



HASLEMERE TOWN COUNCIL
FINANCE, LAND AND PROPERTY RISK ASSESSMENT
Reviewed January 2026

Key: High Risk =H, Medium Risk = M, Low Risk = L

FINANCE				
RISK	H	M	L	ACTION
Banking Arrangements and Expenditure Controls			*	<p>Any cheque payments are signed by an officer and two Councillors as per bank mandate. All payments are approved retrospectively by Council.</p> <p>All online payments are made in accordance with the Council's standing orders and payments set up by either the Clerk or Deputy Clerk then signed off electronically by 2 authorised Members.</p> <p>Transfer between CCLA and HTC's current account are accepted with scanned signatures, however the councillors in question are copied into these transactions for transparency and any payments outside the council's accounts are not permitted in this way.</p> <p>All cash and cheques are paid into the bank on the as soon as possible after receipt.</p> <p>Current and new cheque books are kept in the safe in the Clerk's office.</p> <p>Council has approved a credit card for use by Town Clerk to secure best value at all times. This has a limit of £8000 and is only for use by the Town Clerk. Council signs off all transactions.</p> <p>Monthly data entry and bank reconciliation on the Council's Omega software is currently done by the Deputy Clerk. A monthly report is produced which is checked by the Town Clerk. All transactions and expenditure against budget are reported to Council bi-monthly. At least quarterly the Chair of F&A verifies and countersigns the bank reconciliations against bank statements.</p> <p>The Council employs an internal auditor who reports twice yearly on the Council's financial procedures. The Town Clerk also uses the services of an independent qualified accountant/auditor to</p>

				<p>oversee the book-keeping done in house by Council staff.</p> <p>The council has an adopted investment strategy which seeks to minimise exposure to the council's holdings should an individual financial institution fail.</p>
Fidelity Insurance			*	<p>The Council's external auditor recommends that the level of fidelity insurance held by the Council is enough to cover loss of it holdings at any one time. The level of fidelity insurance is to be reviewed by F&G once a year before the insurance is renewed.</p>
Insurance			*	<p>The Council holds all necessary employers, fidelity and public liability insurances. The Town Clerk requires copies of contractor liability insurance before work can be undertaken.</p>
Grant Applications			*	<p>A review of the Council's grant process took place in 2024.</p> <p>A grant register is maintained to monitor and avoid duplicate claims for grants. This also serves to assess unclaimed grants that need to be budgeted for in future years.</p> <p>Grants have to be claimed within six months of full council approval or within the budgeted financial year. This can be extended at the discretion of the Clerk.</p>
Budgeting			*	<p>A budget working party is appointed at September Council and the process is managed by the Town Clerk. The budget for the coming financial year is agreed at January Full Council.</p> <p>Council reserves are taken into account as part of the budget process.</p> <p>Monthly accounts information given at each Council meeting shows actual spend against budget in all areas.</p> <p>Significant budget overspends are highlighted to Council.</p>
Fraud and Corruption			*	<p>There is triple handling of all payments. Two Councillor signatures are required for all cheques. This must also be countersigned by the RFO. All payments are verified by the bi monthly Council Committees.</p>
Internal Controls			*	<p>The Council's adopted Financial Regulations adhere to best practice guidelines.</p> <p>Monthly lists of expenditure are taken to Council for approval and to exercise financial control. There is dual officer and member involvement in the financial business of the Council.</p> <p>The Council's standing orders, Financial Regulations and other procedure documents are reviewed on a</p>

				<p>scheduled basis to ensure they are in line with the best practice.</p> <p>Councillor attendance at Committee meetings is crucial in order to avoid a by election. A resolution accepting reasons for councillor absence at meetings is passed at each Full Council meeting to ensure that councillors are not 'timed out'. All minutes record attendance and apologies as a record. This action is taken in order to avoid unnecessary Council expenditure on interim elections.</p>
Other financial considerations			*	<p>No petty cash is kept on the premises.</p> <p>Any cash that may be collected, for instance at a charity event, is stored overnight in a safe and banked promptly the next working day.</p>
LAND AND PROPERTY				
Land management and insurance			*	<p>With the council potentially taking on new land and buildings there is a risk that they are not properly maintained or managed due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of officer experience • Lack of proper funding • Lack of other resource <p>The acquisition of these sites has been thoroughly considered by council. Each site will be properly insured and be added to the relevant inspection schemes. Money has been budgeted for additional resource and a sinking fund for ongoing repairs will be established.</p>
Security of vulnerable buildings, amenities or equipment.			*	<p>Town Hall offices are secured and separate from the Council Chamber. No access is allowed into the Council offices outside of normal office hours with the exception of staff and town hall cleaners. Cleaners are recruited by an external company who police check them prior to placement.</p> <p>Users of the Council Chamber are not be able to access the Town Hall offices and kitchen due to GDPR considerations.</p> <p>Anti virus software is installed to protect the computer systems and is kept up to date.</p> <p>A safe is provided for valuable items such as stamps, cheques and cash awaiting banking.</p> <p>A video entry system is used for out of hours visitors and lone workers.</p>
Data Security			*	<p>All important files held on Town Hall computers are backed up regularly by an external company, and</p>

				are stored securely. Computers and laptops are encrypted.
Maintenance			*	<p>Maintenance contractors have been appointed to cut grass and maintain open spaces. The contracts are reviewed every 5 years.</p> <p>The Town Clerk has a maintenance budget and delegated authority to maintain the fabric of the Council's assets.</p>
Health and safety, financial implications of accidents in premises and on play equipment			*	<p>High risks are promptly dealt with.</p> <p>Reasonable practicable precautions are taken to prevent accidents. Equipment is inspected weekly by a town hall officer and two operational inspections and a full annual inspection are conducted by an qualified external company.</p> <p>Where practicable interim repairs are conducted and warning notices placed where risks are evident. Equipment that is damaged / unsafe is removed where practicable.</p> <p>A tree maintenance programme is in place and the trees are regularly inspected by a qualified contractor in the course of their contract work. Interim measures are taken to protect the public when safety issues occur and a prompt repair process is adopted.</p> <p>Lifts and fire extinguishers are inspected regularly and remedial implemented when issues identified.</p> <p>Electrical items at the Town Hall are PAT tested annually.</p> <p>The Town Hall is surveyed every 4-5 years to identify and defects and produce a schedule of works for the following years.</p> <p>The Council has adopted a Lone Worker policy to safeguard officers working alone.</p>
Councillor's Interests			*	<p>HTC reviews its Code of Conduct regularly and updates as necessary. A new code was adopted in January 2022. Councillors must comply with the code and are obliged to declare Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Registrable Interests at every Council meeting.</p> <p>The Council complies fully with the revised Code of Conduct procedures. All Councillors have a copy of the Good Councillor's Guide.</p> <p>New Councillors receive a full briefing and money is budgeted for ongoing Councillor training.</p>
Minutes			*	All minutes are properly recorded / signed with reference numbers.

Outsourcing Services			*	The bills for contractors' work are routinely checked against the contract. Where reasonably practicable site visits are made to ensure that work is complete prior to payment. Town Clerk monitors expenditure and budget control.
Activities outside legal powers			*	The General Power of Competence was re-adopted at Council in May 2023.
Electors Rights			*	The Council will keep their electorate properly informed as to their rights by displaying information on their notice board also advertising in local newspapers and using social media as required. Council Newsletter, Haslemere Happenings, is sent to all households as required. Revised Freedom of Information policy was adopted by Council in 2022. The model publication scheme was re-adopted by Council in 2022.
Qualified Staff			*	The Town Clerk became CILCA qualified in January 2012 obtained her CertHE in Community Governance and Local Council Management (the Advanced Clerk's qualification) in 2016. The Deputy Clerk became CiLCA qualified in 2020. Council sets a staff training budget each year and staff are encouraged to keep up to date with issues affecting the sector.
General Data Protection Regulation			*	The Council acknowledges the increased responsibility the implementation of the GDPR in May 2018 confers. Whilst it no longer retains the services of an external DPO, it will has identified an external company to assist, as necessary, on an ad hoc basis.
Emergencies			*	A situation similar to the pandemic experienced in 2020 would potentially have dramatic effect on the Council and its ability to deliver services. This is also true of any other local emergency, such as flooding or fire. The Council's emergency plan was updated in 2023 and continues to be reviewed periodically.