



# Westbury Town Council

SITUATION ANALYSIS NOVEMBER 2017

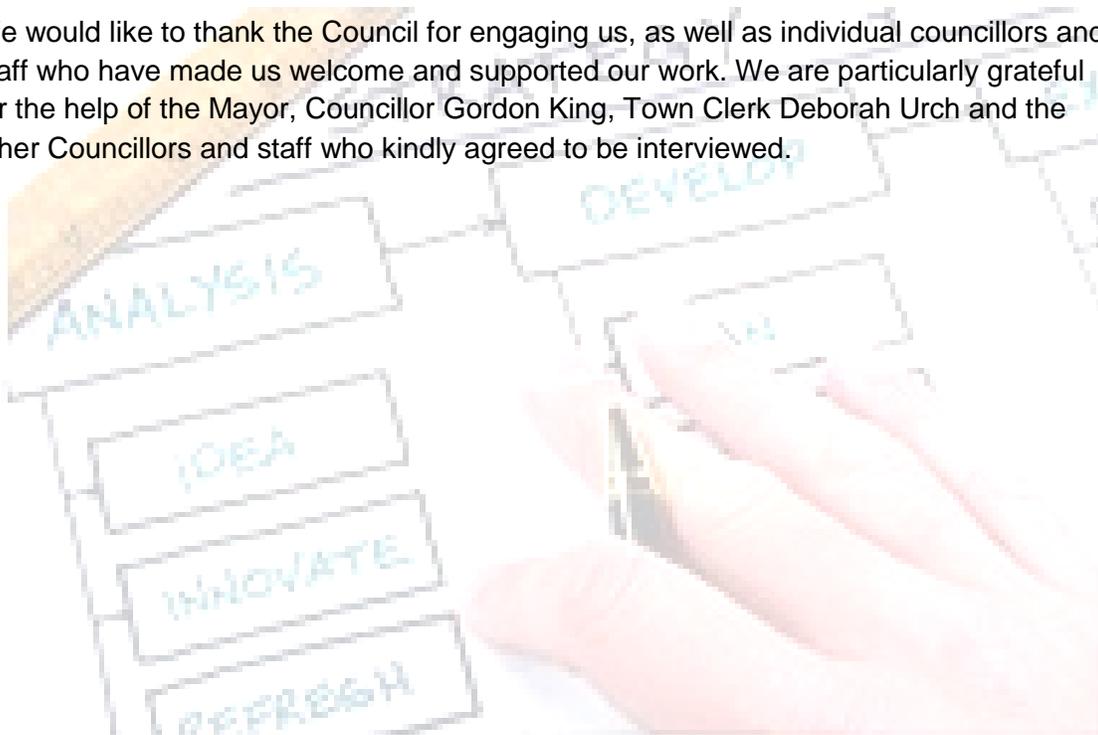
Glyn Chambers Director LCS Ltd

## Introduction

Westbury Town Council require the publication of a strategic plan with a supporting business plan and medium term financial strategy by April 2018. Some progress has been made by working groups, but the Council now wish to expedite the project to achieve the target in the new financial year.

Local Community Solutions Ltd has been engaged to help Westbury Town Council review its current position, and put together proposals for helping it move forward. The initial project was to undertake this review, which includes a full Situation Analysis and subsequently to help develop the council's business plan.

We would like to thank the Council for engaging us, as well as individual councillors and staff who have made us welcome and supported our work. We are particularly grateful for the help of the Mayor, Councillor Gordon King, Town Clerk Deborah Urch and the other Councillors and staff who kindly agreed to be interviewed.



## Executive Summary.

Westbury have been developing a process for strategic business planning for some while and although progress has been made there is now a desire to accelerate that process to achieve a corporate strategy and business plan before the commencement of the new financial year in April 2018.

As with many local councils, practical day to day issues around supporting the community can distract from more strategic issues which often are put off until another day. The Council has recognised this and agreed to accelerate the process by procuring external consultancy support.

Subsequently the Council have appointed LCS an experienced local government consultancy to help develop strategic and business plans. The consultancy to date has included background reading and web research. A visit has been made by LCS consultant Glyn Chambers to observe the Council at work on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2017, which included discussions with the Mayor, three councillors and subsequent telephone conversation with the chairman of Policy and Resources, the Town Clerk and three further members of staff and finally the chair of the community partnership.

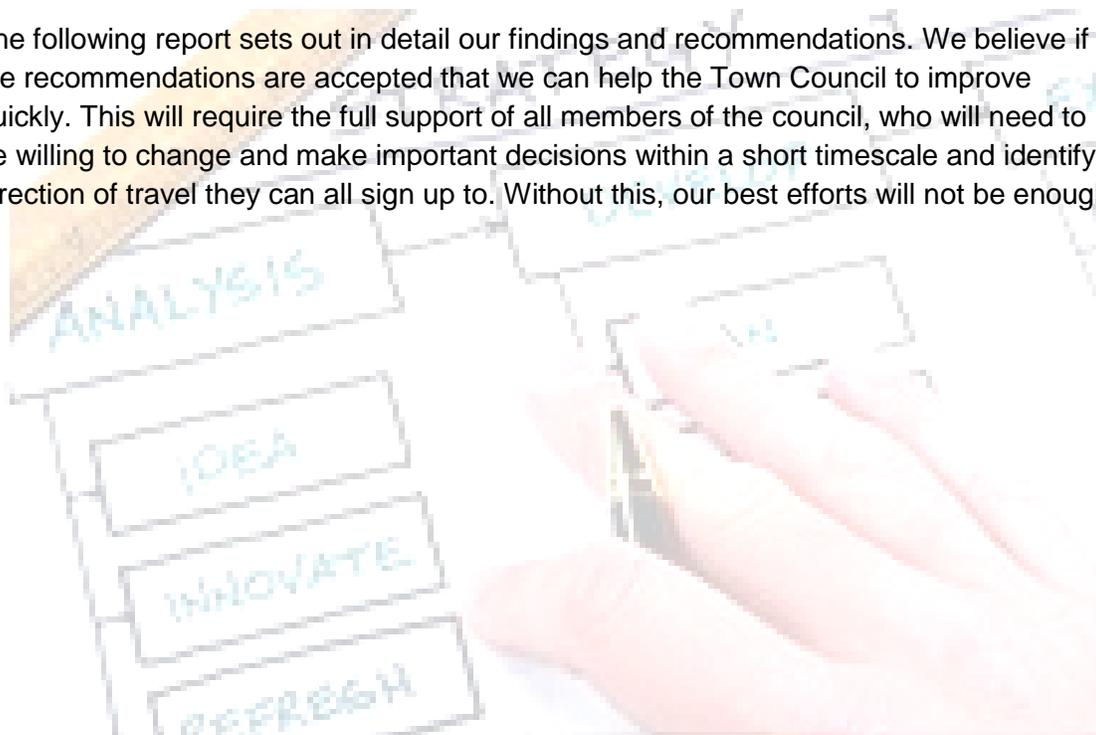
The initial work has focused on the current situation of the council in relation to its capability and assess its readiness to develop a shared strategic plan underpinned with a business plan and integrated performance management.

It has focused on those issues that will be essential in assuring the success of any future strategy. A review and recommendations have therefore been made relating to:

- Finance and Audit
- Governance
- Strategy
- Assets and Services
- Administration
- Public Relations
- Personnel
- Health and Safety
- Sustainability
- Quality and Performance

Our headline conclusion is that Westbury Town Council is well managed with a sound financial and governance core. It is an ambitious council with both officers and members being eager to move the council forward for the benefit of its community. The findings show that the community is at the heart of everything the council does, and councillors demonstrate their preference for active community leadership. Although there are lots of ideas and heart felt sentiments around social value and community engagement, the council lacks a structure to bring all the elements of its thoughts together and translate them into actions. The council recognises that it has no clear or agreed objectives or focus and several councillors are eager to have a business plan. The lack of agreed strategic direction follows through into lack of supporting actions identified within the staffs' annual objectives and together this makes meaningful performance management impossible.

The following report sets out in detail our findings and recommendations. We believe if the recommendations are accepted that we can help the Town Council to improve quickly. This will require the full support of all members of the council, who will need to be willing to change and make important decisions within a short timescale and identify a direction of travel they can all sign up to. Without this, our best efforts will not be enough.



## 1. Town Profile.

Westbury is an historic market town located between Trowbridge and Warminster which provides an important service role for the local community. The town has seen significant housing development in recent years and enjoys very good transport connectivity including a mainline railway and benefits from a significant employment base.

In the hills above the town is the famous Westbury White Horse and although technically located along the boundary of Bratton, the 'Westbury' White horse is considered one of the oldest of the Wiltshire horses. It is reputed to have been first created in 878 with the current shape dating from the 1770's.'

Westbury is one of Wiltshire's smaller market towns, with its near neighbours, Warminster and Trowbridge, being larger and covering a more substantial retail and service provision, however it does play an important role within the network of local towns.

The larger towns around Westbury provide a choice of supermarkets, retail, leisure and education uses. All of the towns within this network have ambitions for growth, and for some while there has been an identified need to clarify the role of Westbury.

From one perspective the town benefits from being part of a cluster of Towns, which have a complementary rather than competing role and together form a critical mass to sustain a higher order of facilities that any one town could alone. However, a weakness for Westbury town centre is that its fragmented and disjointed which adversely affects consumer spending across the town. Furthermore, there is a limited leisure/evening economy unattractive to large national retail and office occupiers. The vision for the Town developed in 2011 proposed that Westbury should: '*Be good at being a small Town*' Whether this vision still holds true for the future must be considered as part of the town council's strategic planning process.

The Principal authority is Wiltshire Council , the unitary authority for most of the ceremonial county of Wiltshire, in the West of England, created in April 2009. It is the successor authority to Wiltshire County Council (1889–2009) and also to four district councils—Kennet, North Wiltshire, Salisbury, and West Wiltshire—all of which had been created in 1973 and were abolished in 2009. Westbury is a civil parish with three electoral wards and with an elected Town Council of fifteen members, the chairman of the Town Council has the title of Mayor of Westbury. The Council offices are located in the Laverton Institute, owned by The Laverton Institute Trust, a registered charity. The Council is the sole trustee of the trust who rent out the building for use by the community and to the Council. The Laverton Institute has a separate business plan and the objectives of the Trust are separate to those of the Council

Westbury Community Area has a resident population of 18,219 and has one main GP surgery and two branch surgeries. In terms of deprivation the Westbury Community Area includes two Super Output Areas (SOAs) that lie in the 20% most deprived SOAs in Wiltshire. Westbury Ham (west) is the most deprived area in Westbury Community Area. Nationally it is in the 2<sup>nd</sup> most deprived quintile (9,220th most deprived area in England out of 32,482).out of the 20.

## 2. Finance & Audit.

The council's accounting and financial reporting are outsourced to independent professionals who advise on all aspects and implications of the council's financial activities and decisions and operate the accounts through the Omega package. This is overseen by the Town Clerk as Responsible Financial Officer. The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 puts local council finance and service transparency as a statutory duty.

Because of consistent budgeting, particularly the regular provision of reserves, the council is financially sound having adequate general and ear marked reserves.

The council is regulated by statutory Financial Regulations and Standing Orders and activities appear to be managed by officers in accordance with these policies set by councillors.

We have read the most recent internal audit by Stuart Pollard of Auditing Solutions and external audit by Grant Thornton UK LLP.

Auditing Solutions in their interim report concluded that the Council continues to maintain adequate and effective internal control arrangements, with only a few issues identified warranting formal comment and recommendation. Auditing Solutions final report was considered by Council in June 2017 where the following issues were considered.

- R3 – The minutes approving the annual precept should formally identify the full value of the precept as adopted. The budget and identified precept was agreed by the Town Council but the precept was not formally adopted. This was an oversight and will be added to the agenda of the next Town Council Meeting
- R4 – The Town Council must formally review and adopt risk assessment annually. The Risk Register was adopted by Town Council in May 2017.
- R6 -R7 – The Asset Register should synchronise with the year-end Statement of Accounts and photographic evidence of assets should be stored within the Asset database. The Asset Register needs considerable work to write off assets and add

photographs. This work will be undertaken over the Summer period and presented to Council in the Autumn.

The external auditor Grant Thornton issued an unqualified section 3 certificate and opinion.

The council is a major business within the town and as such must ensure that it can recover quickly from a disaster which affects its ability to deliver services and continue to function as far as is reasonably practicable in the meantime.

As the council progresses with its business plan it will have the opportunity to consider business risks and actions to lower identified risks. The plan will develop to compliment overall risk arrangements, help maintain critical services during and after any major disruption and promote recovery. The council is also the most accessible tier of local government and community leader, and as such would have a key role in helping the town deal with and recover from a major emergency. Although the statutory responsibility under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to prepare a Major Emergency Plan lies with Wiltshire Council in conjunction with various other agencies, the Town Council will support the Principal authority in implementing their Major Emergency Plan.

**It is therefore recommended that alongside an emerging business plan the council develop a business continuity plan together with a town council emergency plan**

It is recognised that currently committees and council consider only 1 -year forecasts for revenue and capital, receipts and payments and with regular financial reports provided to council together with annual summaries of progress.

**However, Medium Term Financial Planning is an essential part of wider strategic planning, as well as to assess the overall adequacy of the project funds currently being provided through the Precept. It is recommended that a Medium Term Financial Plan is developed alongside the recommended Business Plan.**

### 3. Governance

In this section, we address how the organisation directs and controls its affairs, policies and functions. With local government, there is of course a wider governance role of representing the local community.

We have looked at Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Committee Terms of Reference and Delegation, and key employment documents. Very good progress has been made in developing these documents although the council has recognised that further work needs to be undertaken.

**A schedule of all required council documents has been compiled and it is recommended that a timeline be added to enable progress monitoring.**

**It is also recommended that council use a framework for the documents through a Constitution, which although not a statutory document requirement other than for Principal authorities, will give the documents the status they warrant and provide a comprehensive handbook for councillors, as well as making them easy for the public to find on the website. A discussion on the constituent documents and some appropriate training could be incorporated into future training plans for both councillors and staff, which would enable the governance documents to be better understood.**

#### 4. Strategy and Organisational Culture

The council has a record of delivering well respected services and facilities which contribute considerably to Westbury remaining a vibrant and attractive town. It does not try to do everything itself, but takes a “gap filling” approach and supports others, including voluntary organisations where they can take the lead.

However, the council do not have a clear strategic direction, which should be a priority if the council is to make the best use of its resources. It has a business plan working group who have developed a strong sense of identity for the Town which is in part a corporate vision. However, this must be shared and agreed by council the local community and other stakeholders. To do this and bring all the ideas and aspirations together the council should now develop a comprehensive strategy to give clarity to its direction of travel and identify clearly to the public what the authority stands for.

Organisational Culture.

If an organisation does not have a strong culture that fits with its strategy, then the strategy cannot be effectively executed in a sustainable way.

The culture of an organisation includes things such expectations, experiences, philosophy and values that hold it together, and is expressed in its self-image, inner workings, interactions with the outside world and future expectations. It is based on shared attitudes, beliefs, customs, written and unwritten rules.

It is also shown in;

1. The way the organisation conducts its business, treats its employees and the wider community.

*Councillors and Employees said:*

*The people at Westbury are very nice. We have a very close team and staff work well together and it's a good working environment.*

*The Council takes notice of the community and listens to what it says.*

*We always have an open-door policy for our local community*

*What makes the job worthwhile is being able to do something for the community.*

*We have regular appraisals and team briefs, so I know what is going on.*

*What's most important at Westbury is our commitment to the community.*

*What I enjoy is that no 2 days are alike.*

*I feel like I am part of the community*

*The community of Westbury is the core life giving factor of the Council.*

2. The extent to which freedom is allowed in decision making, developing new ideas and personal expression.

*Councillors and Employees said:*

*We have a can-do culture which allows for flexible working both from a management and employee perspective*

*I have a lot of flexibility and I can think outside the box which makes the job rewarding.*

3. How power and information flows.

*Councillors and Employees said:*

*We have a management team made up of senior councillors and members where ideas and problems are communicated.*

*We have developed lots of contacts in the community helping us discover and learn new things.*

*We now have Councillor surgeries in our wards allowing people once a month to discuss their issues. Getting feedback from the community is a main priority.*

4. How committed employees and councillors are towards collective objectives.

*Councillors and Employees said:*

*It is essential that all Councillors are on board and going in the same direction.*

*The Council must have actions set out in a 5-year plan.*

*We must have a printed and published plan in the hearts, hands and minds of the Council and our Community.*

From the councillor and staff interviews the culture is clearly community focused with councillors and staff having a can-do, hands on approach to the work of the council. There is a good team spirit amongst staff who are willing to go the extra mile to achieve outcomes.

**It is recommended that a value statement to include behaviours is developed alongside any emerging strategic plan both for Councillors and staff which will also have regard to the Councillors code of conduct.**

The council has over the past 12 months taken the decision to take on services from the Principal Authority including public conveniences and play areas previously run by Wiltshire Council

We commend the council in seeking best value and it clearly intends to move towards being an “enabling” authority for its more major functions such as street cleansing, but continue direct provision of more minor functions. This approach is pragmatic and will hopefully free up resources for other priorities.

The Localism Act 2011 makes available a number of new powers and opportunities for town and parish councils which have previously been constrained by limited and often outdated legislation. The economic conditions which have prevailed for a number of years have increased the needs of individuals and communities, curtailing funding and prompting principal councils to shed or reduce local services. Put all these together and there has never been a more important time for the most local level of local government to be active, focused and efficient. Unfortunately, the council does not have the General Power of Competence due to the number of uncontested vacancies on the council. This should be seen as a rallying call to promote the work of the Town Council and communicate and educate local people about the important role they could play in helping shape their town and its Community.

**It is therefore recommended that the role of town councillor is promoted amongst the community in Westbury encouraging people to stand for election. This could also be integrated into the communication plans when the business plan is launched for public consultation.**

A strategic planning process is not just about services and facilities, but is also about clearly articulating Westbury Town Council’s view on how it can contribute to achieving the best standards of governance for the town. The council exists to serve as a vehicle of local opinion; to provide an effective link between local residents & council tax payers with the principal councils, to express local feelings and interests and to keep an overview of all developments within the town. It is an opportunity to ensure all tiers of

local government are coordinated and focused for the good of the town and working in partnership as appropriate.

Any Strategy is only as good as its delivery potential. We recommend, and I know members are keen for the development of a full business plan prepared annually, as a tool to achieve this. It would concentrate on the present but have a number of actions extending over the life of the Strategy. It is also essential to identify how proposals are to be financed and their long-term impact.

For this reason, we suggest your strategic planning, should result in three separate but linked documents:

- Corporate Strategy-including Vision, Mission Statement, key objectives and core values.
- Business Plan- a management tool intended to identify how the financial, human and technological resources available are to be used to achieve declared objectives set out in a council's corporate strategy.
- Medium Term Financial Plan- sets out the financial projections, considerations, pressures and issues for the Authority over the next five years.

It is vital that members own any strategy and therefore it was essential for it to be written around what they say is important. We suggest Member's Planning Day be held at an early date.

The Strategy would be a top-line document and cannot go into every detailed policy decision which a council needs to make.

The other extremely important issue is that developing the strategy is only part of the story how it is implemented is also of vital importance. It's a fact that one of the reasons many implementation efforts fail is that they usually require changing people's habits. And habits in organisations are notoriously sticky and persistent. Habits certainly don't change by telling people in a Town Hall meeting that they should act differently. People are often not even aware that they are doing things in a particular way and that there might be different ways to run the same process.

Identifying and countering the bad habits that keep your strategy from getting executed is not an easy process, there are various practices you can build into your organisation to make it work. Depending on your specific circumstances and strategy, this might involve taking on difficult projects that fit your new strategy and that trigger learning throughout the council. It may involve reshuffling people into different units, to disrupt and alter habitual ways of working and to expose people to alternative ways of doing things. It may also involve identifying key processes and explicitly asking the question "Why do we do it this way?" If the answer is a shrug of the shoulders and a

proclamation of “That’s how we’ve always done it,” it may be a prime candidate for change.

There are usually different ways of doing things, and there is seldom one perfect solution, since all alternatives have advantages and disadvantages — whether it concerns an organization’s structure, incentive system, or resource allocation process. We often resist change unless it is crystal clear that the alternative is substantially better. For a successful strategy implementation process, however, it is useful to put the default the other way around: Change it unless it is crystal clear that the old way is substantially better. Execution involves change. Embrace it.

**Following on from this it is strongly recommended that a working group is set up to monitor and support the implementation of any new strategy.**

## 5. Assets and Services

The Council provides a range of services and facilities which include:

- Public Office at the Laverton Building
- Maintenance of the famous White Horse (although technically outside of Westbury)
- Play Areas
- Public Conveniences
- Managing a range of benches, signs, flower borders hanging baskets and 2 bus stops.
- Skate Park

The council has experience of taking on services and assets from the Principal Authority. These include cleansing and maintenance of public conveniences. The council are currently in negotiations with Wiltshire Council regarding car parks at Westbury Leigh (free car park) and currently provide two hours free car parking in all the three town car parks. It has also taken on responsibility for ten play areas and will now look carefully at the latest policy document from Wiltshire Council in relation to devolution of services and assets transfer in line with a future corporate strategy.

We have made no attempt to evaluate the effectiveness or quality of these services.

## 6. Administration

The council employ 1 full time and 6.86 FTE who undertake all routine administrative tasks under the supervision of the Town Clerk. The capacity of the team is unknown in relation to the future direction of the council. The opportunity for reviewing staff resources would be provided through development of a resourcing plan in line with any future business plans.

Consideration should be given to the administration staff becoming responsible for gathering performance management data alongside any emerging business plan.

### **Recommendation.**

**Review the capacity including knowledge skills and attitude of administration staff as part of the development of a resourcing plan to underpin the future business plan.**

**Following adequate training administration staff to collect data relating to the performance of the Council in relation to future objectives.**

## 7. Public Relations

The council appears to receive good press coverage from local newspapers including the Wiltshire Times.

The council's activities are also well promoted within The White Horse News a free fortnightly newspaper which offers comprehensive coverage of the Westbury area. The council have a Facebook page which is up to date promoting the council's activities and Tweet using Twitter to promote 'what's on' and for public consultations.

The ethos of the council appears to be one of making known what it is doing and why. Openness is the best policy, but of course some information must be confidential by law. There is always a conflict between the aims of data protection and freedom of information, but a positive and consistent approach will gain respect. The council has a number of good things going on, not least councillor's engagement with the community

The Website is the council's "shop window" and is regularly updated giving a good range of information It does provide information on councillors and their declarations of interest.

For information, The Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency (DCLG) applies to local councils and it is expected that the following

information is made available on the Website and most of it is on the Westbury Town Council website with the intention to also include all council policies.

- Grants and payments under contract to the voluntary community and social enterprise sector clearly itemised and listed.
- Senior salaries which are above £58,200
- An organisational chart of the staff structure
- Councillors' allowances and expenses
- Copies of contracts/ tenders to businesses and to the voluntary community and social enterprise sector
- Policies & Complaints Procedure
- Town Council Budget
- Audit Reports
- Annual Return
- Council & Committee Minutes & Agendas (and reports)
- Approved expenditure including costs, supplier and transaction information.

The council does undertake some marketing although there is scope to do more with the development of a new corporate strategy and business plan providing the opportunity to engage with the Westbury Community.

**We recommend then, the development of a comprehensive Communications and Marketing Policy to support any future Corporate Strategy and build on the current areas of good practice. The main areas of promotion to include the following:**

#### **The Town –**

- **Promotion of the Town to attract day visitors, shoppers and tourists**
- **Promotion to attract people looking to live in the Town**
- **Promotion to businesses looking to invest in the Town**

#### **The Council-**

- **Raising the image of the Authority**

- **Statutory and other information to help residents and businesses understand its decision making, policies and priorities.**
- **Marketing of its services to ensure accessibility for all.**

The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 amend the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 to allow the public or press to film, photograph or make an audio recording of council or committee meetings normally open to the public. This makes the management of information going to the public even more important as it can easily be competing with the social media only minutes after a meeting ends.

## 8. Personnel

The Town Clerk is the Proper Officer and R.F.O in addition to which there are 7.86 FTE posts one of which is currently vacant. More recently council have agreed to appoint a temporary member of staff to take forward the Neighbourhood plan

The Employee Handbook is up to date. It is good that council have adopted the collective agreement known as the “Green Book” issued by the NJC for local government Services (comprising representatives of employers & employees). We would recommend that this continues as it gives certainty to both the council and staff. The Green book contains four parts. Part 1 is Principles and Part 4 joint advice. It divides terms and conditions into key national conditions (Part 2) and national provisions which may be modified locally (Part 3).

At the time of our visit, the strong team ethos was very apparent with very much a can-do culture with no silo working and eagerness to help each other and evidence of a supportive learning climate

The Clerk regularly holds staff meetings to communicate the work of the Council and she also attends the council’s management team to provide effective communication between Councillors and officers.

Staff have received regular appraisals, however due the lack of a corporate plan it has been difficult to link individual actions to the council’s priorities and outcomes.

**It is recommended that upon completion of a corporate strategy and business plan that staff appraisals and their objectives are directly linked to those of the Council.**

## 9. Health and Safety

Westbury Town Council has responsibilities as an employer for providing a safe and healthy working environment for all of its employees but must also protect the health and safety of all persons coming into contact or being affected by its work activities, including service users, visitors, partner organisations and volunteers as well as for ensuring contractors have safe systems of work.

The development of the council's policy has been supported by Ellis Whittam. Independent contractors undertake risk assessments for public conveniences and an external contractor carries out weekly inspections of play areas and an independent inspection of these areas is undertaken annually.

## 10. Sustainability

The most accepted definition of sustainability is "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Brundtland Commission of the United Nations 1987). It is acknowledged that this requires the reconciliation of environmental, social and economic demands, which are not mutually exclusive and can be mutually reinforcing.

A council needs to show recognition that its operations impact on the environment in a number of ways. Firstly, as a business it uses energy, causes emissions and operates green space, as a local authority it can protect and at times enhance the local environment both directly and by influencing others. It can also be an enforcer of local environmental standards. Councils are under increasing pressure to reduce their carbon footprint both in recognition of "peak oil" and to help limit climate change.

The Council also has a duty under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, s40 to consider the conservation of biodiversity when carrying out their functions.

Westbury Town Council has adopted within its Health and safety policy a statement of intent relating to the environment. This is very much work in progress and it is **recommended that the council's intentions and priorities in relation to environmental sustainability should be considered during development of strategic plans. It is noteworthy that there are several councils who appear ideally placed in terms of knowledge skills and attitude to become champions in relation to environmental matters. It is recommended that these members are fully utilised in any future plans.**

## 11. Quality and Performance

Westbury has never held the Quality Town Council accreditation, the old system has now been withdrawn by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), and replaced by three levels of a Local Council Award Scheme. In our view communities, partners and the council itself would benefit from the council gaining such an award, as it is widely recognized as an acceptable standard of competence. This could be developed further at a strategic planning day when the council could be advised about the criteria and our assessment of the council's readiness. However members should be aware that there are three levels of award, Foundation, Quality and Quality Gold. To apply for Quality and Quality Gold the criteria requires the council to have obtained 'The General Power of Competence'. One of the conditions of which is that the number of members of the council that have been declared to be elected whether at ordinary elections or at a by-election, is equal to or greater than two-thirds of the total number of members of the council.

The Council could however apply for the Foundation award and to obtain this, the Council must demonstrate that it has the minimum documentation and information in place for operating lawfully and according to standard practice. The council must also have policies for training councillors and is building a foundation for improvement and development.

## 12. Training and Development

Members bring a vast range of skills and experience to the table. However, both local government and the world around it is fast changing and it is a good investment to develop councillors to their full potential. In addition, the council is likely to have a number of new functions over the next few years and it will be important that councillors fully appreciate the implications. Councillors have received training on all aspects of the council's functions and duties, have attended Health and Safety tours of the premises with WALC training for new councillors. Members may be interested to know that some council's have developed role descriptions for members and have introduced voluntary appraisals for councillors.

**It is recommended that a councillor training needs analysis be undertaken together with an action plan which should be contained within a training policy. The policy should also include a re- induction programme for all councillors.**

## 13. Summary of Recommendations

1. **Alongside the emerging business plan the Council should develop a business continuity plan together with a Town Council Emergency Plan**
2. **A Medium Term Financial Plan should be developed alongside the recommended Business plan.**
3. **A timeline should be added to the document completion table to monitor progress of completing the documents**
4. **The Council should use a framework for the documents through a Constitution, which although not a statutory document requirement other than for Principal authorities, will give the documents the status they warrant and provide a comprehensive handbook for Councillors, as well as making them easy for the public to find on the website. A discussion on the constituent documents and some appropriate training could be incorporated into future training plans for both Councillors and staff, which would enable the governance documents to be better understood.**
5. **A value statement to include behaviours should be developed alongside any emerging strategic plan for Councillors and staff, which will also have regard to the Councillors code of conduct.**
6. **It is recommended that the role of Town Councillor is promoted amongst the community in Westbury encouraging people to stand for election. This could also be integrated into the communication plans when the business plan is launched for public consultation.**
7. **We recommend, and I know members are keen for the development of a full business plan prepared annually, as a tool to achieve this. It would concentrate on the present but have a number of actions extending over the life of the Strategy. It is also essential to identify how proposals are to be financed and their long-term impact. For this reason, we suggest your strategic planning, should result in three separate but linked documents:**
  - a) **Corporate Strategy-including Vision, Mission Statement, key objectives and core values.**
  - b) **Business Plan- a management tool intended to identify how the financial, human and technological resources available are to be used to achieve declared objectives set out in a council's corporate strategy.**

- c) **Medium Term Financial Plan-** sets out the financial projections, considerations, pressures and issues for the Authority over the next five years.
  - d) **The corporate strategy, business plan and medium term financial strategy to be completed and agreed by full council by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018.**
8. **It is vital that members own any strategy and therefore it must be written around what councillors say is important. We therefore recommend a Member's Planning Day be held at the earliest opportunity.**
9. **It is recommended that The Strategy would be a top-tier document and not go into every detailed policy decision which council needs to make. Following on from this it is strongly recommended that a working group is established to monitor and support the implementation of any new strategy.**
10. **Review the capacity including knowledge skills and attitude of administration staff as part of the development of a resourcing plan to underpin the future business plan.**
11. **Following adequate training administration staff to collect data relating to the performance of the Council relative to its objectives.**
12. **Develop a comprehensive Communications and Marketing Policy to support any future Corporate Strategy and build on the current areas of good practice.**
13. **It is recommended that a councillor training needs analysis be undertaken together with an action plan to fill training gaps and contained within a training policy. The policy should also include a re- induction programme for all councillors.**