SOMERFORD PARISH COUNCIL

RISK ASSESSMENT

Adopted 20 May 2026
Next Review May 2027

Table 1 **Area where there may be scope to use insurance to help manage risk**	
Risk Identification Insurance cover for risk is the most common approach to certain types of inherent risks: The protection of physical assets owned by the council – buildings, furniture, equipment, etc. (loss or damage)	**Council's response** Insurance is in place with Zurich. Somerford's fixed asset register is detailed in full in the Policy Schedule. Rhead's Meadows and Blackfirs Wood have been added under 'public liability'. A tree survey was completed by Eden Arboriculturists and will be repeated in May 2026. Clerk and Chairman have surveyed the sites, as have our contractors, no additional action needed at present (to be reviewed in May 2026).
The risk of damage to third party property or individuals as a consequence of the council providing services or amenities to the public (public liability)	Covered, £12,000,000
The risk of consequential loss of income or the need to provide essential services following critical damage, loss or non-performance by a third party (fidelity guarantee)	Covered, £250,000
Legal liability as a consequence of asset ownership (public liability)	Covered, £12,000,000
Internal controls A council's internal controls may include:	**Council's response**
An up-to-date register of assets and investments	In place, reviewed annually
Regular maintenance arrangements for physical assets	A maintenance schedule is in place
Annual review of risk and adequacy of cover	Yes, reviewed annually.
Ensuring the robustness of insurance providers	Adequate, Zurich Insurance policy in place

Table 2 **Areas where there may be scope to work with others to help manage risk**	
Risk Identification The limited nature of internal resources in most local councils means that councils wishing to provide services often buy them in from specialist external bodies, e.g., Maintenance for vulnerable buildings, amenities, or equipment.	No buildings or equipment, but we are developing a Service Level Agreement with Congleton Town Council for maintenance of Blackfirs Wood and Rhead's Meadows.

Ensure that proper safeguards exist when the Council works in partnership with another body	Yes, via Streetscape Team
The provision of services being carried out under agency/partnership agreements with principal authorities	Congleton Town Council for dog bin emptying. Shared provision of verge maintenance.
Banking arrangements, including borrowing or lending	No borrowing or lending. Nat West provide banking arrangements. Financial Regulations reviewed annually and Internal Audit in June 2025 raised no issues.
Ad hoc provision of amenities/facilities for events to local community groups Markets management Vehicle or equipment lease or hire Trading units (leisure centres, playing fields, burial grounds, etc.)	None
Professional services (planning, architects, accountancy, design etc.)	Bowcock and Pursaill provided legal advice for RSPB land transfer in 2021/2022. Planning and Transport consultants engaged in March 2023 for Planning Application advice.
Internal controls A council's internal controls may include: Standing orders and financial regulations dealing with the award of contracts for services or the purchase of capital equipment	Financial Regulations, Standing Orders and Code of Conduct reviewed annually.
Regular reporting on performance by suppliers, providers, contractors	Regular reporting to full Council throughout the year.
Annual review of contracts	Any multi-annual contracts are reviewed periodically, at least annually.
Clear statements of management responsibility for each service	No services provided
Regular scrutiny of performance against targets	Contractor service delivery is reviewed by Clerk and reported to full Council.
Adoption of and adherence to codes of practice for procurement and investment	Yes, as per the Financial Regulations and Standing Orders
Arrangements to detect and deter fraud and/or corruption	Yes, as per the Financial Regulations and Standing Orders and internal controls
Regular bank reconciliations, independently reviewed	Clerk produces monthly Bank Reconciliations checked by two Councillors.

Table 3 **Areas where there may be a need to self-manage**	
Risk identification There are a number of activities that create business risks but do not fall easily into either of the above categories for a number of reasons, principally because they are either difficult to quantify or considered inefficient to have provided externally or just uninsurable.	
Keeping proper financial records in accordance with statutory requirements`	Yes
Ensuring all business activities are within legal powers applicable to local councils.	Yes
Complying with restrictions on borrowing	N/A
Ensuring that all requirements are met under employment law and Inland Revenue regulations	Yes – Contract of Employment in place and TCS Management provide payroll services.
Ensuring all requirements are met under Customs and Excise regulations (especially VAT)	Yes Yes
Ensuring the adequacy of the annual precept within sound budgeting arrangements	N/A
Monitoring of performance against agreed standards under partnership agreements	Yes
Ensuring the proper use of funds granted to local community bodies under specific powers or under section 137	N/A
Proper, timely and accurate reporting of council business in the minutes	Yes
Responding to electors wishing to exercise their rights of inspection	Available but not yet requested
Meeting the laid down timetables when responding to consultation invitation	Yes
Proper document control	Yes.
Register of members' interests and gifts and hospitality in place, complete, accurate and up to date	ROMI reviewed annually, Gifts and Hospitality more frequently

Table 4 **Areas where there may be a need to self-manage risk – internal controls**	
Internal controls A council's internal controls may include:	**Council's response**
Regular scrutiny of financial records and proper arrangements for the approval of expenditure	Yes

Regular returns to the Inland Revenue; contracts of employment for all staff, Regular returns of VAT; training the responsible officer in matters of VAT and other taxation issues as necessary. Regular budget monitoring statements Developing systems of performance measurement Procedures for dealing with and monitoring grants or loans made or received Minutes properly numbered and paginated with master copy kept in safekeeping Documented procedures to deal with enquiries from the public Documented procedures to deal with responses to consultation requests Documented procedures for document receipt, circulation, response, handling and filing Procedures in place for recording and monitoring members' interests and gifts and hospitality received Adoption of codes of conduct for members and employees	Yes Yes. Employment contract agreed and performance management in place. Yes, at least annually. Regular Clerk training Yes and on the website Yes no loans Yes Yes FOI Policy and Complaints Policy in place Up to date registers published both locally and on the Cheshire East website Yes, Somerford follows the Cheshire East Council model Code of Conduct
Internal audit assurance Internal audit testing may include: Review of internal controls in place and their documentation Review of minutes to ensure legal powers in place, recorded and correctly applied. Testing of income and expenditure from minutes to cashbook, from bank statements to cashbook, from minutes to statements etc. including petty cash transactions. Review and testing of arrangements to prevent and detect fraud and corruption. Testing of specific internal controls and reporting findings to management	 Yes Yes Monthly monitoring and bank reconciliations, no petty cash held Regular review with the Clerk and two Councillors As above

Approved by Council on 20 May 2026

Geoff Bell

Chairman of Somerford Parish Council

Date 20 May 2026

Carlton Evans

Clerk of Somerford Parish Council

Date 20 May 2026