town Council-owned land with appropriate planting – including trees - and encourage other landowners to do the same.	Suitability of town council sites. Failure of other landowners to engage and participate in wilding. Vandalism.	Low	Loss of opportunity to reduce carbon emissions impact. Possible negative publicity.	Adoption of environmental policy and strategy. Active environmental panel.	New objective
6.6.	To use, wherever possible, green energy suppliers for Town Council contracts.	Higher costs. Administration issues.	Low	Negative environmental impact.	Regular review of energy suppliers to include “green” suppliers.	Yes