

**WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL**  
**POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
**11 NOVEMBER 2024**  
**Staffing Structure Proposals for 2025/6**

**1. Introduction**

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to set out proposals for changes to the Councils staffing structure to ensure the Council is best placed to respond to its changing role both now and in to the future.

**2. Background**

2.1 The Council's scope and scale of responsibility is changing rapidly as a result of (a) Somerset Councils financial difficulties and (b) the Town Council's desire to take on a greater role in community leadership/place shaping/service delivery. Its role is only likely to continue to grow as it is anticipated that Somerset Council will look to further utilise the Town and Parish sector to lead on other aspects of service delivery where it is no longer able to do so, or the Town Council will choose to step in to protect local delivery where Somerset Council decides to no longer provide it.

2.2 With these changes it becomes more important that the senior leader of the council has the capacity to provide effective strategic leadership focussed on service delivery and delivering the strategic priorities of the Council.

2.3 The traditional structure of a Town Council where the Town Clerk manages aspects of service delivery whilst also taking on the democratic service responsibilities of the Proper Officer including preparing agendas and producing minutes, advising on Standing Orders and policy and process, means that the capacity for high level strategic management to deliver Council priorities is limited.

2.4 The review undertaken by Local Council Consulting (LCC) earlier this year was a light touch review to ensure that the grades of existing staff where appropriate given the size and changing roles of the Council. In effect it established a baseline from which we can now work to ensure that the functions of the Council are properly structured.

**3. Considerations**

**Staffing Proposals**

3.1 The proposal is to separate out the Council's strategic management functions and the democratic services functions. In Wellington, that could be achieved by enhancing the role of the current Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)/Deputy Clerk to take on the management of Democratic Services. A working job title could be Finance and Democratic Services Manager (FDSM). Within that function would be the RFO and Deputy Clerk responsibilities. The Town Clerk would retain the role of Proper Officer, but the functions would be delegated to this role.

- 3.2 It is further proposed that to support this role we should create a post of Democratic Services Officer/Finance Assistant reporting to the FDSM that would be able to pick up the transactional elements of both parts of the work. On the democratic services side of things they would prepare agendas, take minutes at Full Council and committee meetings, advise on Standing Orders etc and on the finance side issue invoices, process payments etc. The suggested grade for this post would be LC2 (below substantive) £29,269 - £32,076.
- 3.3 The proposed changes to the roles and responsibilities and the redesignation of the current post of RFO/Deputy Clerk warrant a review of the grading of the post. As this relates to an existing member of staff the proposals are set out in a confidential appendix to this paper.
- 3.4 These changes would leave the Town Clerk role to focus on the strategic management of the Council and service delivery and management. The suggestion has been made that if the Town Clerk is no longer engaged on a day to day basis with council administration the title of the role should be reviewed, and that Chief Executive is more reflective of what the role is. However, this should not result in any change of grade given the LCC review advised that the size of the Council in terms of budget/scope of service delivery etc was LC4 below substantive and the Town Clerk salary range was based on that premise. That has not changed and an increase in grade is not warranted simply by refocussing its responsibilities and changing its designation.
- 3.5 If it is agreed that this is the route to go down, given the imminent budget setting process is going to be complex and time consuming, I would not suggest implementing this change until in to January 2025 by which time we could look to recruit a DSO/FA post which we should be able to cover in this year's staffing budget.
- 3.6 At its September meeting the Community Committee resolved to recommend that the Council should look to create a post of full time Community Development Officer for the financial year 2025/6 and beyond. The rationale for that was that the committee considered that the future of Somerset Council funded early identification and early help support for the town was uncertain and that the time was right for the Town Council to take a lead in developing and leading a model of community working in the town that delivers its Vision statement, develops plans and proposals and coordinates work with all agencies and voluntary groups in the town to identify and meet the needs of the more vulnerable members of our community at the earliest possible opportunity. The post would be graded at LC2 substantive (£33,024 - £36,648).
- 3.7 At its September meeting the Environment Committee resolved to recommend that the post of temporary part time (0.4fte) Climate Change Officer should be made permanent. This would incur no additional cost to the Council as it would be funded by using 0.4 of the vacant project officer vacancy leaving the balance of 0.6fte to be used flexibly as required.
- 3.8 Given the increasing front line role of the Town Council and our imminent move in to the reception area the Council offices opening hours should be increase to 9.00am – 4.00/5.00pm. If agreed, we should look to increase the receptionist role which had been

set at 0.7fte to full time. This is a role that can be covered through a job share and can take on additional admin tasks if needs be.

#### **4. Proposals**

- (i) That the role of Town Clerk be redesignated as Chief Executive with no change in grade.
- (ii) That the role of RFO/Deputy Clerk be redesignated as Finance and Democratic Services Manager (FDSM) on the basis set out in this report and regraded to LC3 Substantive.
- (iii) That the Council create a post of full time Democratic Services Officer/Finance Assistant reporting to the FDSM graded LC2 below substantive.
- (iv) That the Council create a post of a full time Community Development Officer on the basis set out in this report graded at LC2 Substantive.
- (v) That the post of temporary part time (0.4) Climate Change Project Officer be made permanent and the vacant full time Project Officer post be reduced to 0.6fte to fund this post.
- (vi) That the vacant post of 0.7 Receptionist be increased to full time on the basis set out in this report.

**Proposed Structure 2025/6**

