

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL

COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

COMMITTEE:	Finance and Policy Committee		
MEETING DATE AND TIME	13 th February 2025 7.00 pm	LOCATION	Congleton Town Hall
REPORT FROM	David McGifford (Chief Officer) and Serena Van Schepdael (Responsible Financial Officer)		
AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE	18 Annual Review of the Business Risk Assessment 2025-2026		
Background	<p>Risk Management is an essential part of effective corporate governance. The Council has a statutory duty to have in place arrangements for managing risk as stated in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015:</p> <p><i>“A relevant authority must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control which ensures that the financial and operational management of the authority is effective and includes effective arrangements for the management of risk.”</i></p> <p>Congleton Town Council acknowledges that it has a responsibility to manage its risks effectively in order to protect its employees, assets, liabilities, and community against potential losses. The Council is aware that not all risks can be eliminated fully, however through correct and careful procedures, there will be a focused approach to managing any risks.</p> <p>Congleton Town Council currently adheres to the guidance given by JPAG (Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance) in their publication “Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England” Section 5 for the layout of the Business Risk Assessment. Behind this sits detailed risk assessments for all Streetscape activities, Town Hall activities, Information Centre, Paddling Pool, and events in the town centre.</p>		

Updates

The Business Risk Assessment has been updated for the 2025-2026 financial year. This will also be presented to Council for final approval at the Annual Town Meeting in accordance with our Standing Orders. (Section 6J xiii)

Amendments to the Risk Assessment are below:

Reference	Area	Update
1a	Town Hall	Added re-emergency procedures for out-of-hours.
1e	Pool	Updated to show new clicker system.
1j	Polytunnel	Added info re keeping lease up to date.
1k	Christmas Lights	Added re-new tender required. Added to check the insurance of the company storing the lights
1l	Streetscape	Added that changes to contracts should be discussed with CO/RFO
1m	Events	Added annual review of Commercial Partner is due.
1o	Licenses	Added TV license to be renewed annual
2b	Investments	Added that policy reviewed by FAP annually
2d	Controls	Added that RFO to ensure returns are submitted on time.
2f	Cash	Added that all cash is to be locked in a safe until banked.
2h	Budgetary Control	Added that all staff should be updated on the remaining budget and all staff to ensure checks take place prior to placing an order. Added Overspends will be notified to the Council.
2i	Payments	Added invoices only paid on confirmation of good/services received.
2j	Approval of Expenditure	Added staff to follow Financial regulations. Added new supplier checks. Added re-changes to contracts
2l	Credit/Trade cards	Added trade card requirements.
2m	Salaries	Added that changes such as pay award, that a summary to be signed by Mayor, Chair of Finance and Chief Officer
2q	Town Hall bookings	Added that the new Facilities booking system in place
2s	New Suppliers	Added procedure for new supplier forms and checks.
2t	Council Income	A new section was added to state standard procedures that take place regarding income.
2u	Mayor Fundraising	New section to cover income and expenses
3b	Insurance	Added that all claims should go via CO/RFO
3h	Tendering process	Added that tender policy to be reviewed regularly to check new legislation

	3i	Register of Members Interest	Added that paperwork should be completed in required timescales.
	4a	Cyber Security	Added that RFO has access to ICT providers portal to provide training.
	4b	ICT Security	New section re laptops/passwords.
Decision Requested	To approve the Business Risk Assessment for 2025-2026 and to recommend to Council for Approval at the Annual Town Meeting.		

Business Risk Assessment 2025/26~~2024/25~~

[Risk Matrix: Low (1-2) Medium (3-5) High (6-9)]

Area	Risks Identified	Likelihood of risk (Score 1 – 3)	Potential Impact (Score 1 – 3)	Score	Risk Rating (Low, Medium, High)	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Action required
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ASSETS and SERVICES		Likelihood	Impact	Score	Risk Rating	Management/control of Risk	Review/Action
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1a	Security of Town Hall Building	Theft Maintenance Staff Safety Third person use	1	2	2	Low	Building property insured and reviewed annually. Alarm systems with automatic response for Town Hall. Low crime rate in Congleton. Weekly fire alarm checks and annual servicing. Record all incident Third parties sign a contract re liabilities. CCTV installed throughout the building. <u>Emergency procedures are in place for periods of time where Town Hall is closed out of hours through contracts, such as Fire Alarm and Intruder alarm.</u>	Weekly checks of property and actions taken to correct maintenance. CCTV Policy checked annually
1b	Security of Town Treasures	Theft, damage	1	3	3	Med	Treasures locked in the safe. Keys held by CO and current Mayor. CCTV installed to view door of safe. Responsible person with treasures at all times if used for ceremonial or public viewing. Town Treasures signed in and out if taken out of the building (date and name of person taking)	Regular checks need by Town Hall Manager /CO
1c	Maintenance of Town Hall, Museum	Not an adequate budget for grade 2 building H&S – antisocial behaviour	1	3	3	Med	Ensure budget set for maintenance through Town Hall and Asset Committee and Council. Town Hall Manager to inspect property on regular basis for maintenance issues	Monitor budgets

Business Risk Assessment 2025/26~~2024/25~~

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1d	Town Hall Car parking area	H&S – vehicles and people	1	3	3	Med	Lighting, CCTV and appropriate signage and general maintenance	Regular checks by Town Hall Manager.
1e	Paddling Pool	Health and Safety Risk to workers, public and users Theft and damage to pump room and area. Storage of Chemicals	1	3	3	Med	Staff trained and Paddling Pool supervised when open. Detailed Method of Operating Procedures used by staff. COSHH Sheets and written procedures in place Detailed lock up procedures. Secure and Improved storage and knowledge of chemicals in place. Insurance and Public Liability in place. Maximum number policy added for busy periods which has been implemented during hot weather since summer 2018. A booking system in place to ensure attendees do not go over maximum capacity. <u>A clicker system is in place to keep the maximum 140 in the pool, a holding area to prevent queuing on the main path outside the pool is now in place since 2023 to allow a one in one out basis.</u>	Check procedures annually, make sure staff training is up to date.
1f	Paddling Pool	Finance: Increase in costs will have an impact in Precept or other	2	2	4	Med	Reviewing operating hours and ability to charge for entry.	

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		areas of the Council						
1g	Hillary Avenue Allotments –CTC owns the land	H&S of users Safety of site	1	2	2	Low	Work closely with the Allotment Association who manage the allotments on a day-to-day basis. Regular Site inspection. CTC public liability insurance	Review contract and working arrangement
1h	Cenotaph Memorial Sgt Eardley statue Treo memorial and Our Elizabeth statue	Vandalism, damage, deterioration	1	2	2	Med	Regular checks of site for vandalism and damage included on our asset register for insurance. Within range of Town CCTV. Annual waxing of statues and a maintenance plan in existence for stone.	Part of Streetscape checks
1i	Community Garden	H&S of users	1	2	2	Low	Responsible for the site. Regular checks and any hazards made good. On Town Council insurance. Regular volunteers working on site have signed the volunteer register. Volunteer policy updated 2019.	Part of Streetscape checks
1j	Community Polytunnel	H&S of users Theft/vandal	1	1	1	Low	Regular of inspection of site. Extra checks when used. Nothing of value kept here. CTC insurance. <u>Streetscape Manager & Chief Officer to ensure lease from CEC is in place for use of the Polytunnels and up to date.</u>	Part of Streetscape checks
1k	Christmas Lights	Theft. Safety of use	1	1	1	Low	Insured through Town Council and stored securely. Use of professional operator to check, service, install and remove lights. Anchor points checked, tested and certified on rotation as best practice.	Three-year contract with trained equipped and licenced contractor in place for installation, maintenance and storage. Currently in year three.

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						<u>Check Insurance of the company storing the lights is in place.</u>	<u>New Tender is open for a new three year contract for 2025-2028.</u>	
1l	Streetscape Services - Operations	Health and Safety risk to workers, public and contractors Contract changes	1	3	3	Med	Risk Assessments carried out for all procedures and new pieces of work. Staff trained Consideration over implications of contracts e.g. vehicles with potential contract changes. <u>All changes to contracts must be discussed with C/O and RFO and approved by Council before implementing, due to possible budget and contract changes.</u>	Streetscape Manager to check risk assessments and training annually.
1m	Events in the Town Hall	Health and Safety risks to workers, volunteers, contractors and public. Risk to Town Council and Town Hall reputation	1	3	3	Med	Often organised by third parties. Commercial partner assumes responsibility for event. Organisers asked for Risk Assessment and Public Liability. Catering through Commercial Partner. Bar services must be through Town Hall DPS SIA door staff used when evening party event involving alcohol. Bookings are not accepted for 18 th birthday parties.	Maintain existing procedures, and to be reviewed during 2022-23 once future arrangements decided. <u>An annual review to take place on H&S aspects, three year contract with Commercial Partner due to be considered in time for April 2025.</u>
1n	Town Council led events.	Health and Safety risks to workers, volunteers, contractors and public . Risk to	1	3	3	Med	Public liability put in place for events All documentation from third parties checked. Volunteer policy updated All major events are sent to CEC Event Safety Advisory Group for clearance. All contractors RAMS checked.	Maintain existing procedures and ensure new staff are trained.

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		Town Council reputation						
1o	Licences	Financial penalty/liabilities for not having correct licences	1	2	2	Low	All licences stored on H Drive and in filing cabinets PPL and PRS reviewed annually Premises Licence held for Town Hall and Town Centre Small Lotteries Licence renewed annually Marriage/Wedding Licence renewal every three years <u>TV Licence to be renewal annually.</u>	Maintain existing procedures
2	Finance and Contracts							
2a	Banking	Failure of Bank	1	3	3	Med	Funds located in 3 separate banks Policies in place in Financial regulations	RFO continual monitoring
2b	Investments	Level of investment	1	1	1	Low	Investment policy in place Investment Policy updated annually <u>Investment Policy and Strategy are in place and reviewed annually by Finance and Policy Committee and Council.</u>	RFO and Council to review annually or potentially sooner if negative interest rates.
2c	Precept	Precept sum inadequate Late Payment from local authority	1	1	1	Low	Budget and Precept considered by Finance and Policy Committee & Full Council each year. Contingencies in place through reserves.	RFO and Council to review annually

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2d	Financial controls and records		2	2	4	Med	RFO to undergo CPD training when available. Financial Regulations reviewed annually. Internal and External audits and regular Finance and Policy Committee Meetings <u>RFO to ensure VAT returns/ HMRC/Pension returns are submitted on time.</u>	Maintain existing procedures and provide training to new RFO
2e	Petty Cash	Payments not accounted for	1	1	1	Low	All petty cash payments supported by relevant paperwork. Checked by Internal Audit. Processes in Financial Regulations. Petty cash is verified twice yearly.	Maintain existing procedures
2f	Cash	Loss through theft or dishonesty	1	1	1	Low	Cash reconciled and banked regularly. Unbanked cash locked in office. Fidelity Guarantee Insurance in place via Zurich. . Cash handling policy in place. <u>All cash to be locked in the safe provided until banked.</u>	Maintain existing procedures
2g	Bank Reconciliations	Inadequate Checks Bank Errors	1	1	1	Low	Bank reconciliations completed monthly and verified by a member of Finance and Policy committee. Checked via Internal Audits and reported to every Finance and Policy Committee	Maintain existing procedures
2h	Budgetary Process/ <u>Budgetary Spends</u>	Inadequate budget preparation leading to inability to fulfil obligations	1	2	2	Med	Budget considered by Finance and Policy Committee and Full Council. Income and expenditure considered at every Finance and Policy Committee. Internal and External audits in place and follow financial regulations.	Maintain existing procedures

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						All staff are regularly updated with remaining budgets, by the RFO. All staff must ensure checks take place prior to placing an order. Any overspends required will be notified to Council for approval prior to further expenditure.	
2i	Payments	Goods not supplied but invoiced. Invoices incorrect. Invoices unpaid.	1	2	2	Med All invoices checked and initialled for accuracy and receipt of goods/services in line with comprehensive financial regulations. <u>Invoices only to be paid on confirmation of receipt of the goods/ service..</u> List of payments presented to Finance. Committee. Clear audit trail of all expenditure and checked via Internal Audit.	Maintain existing procedures
2j	Approval of Expenditure	Unauthorised purchase Fraud	1	2	2	Med <u>Financial Regulations in place for procedures of purchasing.</u> <u>All staff to ensure they follow Financial Regulations at all times.</u> All payment orders authorised by Council as per Financial Regulations. –Financial Regulations in place for procedures of purchasing. <u>New supplier form are required direct from the supplier to verify information such as VAT/Companies house and Bank Account.</u> <u>Staff are regularly updated of Purchase Order procedures.</u>	Maintaining existing procedures

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						<u>All changes to contracts must be discussed with C/O and RFO and approved by Council before implementing, due to possible budget and contract changes.</u>		
2k	Cheque Books	Loss of Cheques Fraudulent use	1	3	3	Med	All cheque books are kept locked in the office. Summary list of books are kept and signed when one book finished and new one issued. All cheques double signed by 2/6 of the Council signatories and only when matched to a purchase order No blank cheques signed. To be used in line with Financial Regulations and checked by Internal Audit	Maintaining existing procedures , payments are made by BACS where possible
2K(i)	BACs payments	Payment to wrong supplier	1	1	1	Low	Finance Officer produces bank schedule and emails to 2 signatories and inputs to bank. RFO authorises bank payment whilst also double checking bank details and amounts.	Maintain existing procedures
2l	Credit Card / <u>Trade Account Cards</u>	Loss of Card Fraudulent use	1	1	1	Low	Credit card kept double locked in Council office. Usage set out in the financial regulations. Current credit limit £3000. Financial Regulations <u>must be</u> followed for all purchases. <u>Trade Account cards are to be kept safe with until required, all purchases must follow Financial Regulations.</u>	Maintaining existing procedures
2m	Salaries	Incorrect payments to staff	1	2	2	Low	Use external professional team DJH <u>Mitten Clarke</u> to calculate wages monthly. BACs payments checked and signed by 2/6 signatories. Subject to internal audit.	Maintaining existing procedures

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						Ensuring sufficient trained staff in place to undertake the task. RFO double checks sheet prior to processing. Annual Pay Award changes summary sheet signed off by Mayor, Chair of Finance and Chief Officer.		
2n	Annual Return	Not submitted on time Incorrectly completed	1	3	3	Med	RFO aware of date and ensures requirements met. Outside external company identified that could perform task if required. RFO to produce an annual timetable to highlight deadline dates.	Maintaining existing procedures
2o	Streetscape Contract	Reduction of revenue through Service Level Agreement. CEBC or third-party take-over	2	2	4	Med	Keeping standards high. Examination and review of agreed contract in 2024 2021 . Exploring additional external contracts. Look to align any third-party hire contracts with Service Level Agreement. Review of operating procedures	Review by Chief Officer and Streetscape Manager Record Risk of longer-term contract
2p	Catering / events support for Town Hall	New Commercial Partner appointment April 2022. New contract due April 2025	2	2	4	Med	Weekly operational meeting take place for booking requirements. Monthly Management meetings take place for Financial, Marketing and any issues	Review after initial 12 months Reports back into THAS

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2q	Town Hall Room Bookings	Linked to 2p – future use of the Town Hall	2	2	4	Med	<u>Facilities Booking system now in place for room bookings, relevant staff to be kept up to date with training and updates in the software.</u>	To be reviewed in line with outcome 2p.
2r	Congleton Information Centre	Staff, customers, financial risk.	1	2	2	Med	Front line staff who take cash – banking procedures in place and safe on site. Doors locked before cashing up takes place. Weekend workers never in the building alone. Cash handling policy in place. Third party ticket sales – contracts in place making clear no liabilities to CTC Financial regs for purchasing goods in advance of sales	Ensure all policies in place and understood by all staff in the CIC Ensure contracts are in place for new ticket suppliers.
2s	New Suppliers	VAT & Bank accounts/Payments fraud	2	2	4	Med	Full checks on all new suppliers takes place including VAT number check, Companies House check, and bank account check. All confirmation required <u>direct from the supplier, CTC staff must never complete on behalf of the new supplier. -on letterhead paper separate to invoice received.</u>	New supplier form has been introduced which included checklist of online checks required.
2t	<u>Council Income</u>	<u>Sales Ledger/Cash Book</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>Med</u>	<u>New facilities booking system in place which enables reports to be run to ensure all bookings have been invoiced. Finance Officer and RFO do a monthly aged debtor check, the aged debtor list is sent to Chair of Finance quarterly.</u>	<u>Maintain existing levels of procedures.</u>

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						All CIC cash is audited by RFO via daily takings sheets Standing invoices in place for regular customers (such as CEC/Commercial Partner)	
2u	Mayor Fundraising Income/Expenditure	Donations received/Annual expenses for fundraisers	2	2	4	Med Additional summaries are kept alongside the main accounts. Each Mayor has there own bank account to ensure separation of funds. GOFUNDME account set up and donations regular input into accounts.	Maintain same procedures for all other CTC income/cash received.
3	Legal Liabilities						
3a	Ensuring the Council Acts within its legal powers	Ultra Vires Acts incurring financial liability	1	2	2	Low Chief Officer and one members of staff CiLCA qualified. Use of manuals, advice from NALC and SLCC.	Maintaining existing procedures At least one other member of staff to take CiLCA qualification
3b	Insurance	Inadequate cover or over insurance increasing costs unnecessarily. Areas not covered. Policy lapsed.	1	3	3	Med Council covered by Zurich. Review of Policy with company checked annually for relevance and every three years competitively. Insurance approved by Council. Annual update of asset values and checks of contracts and policies. In accordance with Financial Regulations, all insurance claims to be submitted via Chief Officer or RFO only. Chairs of Committees to be made aware of exceptional claims. Zurich to be made aware of named staff who can make claims on insurance.	Maintaining existing procedures Update Asset Register annually Review overall valuation of the Town Hall being the Town Council's key Asset <u>Three year deal in place until June 2027</u>

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3c	Compliance with Inland Revenue Requirements	Payments missed. Year-end returns inaccurate or submitted late.	1	3	3	Med	Sage Payroll system calculates wages, pension and NI. Liaison with Cheshire Pension Services. Subject to Internal Audit.	Maintaining existing procedures
3d	Health and Safety of Staff, Visitors and Contractors	Liability incurred if Council found to be at fault	1	3	3	Med	Council has Health and Safety Policy for employees and protect of the public. Separate Risk Assessments in place for all property and activities carried out. £10million Public Liability Insurance. Regular contact with streetscape staff and Lone Workers.	Risk Assessments reviewed by managers at least annually.
3e	Legal Liability as a consequence of Asset ownership	Injury caused through fault with asset or incorrect training in operation.	1	3	3	Med	Buildings and other assets inspected regularly by staff for faults. PAT checks carried out annually or as needed. Appropriate training given.	Under constant review
3f	Computer Records	Reliability of system. Loss of data through system error or theft.	1	3	3	Med	Office 365 now used with replacement server within the Cloud. Contract with Prism to provide IT services within an hour (office hours) Professional anti-virus software and Firewall. Confidential files password protected	Maintaining existing procedures
3g	Paper records	Storage of ancient documents Retaining documents appropriately	1	1	1	Low	Where appropriate stored in museum or safe. Reviewing off site storage for documents that need to be kept under document retention policy but not used.	

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3h	Tendering Process	Procedures not followed for significant contracts. Best value not achieved. Fraud.	1	3	3	Med	Outlined in the Financial Regulations. Tender documents opened in the presence of at least two councillors and Chief Officer. <u>Policy to be reviewed regularly to check for new regulations. CHALC/NALC to be utilised for advice.</u>	Maintaining existing procedures
3i	Register of Members Interests	Not maintained in accordance with Code of Practice	1	2	2	Low	Up to date Code of Conduct adopted by Council. Register of Interests filed with CEBC and on CTC web site. Written declarations of interests submitted to the office by councillors. <u>All paperwork to be completed as per regulations and requirements to ensure new Councillors acceptance of office is declared in time.</u>	Maintaining existing procedures
3j	Proper Document Control	Documents unaccounted for. No proof of documents received.	1	1	1	Low	Filing system established and updated. Data Protection Act and GDPR requirements in place. Document retention policy in place. Councillors' mail available for collection.	Maintaining existing procedures
3k	GDPR	Failure to safeguard personal information. Misuse of information lead to break of regulations	1	3	3	Med	Firewall and IT security regularly updated. Database audit checked annually. Data protection and privacy policy published. ICO registration checked and paid annually. All data collection sheets state purpose and how stored and used.	Maintain existing procedures

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3l	Climate Change Emergency	Failure to reduce carbon impact from services and activities and to meet mitigation measures to meet Climate Change Emergency	2	2	4	Med	Green Working Group for the town council which monitors carbon footprint, and plans to reduce the Carbon Footprint.	Consider Environmental impact on all services and activities.
4	ICT and Cyber Security							
4a	Cyber Security	Examples of Cyber Security are: Theft of sensitive or regulated information, hardware damage and subsequent loss, Malware and viruses.	2	3	6	High	CTC hold an ICT Policy which includes virus controls. ICT service are provided by a local company, who back up/scan and monitor our ICT system daily/weekly. The account packages are backed up daily and once weekly saved to a separate area. Staff and Councillor Training made available. <u>RFO has access to the ICT providers portal to issue out training on Cyber Security and ICT Safety.</u>	All the Councils PC's, Laptops and files are protected by out ICT providers. PC's and servers are backed up by the ICT provider on a daily basis. Keep ICT Policy updated Officers to arrange for staff to attend training and awareness courses.
<u>4b</u>	<u>ICT Safety</u>	<u>Misuse of laptops/mobile phones</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>All staff to ensure that laptops are locked or closed down every time they leave their desk.</u> <u>No one is to share laptops.</u> <u>No one is to share passwords.</u> <u>ICT company is on place to assist with password issues.</u> <u>Multi Factor Authentication is now in place for all staff and Councillors.</u>	<u>Maintain high levels of security at all times.</u> <u>Follow the Councils ICT policy at all times.</u>

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						<u>Mobile phones are to be used for work purposes only.</u>	
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