

Document Control

Adopted date: October 2026

Next review date: October 2027, or following any significant incident.



Framingham Earl Parish Council

Business Continuity Plan

1. Purpose

This Business Continuity Plan sets out the arrangements to ensure that the essential functions of the Parish Council can continue during and after an unexpected disruption. The Council recognises that unforeseen events may temporarily affect its ability to operate. This Plan provides a framework for maintaining essential services, protecting Council assets and information, and restoring normal operations as quickly as reasonably practicable.

2. Scope

This Plan applies to:

- Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)
- Parish Councillors
- Contractors engaged by the Council
- Council records and information
- Council finances
- Council assets
- Council meetings and decision-making

3. Objectives

The objectives of this Plan are to:

- Protect the health and safety of councillors, employees and contractors.
- Maintain essential Council services.
- Protect Council records and financial information.
- Ensure legal and statutory obligations continue to be met.
- Minimise disruption to residents.
- Restore normal Council operations as quickly as possible.

4. Potential Disruptions

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Illness, resignation or unexpected absence of the Clerk.
- Fire or flood affecting the Clerk's home office.
- Loss of internet, cloud or telephone services.
- Cyber-attack or ransomware.
- Computer or hardware failure.
- Loss of Council records.
- Banking system failure.
- Severe weather.

- Pandemic or public health emergency.
- Failure of a key contractor.
- Utility failure.
- Major incident affecting the parish.

5. Essential Council Functions

The following activities are considered essential:

- Receiving and responding to correspondence.
- Paying invoices.
- Managing Council bank accounts.
- Preparing agendas and minutes.
- Organising Council meetings.
- Responding to planning consultations.
- Managing insurance.
- Maintaining statutory records.
- Responding to emergencies affecting Council property.
- Maintaining the Council website and social media presence where practical.

6. Responsibilities

Full Council

The Council is responsible for:

- Approving this Plan.
- Reviewing the Plan.
- Supporting recovery following any major disruption.

Chair of the Council

The Chair will:

- Liaise with the Clerk during any disruption.
- Authorise emergency decisions where permitted.
- Keep councillors informed.
- Assist in implementing recovery arrangements.

Parish Clerk / RFO

The Clerk will:

- Maintain this Plan.
- Ensure Council records are protected.
- Maintain secure backups.
- Keep key contact lists updated.
- Notify the Chair of any incident affecting Council operations.
- Coordinate recovery wherever possible.

7. Key Contacts

The Clerk shall maintain a confidential contact list including:

- All Parish Councillors
- District Council
- County Council

- Internal Auditor
- External Auditor
- Banking provider
- Insurance provider
- Grounds Maintenance Contractor
- Utility companies
- Website provider
- IT support provider
- Defibrillator provider (where applicable)
- Emergency Planning Officer, South Norfolk Council

This list shall be reviewed at least annually.

8. Council Records

The Clerk will ensure that important records are securely maintained.

These include:

- Minutes
- Agendas
- Financial records
- Asset Register
- Insurance documents
- Contracts
- Policies
- Risk Assessments
- Planning records

Where possible:

- Electronic records shall be backed up using secure cloud storage.
- Important paper documents shall be stored securely.
- Passwords shall be stored securely and not within Council files.

9. Information Technology

Where IT systems fail:

- Cloud backups shall be used where available.
- Alternative equipment may be used where practical.
- The Council website provider shall be contacted if required.
- Passwords shall be changed immediately following any suspected cyber incident.

10. Clerk Absence

If the Clerk is unavailable due to illness or another unforeseen circumstance:

The Chair shall:

- Assess urgent work.
- Determine whether routine work can wait until the Clerk returns.
- Arrange temporary administrative assistance where appropriate.
- Consider appointing a Locum Clerk if the absence is expected to be prolonged.

Priority shall be given to:

- Financial payments.
- Statutory meetings.
- Planning consultations.
- Legal deadlines.

11. Council Meetings

Where meetings cannot proceed as planned:

- Meetings may be postponed where lawful.
- Extraordinary meetings may be called where necessary.
- Residents shall be informed through the Council website and noticeboards.

12. Financial Continuity

The Council will seek to ensure:

- Bank accounts remain secure.
- Payments continue where legally required.
- Insurance premiums are maintained.
- Payroll (if applicable) continues.
- VAT claims and statutory returns are completed as soon as practicable.

13. Contractors

If a contractor is unable to provide services:

The Clerk will:

- Notify the Chair.
- Seek an alternative contractor if authorised.
- Inform residents where service disruption is expected.

14. Communications

During a disruption, information may be provided through:

- Council website
- Noticeboards
- Email
- Telephone
- Social media (where used)

Only authorised Council representatives shall issue public statements.

15. Recovery

Following any significant disruption:

The Clerk and Chair shall:

- Assess the impact.
- Restore Council records.
- Resume normal services.
- Report to the next Council meeting.

- Recommend improvements where necessary.

16. Testing and Review

This Plan shall be:

- Reviewed annually.
- Reviewed after any significant incident.
- Updated following changes to staffing, legislation or Council procedures.

Confidential Information

This Plan contains operational information. The detailed contact list, passwords, banking arrangements and recovery credentials shall be maintained separately by the Clerk and shall not be published.