



Buckingham

Town Council

Business Plan

2015-2018





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Introduction

What is a Town Council Business Plan?

A Business Plan is the Town Council's blueprint for how it will work in a co-ordinated way in the best interests of all who live or work in the town or who use the Council's services. The Plan sets out the Council's values, vision and key objectives.

A Business Plan sets out the mission, objectives and key priorities of what an organisation wants to achieve, either directly or by trying to increase its influence on the relevant delivery body, such as the District or County Council. It is a Council's action plan for a set number of years. The Plan will help drive and determine the direction and content of all other internal strategies and resources of the Council.

This Business Plan sets out for Members, staff, and the community we serve, our mission, purpose and priorities for the next three years.

Why has Buckingham Town Council decided to produce a Business Plan?

This Business Plan will help ensure that Buckingham Town Council can take a planned and consistent approach to:

- The design and delivery of services
- The prioritisation and allocation of resources
- The achievement of real value for money

Having an agreed strategy provides a framework for the Town Council to work within, enabling it to operate in a more consistent and co-ordinated way. The Business Plan will allow the Council to become more confident and proactive in its decision making.

Later in the Plan we have identified:

- The core objectives of the Council over the next three years.
- The key processes and actions associated with each of the Council's priorities

How we ensured Community Involvement

In determining the aims of the Council the Business Plan has:

- Recognised national and local priorities
- Taken account of the views of local communities

Buckingham Town Council has developed a comprehensive Neighbourhood Development Plan which involved a series of public consultation periods and events allowing residents to provide their input. The issues and public opinions highlighted during those consultation events have been used to help form and prioritise the Council's key aims and strategic points.

Monitoring the Business Plan

As mentioned above, the Plan will help drive and determine the direction and content of all other internal strategies and resources of the Council. The detailed content of the Plan will be strongly influenced by other work and will need to be regularly reviewed and updated accordingly. Internal pressure may arise from plans to improve service quality and the availability of resources, while external pressure may come from partnership work, other strategic plans, and Government legislation.



BUCKINGHAM

The Local Picture

The town of Buckingham, with a population of roughly 13,000, is situated in the North of Buckinghamshire close to the borders of Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire and 13 miles from Milton Keynes. Buckingham is a classic country market town, still retaining some of its medieval past, in an attractive setting. Buckingham is the second largest town in the district of Aylesbury Vale.

The centre of Buckingham is predominantly Georgian or earlier in building style, with infill during the Victorian period as well as some peripheral development. This is preserved by the Conservation Area status conferred in 1971 and amended in 2005. In total there are more than 200 listed buildings in the town.

Buckingham has a variety of restaurants and pubs, typical of a small market town. It has a number of local shops, both national and independent. Market days are Tuesday and Saturday which take over Market Hill and the former high street and cattle pens area. Buckingham is twinned with Mouvaux, France.

The town is sited on the River Great Ouse which provides a focal point for the town's green spaces and parks. The town features a large area of open leisure facilities, including Chandos Park and Bourton Park and the old railway line, which form the basis for the development of various walks.

Buckingham benefits from high levels of sporting activity. As well as its large green parks, which include children's playing parks, the town has two Multi Use Games Areas, tennis courts, two bowling green clubs, a skate park, football fields and the Swan Pool leisure centre. There are a large number of clubs making use of these facilities providing opportunities for residents of all ages in a variety of sports.

Buckingham has a high percentage (72%) of owner-occupiers, with the remaining housing consisting of 11% social housing and 15% private rentals. The town has four residential estates to the east of the town, with a good mixture of stock and style. The most recent development, Lace Hill, started in 2012. Western residential, to the south of the river, provides a good mixture of styles with significant areas of green space and sporting facilities. The North Western arc of the town includes a mixture of housing stock and a range of open spaces, including Stowe Avenue. A large industrial park lies to the south of the town housing a mix of manufacturing businesses and service providers. Several businesses have relocated here from the town centre in recent years.

Buckingham has three primary schools, with another due to open on the Lace Hill development. In addition there is the Royal Latin, a selective Grammar school; and the Buckingham School, both of which cater for students between 11—18 years old.

The town has a number of places to worship, including St Peter & St Paul's Church of England; St. Bernardine's Roman Catholic Church; Well Street United Church; the Salvation Army Citadel, the Evangelical Church (Meets in Bourton Meadow School) and Jehovah's Witnesses who meet in Well Street Oddfellows' Hall.

Buckingham University, an independent university is located within the town. The university opened in 1976 and has gradually grown, with 1,300 students currently on campus (2,000 students in total) The university is a major employer within the town, as well as adding to the town's economy.

Meeting Future Demands

The town has considerable potential for development and enhancement, but it will be necessary to tackle such issues that may arise as a result of development. Over the last couple of years the Town Council has developed a

Neighbourhood

Development Plan for Buckingham. A Neighbourhood Plan is a new type of planning document and is part of the Government's new approach to planning, which aims to give local people more say about what goes on in their area. This is set out in the 'Localism Act' that came into force in April 2012.



The Town Council

The Council's Vision, Aims and Long Term Objectives

The Town Council's aim is to improve the quality of life for the residents of Buckingham. A working group consisting of Council Members and Officers addressed how the Council will achieve this and as such Members agreed Buckingham Town Council needs to work towards achieving eight **Core Objectives** over the next three years;

- 1) The Completion of a successful Neighbourhood Plan and ensuring that the plan is being used appropriately to judge planning permissions within the town
- 2) Improved community Spirit
- 3) Established greater active engagement with local Partners and Public
- 4) Promoted and improved economic activity within the town
- 5) Maintained, improved and expanded our green and open spaces (including allotments and cemetery)
- 6) Maintained Quality Council Status
- 7) Developed an effective resources plan (to include an income generation plan, adequate staffing to achieve our ambitions and good value council processes)
- 8) Make Buckingham an even more attractive town/parish (including improved infrastructure)

Each of these objectives contains specific projects and activities that the Council is already doing, or must begin, to achieve the set objective.

Key Processes

The successful achievement of the Council's core objectives is dependent on the Council and its Officers performing certain key projects, process and activities exceptionally well, in order for us to be confident that we are well placed to be achieving the objectives set out above.

The Council has highlighted the below six processes as being crucially important;

- Developing Capability of Council Staff
- Liaising with, and influencing, other key bodies
- Long term and tactical planning
- Knowledge Management
- Developing Policy
- Community Engagement

The Council has reviewed threats and opportunities for each of the Key Processes and has developed action points for each. This includes consideration during the setting of precept.

Performance Indicators

It is important that the Council measures its progress and creates an avenue to adapt its workings to ensure the plan is a success. The Council has created measurable Performance Indicators for each of its eight objectives. The Resources Committee will review the Council's progress against these indicators on a regular basis. A report will be issued to the Resources Committee every 12 weeks, ensuring the Council is actively pursuing its objectives, adapting and taking action to meet its targets when necessary.



BUCKINGHAM

An Overview of Buckingham Town Council

Buckinghamshire is made up of three tiers of local government, each with differing areas of responsibilities. Buckingham Town Council is the first and most local tier of government for residents of Buckingham Parish.

Aylesbury Vale District Council is the second tier and is responsible for services within Buckingham including, parking, housing and street cleaning. The third tier of local government is Buckinghamshire County Council, its responsibilities include education, highways, libraries, rights of way, health and social services.

As of May 2015 Buckingham Town Council has four electoral wards and seventeen elected Councillors who are elected every four years. The Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor are elected by Councillors at the Annual Statutory Meeting in May.

The Council has four standing committees, each with its own remit;

Resources

The Town Council's Resources Committee (Previously Environment, Finance, Administration and Personnel) is authorised by the Full Council to take responsibility for the preparation of the Council's annual precept, implementation of annual grants system, review of the longer term strategy of the Council, the review of any personnel requirements, and the monitoring and scrutinising of the budget. In addition the Committee takes responsibility for the regular review of Standing Orders, Policies and Terms of Reference.

Environment

The Committee is authorised to take responsibility for the protection and improvement of the town and its environs. The Committee makes recommendations to the Full Council regarding any land or property held or leased, and any proposed purchases or sales.

The Committee also reviews work required to footpaths, pavements, cycle-ways, roads, waterways, horticultural and arboriculture works, street furniture (seats, planters, waste bins), play areas, and play equipment.

Planning

This committee has three key roles: it reviews every planning application, considers tree applications, and takes part in various district and regional consultations where they may impact on Buckingham.

The Town Council is a statutory consultee, and reviews all planning applications and advises AVDC should they not meet local requirements and aspirations. However, it should be noted that Aylesbury Vale District Council makes the final decision on all planning applications, and does not always agree with the Town Council's comments.

Town Centre and Events

The Town Centre & Events Committee remit is to make the town centre a pleasant place to come to, and to put on events for residents and visitors. All events are aimed to strengthen our community, young and old; and contribute to making Buckingham an especially vibrant town. Many events are run in partnership with local groups and organisations. The Committee also takes responsibility for the running of the markets, floral displays, youth projects and the promotion of the town through appropriate media.



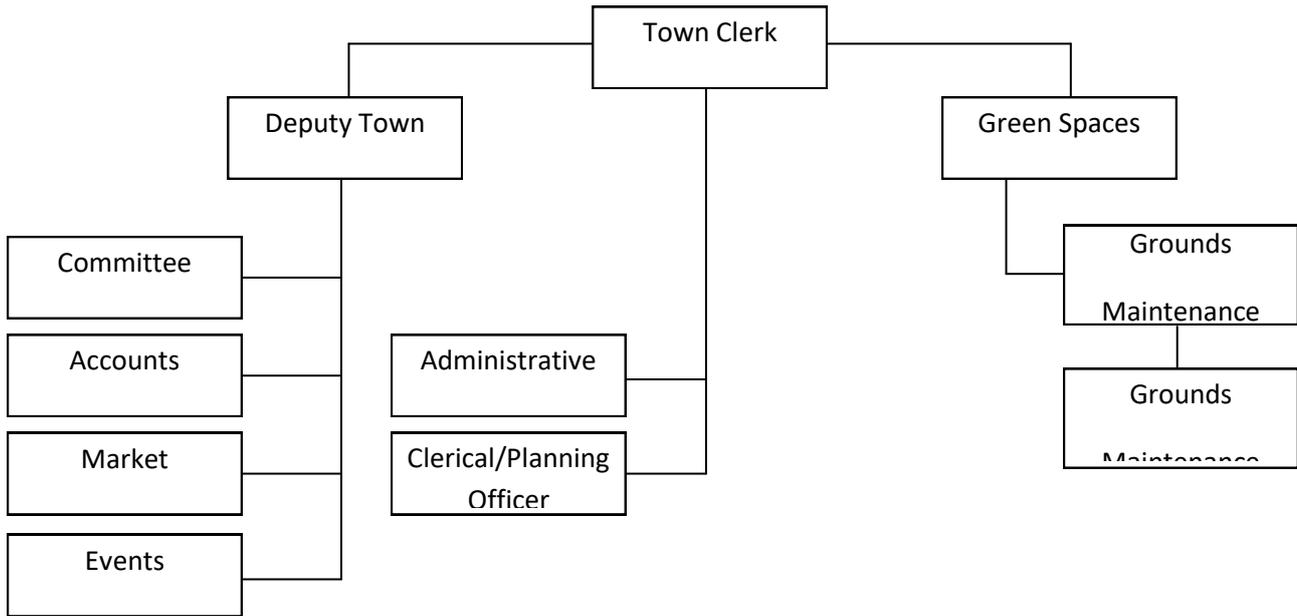


The Town Council

Management Structure

The administration of the Town Council is carried out by the qualified Town Clerk who is appointed by the Town Council. The Town Clerk is required to carry out all the functions required by law as the Town Council's proper officer and to issue all statutory notifications. The Town Clerk is also the Responsible Finance Officer.

The Town Council is supported by a team of 11 members of staff as detailed in the below management structure diagram.



Council Assets and Areas of Responsibility

Bourton Park

Chandos Park (Not including Nichols Walk)

Chandos Park Public Toilets

Public Play Areas (Excluding Ottersbrook, Bridge Street, Overn Crescent & Wittmills Oak)

Town Cemetery

Railways and Circular Walks

Council Chamber

Markets (Street & Flea)

Grounds Maintenance Areas of Responsibility

Planters and Hanging Baskets

Provision of Litter & Dog Bins (Not emptying)

Bus Shelter Stratford Road

Provision of Salt bins (Not refilling)

Christmas Lights and Cattle Pens Pea Lights



Your Views Matter

Reviewing Our Business Plan

The Business Plan will be a regular item on the agenda for the Resources Committee to ensure the Council formally reviews its progress and objectives.

The Business Plan will be reviewed annually in August to enable any changes to be considered during the Precept planning for the following year.

We want to know what you think about this plan and its contents

Our Business Plan shall form one of the main ways the Council will inform the public about what we are doing to meet the needs of the community. We welcome any comments on our Business Plan and would appreciate views on its content and format. If you require any further information that would help you understand what we are trying to achieve, please let us know.

More information about the Council, including an electronic version of this Plan, is available on our website www.buckingham-tc.gov.uk

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