

Mountsorrel recommendations action plan

| Number | Title | Recommendation | Comments/Update | Timescale | Ownership | Status |
|--------|-------|---|-----------------|-----------|-----------|--------|
| 1. | | Continue working towards and maintaining compliance with The Local Government Transparency Code 2015 | | | | |
| 2. | | Ensure that there is always <u>explicit</u> reference on agendas for meetings of the Council or its Committees that a specific proposal is to be considered when entering into financial, staffing, and other commitments. This includes items which are confidential (see 3 below). | | | | |
| 3. | | Items which relate to confidential business (e.g. staffing matters) should be dealt with at Council and Committee meetings through the use of written reports with recommendations, usually written by officers with Cllr input where appropriate. This enables agendas to explicitly refer to the proposal(s) in hand. | | | | |
| 4. | | Undertake a full independent staffing structure review to ensure that the council has the appropriate staffing resources and structures in place to meet the current and future demands of the council and its projects, facilities, and services. No further permanent posts should be created until such a time as the report has been considered. | | | | |
| 5. | | Make greater use of formal reports at Committee and Council level to provide an audit trail for informed, controlled, and risk assessed decisions making (e.g. to explain the reasons or factors for recommending a course of action and confirm alternative courses of action have been formally presented and properly considered but rejected by Cllrs). | | | | |
| 6. | | Develop and adopt a detailed Business Continuity Plan to complement or further develop the council's existing risk management measures. It should identify and address risks that could impact on key council services/functions/projects and the actions which should be taken to avoid disruption of these services/functions, including delegated authority where it exists. | | | | |
| 7. | | Implement systemic consultation engagement processes to engage with the community and allow them to shape Council plans including all major projects and using a variety of means, including considering the use of participative budgeting. | | | | |

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| 8. | | <p>Adopt recognised best practice for local council capital projects ensuring that as a minimum the following steps are undertaken and properly documented before committing the council to a project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation and engagement, including on specific costs and any precept and council tax implications. • Appropriate business plan in place. • Appropriate legal and VAT advice sought by the council itself in place. • Clear identified need(s) by means of a needs analysis or similar. • Project plan. | | | | |
| 9. | | Provide project management training for key officers and all Cllrs, ideally based on the “5 Case Model”. | | | | |
| 10. | | Consider making training (core and/or specialist) compulsory for all Councillors who wish to become Committee members, and a recommendation that all Cllrs are expected to attend core training (ie Councillor Training, and Chairman’s Training) upon election or co-option. | | | | |
| 11. | | Add strengthened reporting mechanisms to the council’s Schedule of Delegation clearly detailing how use of existing delegated authority to council officers and committees should be reported to council in a timely and comprehensive manner. | | | | |
| 12. | | Creation of a Cllr induction program for all new Cllrs, and provision of key documentation from outset. This includes organisational structure, budget, council policies and procedures (Financial Regulations, Standing Orders, Committee Terms of Reference, Code of Conduct, Schedule of Delegation, Complaints Procedure, etc). LRALC key policies and procedures document provides the basis for this. New cllrs should also be fully briefed on all council projects, e.g. timelines, previous key decision making, other options considered, etc. | | | | |
| 13. | | Council commits to achieving the Local Council Award Scheme (LCAS, ex “Quality Council Scheme”) at Foundation level and Subsequent progression to Quality, or Quality Gold. This will provide a framework and formal recognition for the application of best and lawful practice. | | | | |

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| 14. | | Urgently address website issues which have resulted in key information no longer being accessible via this route, including making minutes and agendas of Council and Committee meetings for the last 3 years available. | | | | |
| 15. | | Update risk assessment register to recognise risks associated with individuals acting in a way which is ultra-vires, failure of internal controls, and other organisational risks (e.g. IT failure, loss of premises, long term absence of proper Officer/RFO, pandemics, etc). | | | | |
| 16. | | Implement written risk assessments for proposed capital and other key proposals as part of the decision-making processes for the Council to ensure that project management and decision making controls are operating effectively and are managed at a corporate rather than individual level. | | | | |
| 17. | | Officers (or an appointed independent project manager reporting to the Council for major projects or where capacity issues require it) should manage the day to day delivery of future capital projects. This is to avoid the risk of conflicting interests being seen as an issue, perceived or otherwise, as a result of individuals (including Cllrs) with existing involvement or interests (direct or indirect) undertaking such roles. It also reflects the recognised separation of duties embedded in Financial Regulations and sector practice. | | | | |
| 18. | | Ensure all contracts and contractors are monitored and overseen by the Clerk or another relevant Officer on behalf of Council, and not Cllrs. | | | | |
| 19. | | Identify specialist knowledge and skills held by elected members on an ongoing basis so that this may be utilised at an operational level by providing advice and guidance to the relevant Officer(s), e.g. to assist the Clerk in drafting appropriate technical specifications for contracts and tenders. | | | | |
| 20. | | Restrict direct involvement of Cllrs in staffing matters other than through formal business at relevant Council or Committee meetings or matters being dealt with through recognised council procedures (e.g. grievance and disciplinary policy) or approved council activity (e.g. recruitment activities, such as interview panels). The direct issuing of instructions to MMC staff by cllrs should cease immediately. | | | | |
| 21. | | Ensure that all meetings of Council, including Committees, have the Clerk or another nominated administrative Officer present except when unavoidable | | | | |

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| | | (e.g. staff absence), and other Officers to attend for specific items of business where their presence is necessary. | | | | |
| 22. | | Adopt recommended Committee structure detailed in the Governance Review with appropriate Terms of Reference and membership for the 2020-21 civic year. | | | | |
| 23. | | Develop a detailed and costed strategic/business plan covering council priorities and a financial forecast for at least three years linked to revenue and capital plans for the Council, its projects, and its community. This should also include the strategy for asset management, council reserves, and community engagement and consultation. | | | | |
| 24. | | Provide refresher training for a Cllrs on Code of Conduct and Interests. | | | | |
| 25. | | Undertake a review of the Council's Code of Conduct in the light of the council's expanded range of activities and influence to ensure it is fit for purpose, include considering the adoption of any further non-statutory categories of interest and any associated requirements/restrictions placed on cllrs by these. | | | | |
| 26. | | The council should look to commission external conflict resolution support (e.g. mediation) as a matter of urgency to address the embedded conflict issues which are impacting upon the council's ability of the council to function smoothly and with consensus. | | | | |
| 27. | | The council should commission solicitors to undertake a review of the lease agreement which pertains to the MMC to ensure that the interests of the council and tax payers are being prioritised and met. | | | | |
| 28. | | The council should not make the final commitment to deliver the Halstead Road project until a proper detailed business case (including revenue costs, projected income, and a detailed needs analysis) and comprehensive consultation and engagement plan is developed and considered by council. | | | | |