

Buckingham Town Council

Business Plan

2021 - 2025



Contents

1.	Introduction	3
2.	Why has Buckingham Town Council decided to produce a Business Plan?	3
2.1.	Role of the Business Plan	3
2.2.	How we ensured Community Involvement	3
3.	Monitoring the Business Plan	4
4.	The Local Picture	4
5.	Meeting Future Demands	5
6.	Aim and Core Objectives	5
6.1.	Aim	5
6.2.	Core Objectives	5
6.3.	Key Processes	6
6.4.	Performance Indicators	6
7.	Buckingham	7
7.1.	Context	7
7.2.	Committees	7
	Resources	7
	Environment	7
	Planning	8
	Town Centre and Events	8
7.3.	Management Structure	8
7.4.	Council Assets and Areas of Responsibility	10
8.	Action Plan for 2021	10
10.	Your Views Matter	13
10.1.	Reviewing Our Business Plan	13
10.2.	How to Contact us:	13

1. Introduction

This 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, along with actions for the next 12 months.

The 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 the Council's action plan for the next five 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 four years.

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

2.1. Role of the 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 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 five years.
- The key processes and actions associated with each of the Council's priorities, including actions to be taken in the next 12 months.

Budget

Each year the Council sets a budget for the coming financial year and a five-year budget. This Business Plan should be read in conjunction with the budgets, which allocate resources for the Council's priorities to be achieved.

2.2. 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.

3. Monitoring the Business Plan

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 regularly reviewed and updated in light of external and internal pressures and opportunities. 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.

4. The Local Picture

The town of Buckingham, with a population of roughly 15,000, 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.

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 and Neukirchen-Vluyn in Germany.

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 four primary schools. 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.

The University of Buckingham, 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.

5. 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. The Town Council has developed a Neighbourhood Development Plan for Buckingham, which was made following overwhelming support from residents in a referendum in 2015. 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 Plan provides a vision for the town's future and sets out clear planning policies to realise this vision. The Plan can be viewed at: <https://www.buckingham-tc.gov.uk/your-town-council/council-plans/>.

6. Aim and Core Objectives

6.1. Aim

The Town Council's aim is to improve the quality of life for the residents of Buckingham.

6.2. Core Objectives

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 five years. These were reviewed in 2019 and the ninth objective was then added;

1. To ensure the current Neighbourhood Plan is being used appropriately to judge planning permissions within the town, and to carry out a full refresh of the Neighbourhood Plan to ensure the Town has the best possible Plan in place once the Vale of Aylesbury Plan is agreed.
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)
9. To take on additional devolved services and assets where this supports the Council's other Core Objectives

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

6.3. 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.

6.4. 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 14 weeks, ensuring the Council is actively pursuing its objectives, adapting and taking action to meet its targets when necessary.

7. Buckingham

7.1. Context

Buckinghamshire is made up of two tiers of local government, each with differing areas of responsibilities. For Buckingham, these are Buckingham Town Council and Buckinghamshire Council. The Town Council is and will remain the first and most local tier of government for residents of Buckingham Parish.

The new Buckinghamshire Council is responsible for services within Buckingham including parking, housing, planning, street cleaning, education, highways, libraries, rights of way, health and social care.

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

7.2. Committees

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

Resources

The Resources Committee is authorised by the Full Council to take responsibility for the preparation of the Council's annual precept, implementation of the annual grants system, review of the longer term strategy of the Council, the review of any personnel requirements, communications, 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. The Committee also oversees the Council's communications, including press, social media, the website and the newsletter.

Environment

The Environment 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 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.

The Committee engages with other public services - acting as the consultee, making representations, participating in and supporting as required all matters relating to community care, social care and health services policing, crime and ASB reduction.

Planning

This committee reviews every planning application, considers tree applications, oversees the Neighbourhood Plan 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 Buckinghamshire Council should they not meet local requirements and aspirations. However, it should be noted that the Planning Authority (Buckinghamshire Council) makes the final decision on all planning applications, and does not always agree with the Town Council's comments.

The Committee undertakes all powers and duties of the Council in respect of Neighbourhood Planning and Development under the Localism Act.

Town Centre and Events

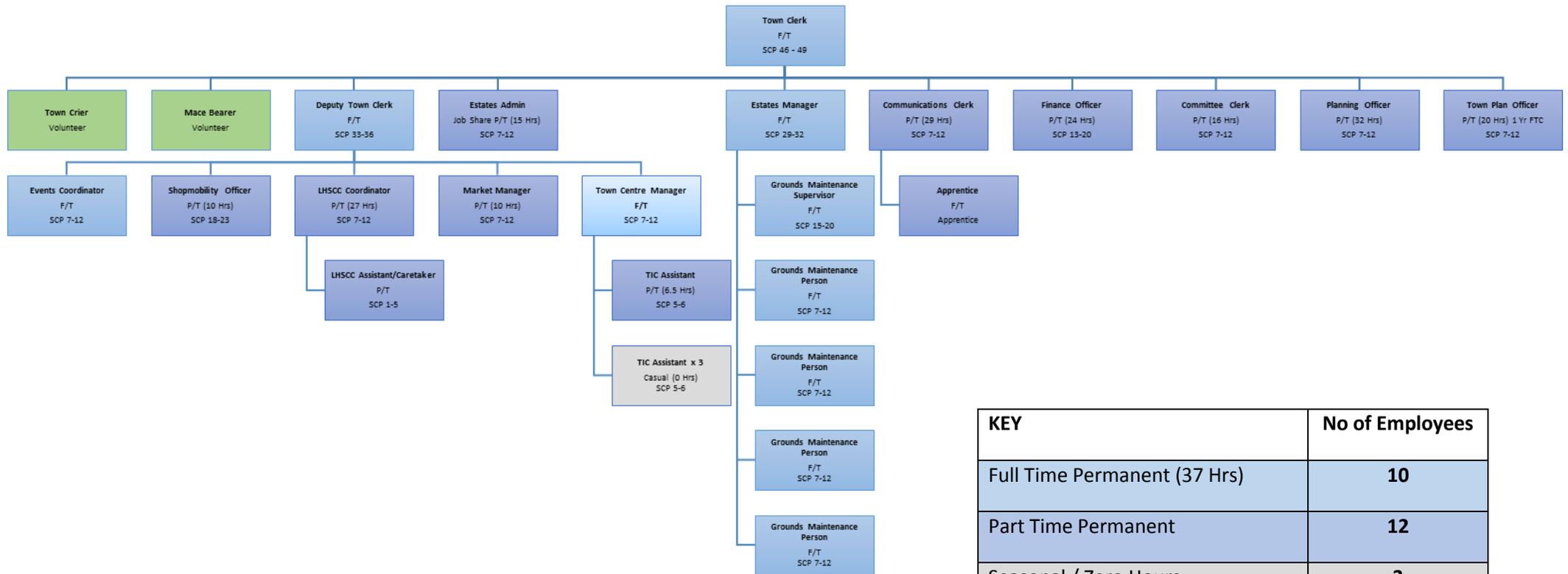
The Town Centre & Events Committee remit is to make the town centre a pleasant place to come to, and to put on events for residents and visitors. All events are aimed to strengthen our community, young and old; and contribute to making Buckingham an especially vibrant town. Many events are run in partnership 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.

7.3. Management Structure

The administration of the Town Council is carried out by the 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 25 members of staff as detailed in the following management structure diagram:



KEY	No of Employees
Full Time Permanent (37 Hrs)	10
Part Time Permanent	12
Seasonal / Zero Hours	3
Volunteer	2

Notes:

Number of paid posts – 25

Number of Employees – 24 (1 job share)

Full Time Equivalent Posts – 15.5

SCP = Spinal Column Point (Local Government Pay Scale)

7.4. Council Assets and Areas of Responsibility

Assets

- Bourton Park
- Brackley Road Cemetery
- Bridge Street, Overn Crescent & Wittmills Oak)
- Buckingham Community Centre (managed by the Community Association Trust)
- Chandos Park (Not including Nichols Walk)
- Chandos Park Public Toilets
- Cornwalls Meadow Public Toilets
- Council Chamber
- Council depot
- Lace Hill Sports and Community Centre
- Lace Hill sports pitches
- Markets (Street & Flea)
- Public Play Areas (Excluding Ottersbrook,
- Railways and Circular Walks
- Shopmobility Service

Areas of Responsibility

- Annual events programme including fringe week
- Burial Authority
- Bus Shelter Stratford Road
- Christmas Lights and Cattle Pens Pea Lights
- Grounds Maintenance
- Managing the Lace Hill Sports and Community Centre
- Planters and Hanging Baskets
- Providing Tourist Information Centre in the Old Gaol
- Provision of Litter & Dog Bins (emptied by a contractor)
- Provision of Salt bins (Not refilling)
- Shopmobility Service
- Urban transport services including grass verge cutting (devolved from the highway authority)

8. Action Plan for 2021

The following Action Plan summarises what the Council plans to achieve during 2021, to further the Core Objectives. These actions are in addition to the Council continuing to manage its assets and deliver day to day services.

Item	Core Objective	Action(s)	Responsibility	Deadline
1. Purchase land for new cemetery and allotments	5	Appoint cemetery designer	Town Clerk	April
		Agree overall design	Environment Committee	September

Item	Core Objective	Action(s)	Responsibility	Deadline
		Borrow funds from Public Works Loan Board	Town Clerk / Full Council	December
		Purchase Land	Town Clerk / Full Council	May
2. Install solar panels on Lace Hill and Buckingham community centres	7	Tender for Work at Lace Hill	Deputy Town Clerk	April
		Appoint Contractor	Resources Committee	May
		Oversee completion	Deputy Town Clerk	December
		Tender for Work at Buckingham Community Centre	Deputy Town Clerk	August
		Appoint Contractor	Resources Committee	September
		Oversee completion	Deputy Town Clerk	March
3. Develop draft revised Neighbourhood Plan	1	Carry out stakeholder consultation	Town Plan Officer	June
		Review draft Plan in light of the New Vale Plan, once this is agreed	Town Plan Officer	July
		Complete draft revised Plan	Town Plan Officer	September
4. Agree new devolved services package with new Buckinghamshire Council	3,5,7,8 & 9	Agree package of services, assets and finance with Buckinghamshire Council	Town Clerk / Full Council	June
		Agree draft contracts for signing in 2022	Town Clerk / Full Council / solicitor	September
5. Implement four year community grants	2,3 & 7	Seek applications	Communications Clerk	September / October

Item	Core Objective	Action(s)	Responsibility	Deadline
		Decide on grants	Resources	February
		Sign agreements	Town Clerk	March
6. Implement Town Council's Tourism Strategy	2,3 & 8	As detailed in the Strategy	Deputy Town Clerk	March and ongoing
7. Complete twinning with Neukirchen-Vluyn	2	Arrange English signing later in the year	Town Clerk / Mayor	December
8. Implement Climate Change Action Plan	5, 7, 8	As detailed in the Strategy	Town Clerk	Ongoing
9. Uphold the Neighbourhood Plan	1	Review all planning applications to ensure compliance with the BNDP, and oppose all those which do not uphold it	Planning Committee and Planning Clerk	Ongoing
10. Review the Vision and Design Statement	1	Review the V&D Statement in line with current planning guidance as part of the preparation of the revised Buckingham Neighbourhood Plan.	Planning Committee and Town Plan Officer	April
		Hold a celebration event marking 20 years of the Buckingham Design Guide. "	Town Clerk	2022
11. Work with the new Buckinghamshire Council to ensure effective ongoing Planning processes	1	Attend all training and briefing sessions available	All Councillors and relevant officers	2021
		Maintain communications with Planning officers	Town Clerk	Ongoing
12. Carry out a review of street lighting and safety in the light of concerns from residents who don't feel safe walking through the town.	8	Review options for new lights and effectiveness of current lights	Town Clerk	September
		Review other resident suggestions for improving safety in the town	Town Clerk	September

13. Your Views Matter

13.1. *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 by Full Council in October each year to enable any changes to be considered during the Precept planning for the following year and the next year's Action Plan to be put in place.

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.

13.2. *How to Contact us:*

Buckingham Town Council
The Buckingham Centre
Verney Close
Buckingham
MK18 1JP

Tel: 01825 762 774

office@buckingham-tc.gov.uk

www.buckingham-tc.gov.uk