

Included in the Clerk's job evaluation report were some considerations for MPC as a whole, which are itemised below

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

- reviewing the working group and lead councillor structure to ensure lawful and effective delegation;
- reviewing Terms of Reference for all working groups, particularly where they appear to make decisions or discharge Council functions;
- considering whether the Planning Working Group should be formally constituted as a committee or whether planning responses should be dealt with through Full Council or officer delegation;
- undertaking a staffing and governance review to ensure resources and structures are aligned with the Council's asset base, service breadth and project workload;
- developing a business continuity plan for Clerk/RFO absence, including arrangements for urgent payments, agendas, statutory deadlines and project continuity;
- considering whether administrative or project support may be required as projects progress;
- considering the formation of an HR Committee or formal HR support arrangement, with appropriate training for councillors involved in employment matters;
- providing councillor training on the distinction between councillor, working group, committee and officer responsibilities;
- developing a Strategic Plan and Action Plan to support prioritisation, medium-term financial planning and workload management;
- reviewing the job evaluation in 3-5 years, or earlier if staffing levels increase, assets change materially, or services expand.

KEY RISKS

OPERATIONAL CAPACITY

The Clerk remains central to the Council's continuity, with limited resilience if the postholder is unavailable. Councillors recognised that work would be significantly affected in the Clerk's absence, particularly in relation to projects and operational matters. Increased facilities management duties, including the pavilion refurbishment and subsequent operation, are likely to add further pressure to administrative and governance capacity. The Council should consider whether the current staffing structure is sustainable as project activity increases. If the Clerk is unable to increase their hours due to other commitments, the Council may need to consider alternative forms of support, such as part-time administrative support, project support, locum cover arrangements, or specialist external advice where appropriate. –

ASSET & FACILITIES RISK

The Council's growing and varied asset portfolio increases the need for compliance monitoring, insurance review, contractor oversight, inspection arrangements and clear reporting. The pavilion refurbishment, Bowls Club lease and playground development are examples of asset-related matters that create additional governance, financial and operational risk. Although stewards assist with asset monitoring, they do not remove the Clerk's responsibility for ensuring matters are reported, escalated and acted upon appropriately.

GOVERNANCE & WORKFORCE

The working group and lead councillor model is intended to distribute workload, but in practice may increase demands on the Clerk and blur lines of accountability. If councillors undertake operational tasks or discharge functions outside proper delegation arrangements, this exposes the Council to governance and legal risk. The absence of office accommodation should not, in itself, prevent the Council from considering additional staffing support. Many local councils operate with remote, hybrid or home-based administrative arrangements. If additional support is required, the issue is therefore primarily one of operational need, affordability and precept planning, rather than office accommodation alone. The Council should ensure councillors understand the distinction between strategic decision making, working group activity, committee delegation and officer implementation. A councillor training session would help strengthen governance and reduce risk.

Councillors involved in the job evaluation process make the following recommendations to MPC for this financial year

- Review working groups' terms of reference
- Review staffing levels – recommendation is to consider an additional part-time post in time for inclusion in next year's budget. This would allow the Clerk to concentrate on the more important/complex issues, while having support for carrying out the more day to day functions. It would also reduce the operational risk.
- Draft a strategic plan for next 5 years
- Source a provider for roles and responsibilities training for all councillors, clerk and volunteers.