



BUCKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

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Town Clerk: Claire Molyneux

FULL COUNCIL

Wednesday, 08 May 2024

Councillors,

You are summoned to a meeting of the Full Council of Buckingham Town Council to be held on Monday 13th May 2024, following the Annual Statutory Meeting at 7pm, in the Council Chamber, Cornwalls Meadow, Buckingham.

Please note that the meeting will be preceded by a Public Session in accordance with Standing Orders 3.e and 3.f, which will last for a maximum of 15 minutes. Members of the public can attend the meeting in person. If you would like to address the meeting virtually, please email committeeclerk@buckingham-tc.gov.uk or call 01280 816426 for details.

The meeting can be watched live on the Town Council's YouTube channel here:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC89BUTwVpjAOEldSIfcZC9Q/>.

Claire Molyneux
Town Clerk

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence

Members are asked to receive apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of interest

To receive declarations of any personal or prejudicial interest under consideration on this agenda in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 Sections 26-34 & Schedule 4.

3. Minutes

To agree as a correct record the minutes of the Precept meeting held on 29th January 2024 and the Full Council meeting held on 18th March 2024.

[Copy previously circulated](#)
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Germany



Twinned with Mouvaux, France; Neukirchen-Vluyn,

Members are reminded when making decisions that the Public Sector Equality Duty 2010 requires Members to have due regard to the need to: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act, advance equality of opportunity between people who share a characteristic and those who don't, and to foster good relations between people who share a characteristic and those who don't. All Committee documents can be found on the Buckingham Town Council's website. Alternatively, the Clerk can send you a copy of any minutes, reports, or other information. To do this, send a request using the contact details set out above.

4. Interim minutes

To agree as a correct record the minutes of the Interim Full Council meeting held on 26th February 2024. [Copy previously circulated](#)

5. Planning Committee

To receive the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 5th February 2024, 26th February 2024, and 25th March 2024.

[Copy previously circulated](#)
[Copy previously circulated](#)
[Copy previously circulated](#)

6. Town Centre and Events Committee

To receive the minutes of the Town Centre and Events Committee meeting held on 12th February 2024. [Copy previously circulated](#)

7. Environment Committee

To receive the minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on 19th February 2024.

[Copy previously circulated](#)

8. Resources Committee

To receive the minutes of the Resources Committee meeting held on 4th March 2023.

[Copy previously circulated](#)

9. Recommendations from Resources**9.1 Staff Handbook**

To receive a report from the Compliance and Projects Manager.

[BTC/1/24](#)
[Appendix A](#)

9.2 Freedom of Information and Data Protection

9.2.1 To receive a report from the Compliance and Projects Manager.

[BTC/2/24](#)

9.2.2 To review the council's procedures for handling requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 2018.

[Appendix B](#)

10. Annual Town Meeting 23rd March 2022

To receive a feedback report from the Committee Clerk.

[Appendix C](#)

11. To receive and question reports from Buckinghamshire Council Councillors**12. Review of policies and delegated arrangements as required by Standing Orders Section 5**

To review, amend or confirm the delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, employees, and other local authorities.

12.1 Financial Regulations, Financial Risk Assessment and Scheme of Delegation

To receive a report from the Compliance and Projects Manager.

[BTC/3/24](#)

12.1.2 Financial Regulations

[Appendix D](#)

12.1.3 Financial Risk Assessment

[Appendix E](#)

12.1.1 Scheme of Delegation

[Appendix F](#)

12.2 Committee Terms of Reference

To review and amend or confirm the terms of references for committees:

12.2.1 Environment Committee

[Appendix G](#)

12.2.2 Resources Committee

[Appendix H](#)

12.2.3 Planning Committee

[Appendix I](#)

12.2.4 Town Centre & Events Committee

[Appendix J](#)

12.2.5 Staffing (Confidential Matters) Committee

[Appendix K](#)

12.2.6 Communications Strategy Group

[Appendix L](#)

12.2.7 To agree to rename the Communications Strategy Group the Communications Strategy Sub-Committee to reflect its actual status.

12.2.8 Appeals Committee

[Appendix M](#)

- 12.3 Committee Choices
To receive and agree Councillor Committee appointments. [Appendix N](#)
- 12.4 Standing Orders
12.4.1 To receive a report from the Compliance and Projects Manager. [BTC/4/24](#)
12.4.1 Standing orders. [Appendix O](#)
- 12.5 Review of Arrangements with other Local Authorities. [Appendix P](#)
- 12.6 Review of Representation [Appendix Q](#)
Review and update work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back.
- 12.7 Inventory of Land and Assets
To receive a report from the Compliance and Projects Manager. [BTC/5/24](#)
Review of inventory of land and assets including buildings and office equipment. [Appendix R](#)
Review of the Asset Register and Disposal policy. [Appendix S](#)
- 12.8 Insurances
Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks. [Appendix T](#)
- 12.9 Subscriptions
Review of the council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies. [Appendix U](#)
- 12.10 Complaints & Compliments
To receive a report from the Compliance and Projects Manager. [BTC/6/24](#)
Review of the Council's complaints procedure. [Appendix V](#)

13. Motion: Cllr. Ralph (supported by Cllr. Cole)

That this Council joins with Winslow Town Council in writing to Buckinghamshire Council leader Cllr Martin Tett regarding our concerns over the deteriorating levels of service in planning issues, the letter to read:

At a recent meeting of representatives of Buckingham and Winslow Town Councils, the discussion centred upon the deteriorating levels of service in relation to planning matters, consultations etc from certain departments of Buckinghamshire Council.

Both Councils have experienced an increasing reluctance by Buckinghamshire Council to engage and work together on topics of considerable importance to our Town Councils. We are advised that the Town and Parish Charter 'is founded on Buckinghamshire Council's respect for all councils in Buckinghamshire as independent, democratically accountable bodies and has one simple aim - to articulate and demonstrate our commitment to work together to serve the people of Buckinghamshire' and 'to enable effective communication.'

The attached Appendices provide details of a number of matters experienced by each Town Council, where there have been significant failures as far as the assurances regarding customer service levels detailed in the BC Town and Parish Charter are concerned.

Our reason for contacting yourself is that we have been unable to establish satisfactory communication from the Officers concerned or the feeling that our concerns are being respected and listened to. We trust that you agree that this failure to engage with our Councils is unsatisfactory and the guidance of the Town and Parish Charter should not be ignored.

The letter and its appendices to be copied into Cllr Peter Strachan, Cabinet Member for Planning & Regeneration; Cllr Arif Hussein, Cabinet Member for Communities; Steve Bambrick, Corporate Director Planning, Growth & Regeneration; Eric Owens, Director Planning & Environment; Planning; and Rachael Shimmin OBE Chief Executive.

Draft letter.

[Appendix W](#)

14. Code of Conduct

To review and confirm the Council's Code of Conduct.

[Appendix X](#)

15. To AGREE to continue to adopt the General Power of Competence.

Buckingham Town Council is an eligible Council for the General Power of Competence as it meets the prescribed conditions. The Council therefore has greater than two thirds of its Members elected, and the Town Clerk holds the Certificate in Local Council Administration and has completed the relevant training.

16. Extraordinary payment.

To note that the Town Clerk authorised a payment of £25 to the Best Kept Village Competition in order to secure the event entry.

17. Town Centre Study Report

To receive a report from the Deputy Town Clerk.

[BTC/7/24](#)
[Appendix Y](#)

18. Access for all funding

To receive a report from the Deputy Town Clerk.

[BTC/8/24](#)

19. Park Run Funds

To receive a report from the Finance Officer.

[BTC/9/24](#)

20. To agree that should neither the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk be substantively available, the Compliance and Projects Manager will act as the Town Clerk.

21. To agree to add the current Compliance and Projects Manager as a banking signatory.

22. To agree the ear-marked reserves

To receive a report from the Town Clerk.

[BTC/10/24](#)
[Appendix Z](#)

23. Payment endorsements

To note that the payment endorsements will go to the next Resources Committee.

24. Mayoral engagements

To receive a list of events attended by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

Functions the Mayor has attended:

21.03.24 AGM of Friends of Buckingham Hospital

05.04.24 Clarendon House 2nd anniversary

13.04.24 Memorial Service for Alan Wilson, the late Bishop of Buckingham

14.04.24 Declaration Ceremony for the new High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire

23.04.24 Thames Valley Police Aylesbury Vale Local Police Area Commendations Ceremony

01.05.24 Bourton Academy May Day Celebration

25. Chair's announcements

26. Dates of the next meetings:

Interim: 17th June 2024

Full Council: 8th July 2024

To:

All Councillors

Buckingham Town Council**Full Council****Monday 13th May 2024**

Contact Officer: Compliance and Projects Manager

Staff Handbook - May 2024**1. Recommendations**

1.1. It is recommended that Members review and approve the new Staff Handbook.

2. Background

2.1. This is being discussed because the Staff Handbook has been wholly rewritten by our new HR and Employment Law consultants Worknest.

2.2. At their meeting of 29 April 2024 the Resources Committee scrutinised the draft handbook and made a recommendation to send the draft Staff Handbook to Full Council for agreement subject to expected amendments by our HR and Employment Law consultants following changes in legislation from 1 April 2024 and their amendment to include 'the legal right to join a trade union' (minute 782/23).

2.3. Worknest have now updated the handbook to reflect recent legislative changes.

3. List of Amendments since the Resources Committee Meeting

- Flexible working. Updated statutory policy at 4.1.
- Paternity Leave and Pay. Updated statutory policy at 4.5.
- Carer's Leave Act 2023. New statutory policy added to section 4.10.
- Addition of "a legal right to join a trade union" in the introduction on page 2.
- The short-term absence procedure has changed from 'no more than three occasions within a 3-month period' to '12-month period'.
- The date in the footer has been changed to 6th May 2024.
- Following approval by Full Council the document will be reformatted and the page numbers on the contents pages rechecked to match the text in the document as required.



WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Buckingham Town Council. Our strength as a Council is due to the skills and abilities of colleagues like you. We look forward to a long and successful working relationship with you and sincerely hope that your time with us is enjoyable and rewarding.

This handbook

This handbook is designed to explain the way in which we work and to set out the key procedures, rules and policies designed to ensure an efficient workplace and a safe and supportive environment for all employees. The contents of this handbook do not form part of the terms of your contract of employment unless otherwise stated. The Council may need to alter or amend any policy or procedure contained in this handbook to ensure that it remains relevant and consistent with the needs of the business. Any such change will be notified to all employees and an up-to-date copy of this handbook can be obtained from the intranet. If you do not have access to the intranet an email copy can be requested.

The Council recognises the 'Green Book' which includes enhancements above the statutory minimum to certain employee benefits. These additional benefits are mainly detailed within your contract of employment, however if detailed within this handbook, they will be clearly identifiable.

The Council further recognises and respects your right to join a Trade Union, although you are under no obligation to do so if you do not wish to.

We do expect you to comply with the requirements set out in this handbook and failure to do so may lead to disciplinary action; in appropriate cases, up to and including dismissal.

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1

KEY PRINCIPLES

This section sets out some of the key commitments made by the Council to its employees – and the key commitments expected from employees in return.

1.1 Council Employee Code of Conduct

The behaviour of employees is central to the continued success of the Council. This handbook sets out a number of requirements aimed at ensuring the smooth running of the Council and the fair treatment of all employees. A number of these are so important that any breach of them will amount to gross misconduct and these are clearly identified throughout the handbook. Your attention is drawn in particular to the following:

- The rules on gifts and hospitality;
- The policy on smoking;
- The policy on alcohol and drugs;
- The policies on driving and the use of Council vehicles;
- The policy regarding social media; and
- The rules concerning the use of computers, the internet and email;

Dishonesty

It is important to stress that any form of dishonesty, however minor, may be regarded as gross misconduct. This includes theft of property, whether belonging to the Council, colleagues or any third party. However, it also includes an employee seeking to gain any advantage through deception - such as making a false claim for expenses or overtime, falsely claiming to be sick or falsely claiming to have completed a particular task.

It does not matter if any amount of money at issue is small. The Council may regard any dishonesty by employees as gross misconduct which may usually result in dismissal.

Refusal to carry out instructions

The Council expects employees to work in a spirit of cooperation with their colleagues and managers for the good of the business as a whole. Employees are required to carry out their managers' instructions and a deliberate and wilful refusal to do so will be gross misconduct.

If you believe that you have been instructed to do something that does not fall within your duties, or which is in some other way unreasonable then the appropriate way of dealing with this is to raise a grievance under the grievance procedure (see Section 5). However, doing so will not prevent a refusal to carry out an instruction from amounting to gross misconduct if it is found to have been a reasonable one in all the circumstances.

1.2 Health and Safety

The primary duty owed to you by the Council is to ensure that you are safe while you are at work. Similarly, all employees are obliged to carry out their duties in a safe and

responsible manner that does not risk harm to either themselves, their colleagues, or any other person.

A detailed health and safety policy/handbook identifying the roles and responsibilities of key staff members for ensuring that the Council meets its commitment to health and safety is available from the Compliance and Projects Manager. In addition there is information on health and safety displayed throughout our premises.

Detailed risk assessments have been carried out on all aspects of the Council's activities and steps have been taken to ensure that all work can be done safely. Any employee who is concerned that any aspect of the Council's activities poses a risk to health and safety should report this to the nearest available manager immediately. Genuine concerns about health and safety will always be treated with the utmost seriousness and be thoroughly investigated.

Employees are required to comply with all instructions rules and procedures concerning matters of health and safety. Failure to do so may amount to gross misconduct. In particular, where employees are required to wear personal protective equipment then failure to do so will be treated as gross misconduct which will usually result in dismissal.

1.3 Ethical Conduct

The Council aims for the highest possible standards of ethical conduct in all of its activities and expects the conduct of individual employees to reflect this. Dishonesty of any kind will be treated as a serious matter, which may amount to gross misconduct and therefore to dismissal without notice.

Gifts and Hospitality

The acceptance of gifts and hospitality from clients/customers, suppliers and potential suppliers must not give the appearance that employees or the Council may be unduly influenced in the decisions that they make in respect of clients/customers, suppliers or in any other aspect of their work.

All gifts and hospitality given or received, of whatever value, must be entered in the Register kept by the management team.

No personal gifts should be accepted without express permission from the Town Clerk. No personal gifts of a value in excess of £50 are permitted whatsoever.

Acceptance of hospitality, such as lunch or drinks receptions, should be kept within common sense limits and should always be authorised by the Town Clerk. Offers of hospitality must always be authorised by the Town Clerk.

You may also be instructed to return any gifts which the Town Clerk considers to be inappropriate, or to refuse to accept hospitality from a particular supplier or potential supplier. Failing to obey such an instruction will be treated as misconduct.

Allowing gifts or hospitality to influence any purchasing/business decisions that you may make on behalf of the Council or to otherwise influence the way in which you perform your duties is an act of gross misconduct which will usually result in dismissal.

It is also an act of gross misconduct to seek to influence any other person to behave in an improper way or to confer a business advantage on you or the Council through the giving of any gift or hospitality.

1.4 Whistleblowing

The Council encourages employees to raise any concerns that they may have about any wrongdoing at any level within the business. Wrongdoing in this context means any breach of a legal obligation, risk to health and safety, a criminal offence being committed, a miscarriage of justice occurring or likely to occur, damage to the environment, or an attempt to conceal any of the above.

Any initial concern should be raised with the Town Clerk. However, if this is not appropriate then you should contact another member of the management team who will ensure that your concern is properly addressed.

Employees who raise a concern which is in the public interest under this policy are entitled not to be subjected to any detriment as a result, however the employee must reasonably believe that the disclosure they are making is true.

Even if your concern proves to be unfounded you will be protected against any reprisals from your manager, colleagues, or any other employee of the business. Making a deliberately false allegation, however, against the Council, a fellow employee or any other person will be treated as an act of gross misconduct which will usually result in dismissal.

If you are the subject of an allegation of wrongdoing then you will be informed of the allegation and given every opportunity to explain the situation and put your side of the story. Disciplinary action will only be taken following a full investigation in accordance with the disciplinary procedure.

1.5 Good Faith and Loyalty

The employment relationship is one built on trust, and we all have a mutual interest in making the relationship a success. The Council has a duty to provide reasonable support to employees and employees have a duty of good faith towards the Council.

In practice this means not doing anything that undermines the Council's standing with members of the public, Councillors, and fellow employees. For example, not doing anything that undermines the Council's position by acting in competition with it, providing information to competitors or undermining the Council's standing with clients, customers, and fellow employees.

1.6 Data Protection

We will process personal data and sensitive personal data (also known as 'special categories of personal data') relating to you in accordance with our Data Protection Policy and our Data Protection Privacy Notice (provided to you separately), as well as in accordance with the relevant data protection legislation.

We may monitor staff in accordance with our policies relating to email, internet and communications systems and monitoring at work, as detailed in this Employee Handbook and in accordance with the relevant data protection legislation.

You will comply with your obligations under our Data Protection Policy and other relevant policies as directed.

1.7 Environmental Statement

In the undertaking of their daily duties, we accept that all staff associated with the Council will have an influence on the environment. We will commit to adopting working practices that will help to have a positive effect, assist towards continued environmental improvement, prevent pollution, and reduce unavoidable negative influences caused by our working practices.

The Council therefore maintains a policy of 'minimum waste' which is essential to the cost effective and efficient running of all our operations. Every employee has a responsibility to promote this policy by taking extra care when carrying out normal duties to avoid unnecessary or extravagant use of services, materials, lights, heating, water etc.

2

HOW WE DO THINGS

This section deals with some important administrative requirements to do with your employment and sets out the standards the Council expects of employees in various situations.

2.1 Proof of Identity

The Council is legally obliged to ensure that all employees are permitted to work in the UK. It is a condition of your employment that you comply with all reasonable requests to provide details of your identity, right to work in the UK and place of residence. This will include allowing the Council to take copies of your passport or other appropriate documents and to check their authenticity. Copies of any such documents will be kept in your personnel file for such a period as is deemed necessary in compliance with current data protection laws.

The Council may dismiss any employee who cannot demonstrate that they are legally entitled to work in the United Kingdom.

2.2 Dress Code

All employees should dress in a manner appropriate to the work that they do. Key factors include whether or not the employee meets clients or customers and whether the requirements of health and safety require particular clothing. How you dress is largely a matter of common sense. If your manager feels that you are dressing in an inappropriate way they may ask you to dress differently the next time you come into work. A persistent refusal to comply with a reasonable standard set by a manager will amount to misconduct.

Where an employee dresses in a completely inappropriate way, for example by wearing clothing with offensive images or slogans, then they may be sent home to change. Any time taken to go home and change will be unpaid.

Employees required to wear Uniform

If you are provided with specific uniform for your role, you will be expected to wear this whilst at work, especially if you may come into contact with the public in the performance of your duties.

You must ensure you look presentable for work and your uniform is maintained in a good condition. If you lose your uniform, or do not look after it, then the Council will be entitled to make a deduction from your remuneration to cover the cost of replacing this. General wear and tear will be taken into account and the Council may exercise its discretion to replace uniform.

Personal Protective Equipment

If you are provided with any Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) you must ensure you wear this as required, especially in any designated area which may pose additional risk. Failure to do so is likely to result in disciplinary action.

2.3 Timekeeping

Good timekeeping is essential in any team; however we recognise the commitment that staff dedicate to their duties and therefore are happy to show some flexibility in terms of time keeping. This having been said, any employee who is seen to abuse this goodwill, will be spoken to. Persistent abuse of this goodwill will likely result in disciplinary action.

Where it is clear that you are going to be late for work you must contact your line manager as soon as possible to explain the situation and give an estimate of your arrival time. You must make every effort to talk to your manager directly rather than leave a message with colleagues or send an email or text message.

If personal or domestic circumstances make it difficult for you to attend work on time then you should discuss this with your line manager. In some cases, the Council may be able to accommodate a reasonable need for flexibility, but this will be subject to the needs of the business and the need to avoid placing an unfair burden on your colleagues (see Section 4).

Time Off In Lieu (TOIL)

Your contractual hours of work are detailed within your terms and conditions of employment.

Any hours worked in addition to these must be reasonable and appropriate and can be taken as time off in lieu. Additional hours will only be paid where specified in your contract of employment. Both TOIL and overtime must be recorded on your timesheet.

Time off in lieu will be compensated at the following rates

- Monday to Friday - on an hour-by-hour basis;
- Saturday – time and a half;
- Sunday and Bank Holidays – Double time.

The timing for taking time off in lieu must be reasonable and appropriate. The time will be calculated on your timesheet. Ideally, time off in lieu should be taken as soon as possible.

You should not accumulate more than two weeks equivalent of your usual hours.

Time off in lieu will be subject to regular review via supervision with your Line Manager.

2.4 Adverse Weather and Traffic Disruption

Adverse Weather

Adverse weather conditions can cause road closures and public transport disruption.

The Council's primary duty is to provide a safe place of work. If adverse weather means that this cannot be achieved, and the workplace needs to close then all employees will be sent home or told not to come in. In these circumstances, where possible, employees may be required to work from home and will be paid as normal. If home working is not a suitable alternative arrangement, employees will be paid in full for any working time that they have lost.

If the need to close the workplace persists, the Council may invoke any lay-off clause in employees' contracts.

Traffic Disruption

We understand that events such as industrial action, road traffic accidents and road works can cause difficulties for employees attempting to travel into the workplace. In these circumstances we are prepared to take a flexible approach to working arrangements while still keeping the business running as effectively as possible.

You must make a genuine effort to report for work at your normal start time. You may need to leave home earlier to give yourself extra time for the journey or taking an alternative route. Travel on foot or by bicycle should be considered where appropriate and safe.

If you are unable to get into work, you should check the situation throughout the day in case it improves. Information may be available from local radio stations, the police, transport providers or the internet. If conditions improve sufficiently to allow you to travel in to work, you should report this to your manager and attend work unless told otherwise.

Delayed Return from holidays

You should make every effort to return to work as planned at the end of any period of authorised annual leave and should ensure that travel arrangements are made that would best ensure this is possible. However, we recognise that employees may be delayed when returning from holidays due to cancellations/ delays.

If you are unable to travel into work

If the workplace is open, it is the responsibility of employees to attend work if they possibly can.

Employees who are absent from work due to adverse weather or other travel disruptions are not entitled to be paid for the time lost.

Where it is clear that you are not going to be able to get to work you must contact your line manager as soon as possible to explain the situation. You must make every effort to talk to your manager directly rather than leave a message with colleagues or send an email or text message.

If you are unable to attend work due to severe weather or other travel difficulties, then you will be required to take time from your annual leave allowance to cover any absence or to take unpaid time off by agreement with your manager.

There may be circumstances in which employees are able to work at home or from an alternative place of work, if available, but this will be entirely at the discretion of the Council. If you do this, you will receive your normal pay.

If travel disruption or adverse weather causes you to arrive at work late or requires you to leave work early you will usually be expected to make up any lost time.

2.5 Rest Breaks

The Council encourages all employees to take full advantage of scheduled rest breaks. These are provided not only for comfort, but also to protect the health of employees and prevent excessive fatigue from causing accidents.

A rest break should be taken away from your workstation wherever possible. If you leave the premises you should bear in mind the time that it will take you to return from the break so that you can ensure that you begin work again on time.

Different areas of the business may have different arrangements for ad hoc breaks such as to make a cup of tea or coffee. These arrangements are in place to ensure the smooth running of the business and to prevent putting unfair pressure on colleagues. You are required to comply with any requirements relating to such breaks as may be in place from time to time.

2.6 Smoking

The Council operates a smoke-free workplace. Smoking (which includes the use of e-cigarettes and personal vaporisers) is therefore strictly prohibited throughout all Council premises, including any Council vehicle. Smoking is only permitted in the designated outside areas.

Employees should try to keep smoking breaks to a minimum and should be aware of the amount of time they spend on smoking breaks over the course of the day. Employees should be particularly careful to avoid taking smoking breaks at busy periods or at a time that will cause increased work or pressure for colleagues.

2.7 Computer Use - Including the use of email/Internet

It is very important that the Council is able to keep its data secure. To assist with this, all employees are required to comply with instructions that may be issued from time to time regarding the use of Council-owned IT or communication systems.

You should ensure that when leaving your workstation for any lengthy period, that you lock your IT devices or log off if appropriate.

You must not attach any device to Council IT equipment without authorisation from the Town Clerk and you must not open attachments or click on links unless you know you can trust the source. Council portable IT devices must be kept secure, and password protected at all times.

Your computer password is an important piece of confidential information, and you should treat it that way. Do not share it with others, and make sure that it is not written down anywhere where an unauthorised person can find it.

Unauthorised access to any of the Council's IT and communication systems will amount to gross misconduct.

Internet Use

Employees with access to the internet on Council-owned IT devices should use that access responsibly.

From time to time the Council may block access to sites which it considers inappropriate but whether or not a specific site has been blocked, employees must not use the internet to view or download offensive or sexually explicit material. Any attempt to do so may, depending on the circumstances, amount to gross misconduct leading to dismissal.

Employees must not download any software, plugins, or extensions on to Council-owned IT devices unless this is first cleared by an appropriate manager. Employees should also refrain from downloading music, video, or any other entertainment content on any Council-owned IT device.

Firewalls and anti-virus software may be used to protect the Council's IT and communication systems. These must not be disabled or switched off without express permission from management.

Email

All email correspondence should be dealt with in the same professional and diligent manner as any other form of correspondence.

If you have a Council email account you should be mindful of the fact that any email that you send will be identifiable as coming from the Council. You should therefore take care not to send anything via email that may reflect badly on the Council. In particular, you must not send content of a sexual, racist, or discriminatory nature, junk mail, chain letters, cartoons or jokes from any email address associated with work.

Using a Council/work email address to send inappropriate material, including content of a sexual, racist, or discriminatory nature, is strictly prohibited and may amount to gross misconduct. Should you receive any offensive or inappropriate content via email you should inform a member of management of this as soon as possible so that they can ensure that it is removed from the system.

You should also take care that emails will be seen only by the person intended. Particular care should be taken when sending confidential information that the email has been correctly addressed, marked 'private' / 'confidential' and not copied to those not authorised to see the information. Sending confidential information via email without proper authorisation or without taking sufficient care to ensure that it is properly protected will be treated as misconduct.

Privacy

Monitoring of email usage takes place without notice. You should have no expectation of privacy in respect of personal and business use of email and the internet whilst at work.

Your email remains the property of the Council and therefore you should not use your Council email to send or receive any information that you regard as private. The Council may, in the course of its business, read emails that you have sent or received - although in the absence of evidence of wrongdoing the Council will try to avoid reading personal emails if possible.

2.8 Social Media

An employee's behaviour on any social networking or other internet site must be consistent with the behaviour required of employees generally. Where it is possible for users of a social media site to ascertain who you work for, then you should take particular care not to behave in a way which reflects badly on the Council.

Inappropriate or disparaging comments about the Council, colleagues or clients will be treated as misconduct. Because social media interactions can be copied and widely disseminated in a way that you may not be able to control, the Council will take a particularly serious view of any misconduct that occurs through the use of social media.

You must not operate a social media account or profile that purports to be operated on or on behalf of the Council without express permission to do so from the Town Clerk.

You should not attempt to access *personal* social networking sites, such as Facebook/X (formally Twitter) or similar on Council IT and communication systems. This includes during break times.

2.9 Telephones

Council telephones must be used for legitimate business purposes only.

Calls and texts on personal mobile phones should wherever possible be restricted to formal rest breaks.

2.10 Alcohol and Drugs

The Council's approach to the consumption of alcohol, drugs, and other substances (including new psychoactive substances) that have intoxicating and/or behaviour-altering effects or impair judgement (referred to in this policy as "other substances") is based on the need to ensure a safe and productive working environment. Because of the serious nature of the risks posed by the abuse of alcohol, drugs and other substances in the workplace, any breach of the rules in this area will be treated as gross misconduct which will usually result in dismissal.

An employee will be regarded as 'under the influence' of alcohol, drugs, or other substances if their behaviour, speech, ability to concentrate or otherwise perform their duties is in any way affected. An employee will also be regarded as under the influence if they fail a drug, other substance, or alcohol test.

Dependency

Employees who have a dependency on alcohol, drugs or other substances may be offered support and encouraged to seek appropriate counselling or medical help. Absence arising from treatment or counselling related to drug, alcohol or other substance abuse will be treated as sickness absence under the Council's absence management policy. However, while the Council will always try to be supportive toward employees with a drug, alcohol, or other substance problem, this will not prevent disciplinary action being taken when employees act in breach of the rules laid out in this policy.

Wherever an employee informs the Council that they have a drug, alcohol, or other substance problem this will, as far as possible, be treated in the utmost confidence. However the Council may need to disclose particular circumstances to managers,

regulatory authorities or others should this be necessary to ensure safety or compliance with legal requirements.

Drugs

The consumption, storage, distribution or sale of illegal drugs or any other behaviour-altering and/or intoxicating substance, including new psychoactive substances, on Council premises or during working time is strictly prohibited. The Council will report any illegal activities to the police or other relevant authorities.

You must not present yourself for work under the influence of illegal drugs or any other substance taken for non-medical purposes.

Medicines and Prescription Drugs

If you are taking prescription drugs or any other medicine that may affect your performance at work or your ability to carry out any of your duties, then you must inform the Town Clerk of this so that steps can be taken to ensure that the work can be done safely. It is your responsibility, when beginning any course of medication, to check whether it may adversely affect your ability to work.

Alcohol

Consumption of even a small amount of alcohol may be sufficient to adversely affect the work of an employee and could pose a risk to health and safety. Remember that alcohol remains in the bloodstream for up to 24 hours following consumption and that the consumption of a significant amount of alcohol in the evening may leave you unfit to work in the morning.

You must not present yourself for work under the influence of alcohol.

You must not consume any alcohol during working time, lunchtime or during any break unless this has been specifically authorised by the Town Clerk.

Where alcohol is available at Council organised events or occasions when you are representing the Council – even outside working hours - it is important to behave responsibly and not drink to excess. Behaviour that reflects badly on the Council will be a disciplinary matter and in serious cases may amount to gross misconduct.

Drug, alcohol and other substance testing

The Council may require you to submit to drug, alcohol and/or other substance testing where there is reason to believe that you may have acted in breach of this policy.

Because of the safety-critical nature of the business, the Council may subject any employee to random drug, alcohol and/or other substance testing when they arrive at work or at any stage during the working day.

This may include a standard breathalyser test administered by your manager. Arrangements for blood or urine testing may vary from time to time, but such tests will always be carried out by suitably qualified, independent professionals or specially trained staff.

An employee will be treated as having failed a drug or alcohol test if the test shows the presence of illegal drugs or a level of alcohol in excess of the drink driving limit applicable in England & Wales (80 mg of alcohol per 100 ml of blood, 35 mcg per 100 ml of breath or 107 mg per 100 ml of urine).

An employee who refuses, without proper excuse, to undergo a test required under this policy will be treated as having failed the test. This failure will be treated as gross misconduct.

Whether a test needs to be conducted is a matter for the Council to decide. In cases where an employee is clearly under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or other substances there is other clear evidence of a breach of this policy then disciplinary action may still be taken even if no test is carried out.

2.11 Driving

Where driving is required as part of your job, it is your responsibility to ensure that you are legally qualified to drive.

Licences will go through the Council inspection procedure which requires us to check individual licences once a year with the DVLA, or as otherwise requested. The Council will require you to share your driving licence information by supplying it with your driving licence number and a check code provided by the DVLA. If you receive any points on your licence you must inform the Council of this immediately.

If you use your own vehicle to drive on Council/work-related business, it is your responsibility to arrange to be insured for that business use. The Council may require you at any time/annually to allow a copy of your insurance and any MOT test certificate to be made and kept in our records.

You are responsible for any driving offences committed while driving as part of your duties, including any parking fines. Dangerous, careless, inconsiderate, or aggressive driving as well as causing a risk to others can be damaging to the Council's reputation and can amount to gross misconduct. If you are banned from driving for any reason, the Council is not obliged to find alternative work for you and may choose to dismiss you if the ban renders you incapable of performing your duties as required.

It is illegal to use your mobile phone whilst driving. This includes texting etc.

Employees should **never** use their mobile phone whilst driving on Council business.

Any journey carried out on Council business must be scheduled in such a way as to allow adequate rest breaks – usually one break of 15 minutes for two hours of driving. Where possible, driving on Council business should be avoided either late at night or very early in the morning.

Safety is the Council's prime responsibility, and you should not be required to compromise safety in any way when driving on Council business. If you are concerned about any driving requirements you may have, then you should discuss these with your line manager and appropriate arrangements will be made to ensure that any work-related journey can be completed safely.

Council Vehicles

If a Council vehicle is provided to you as part of your contract of employment or you are required to drive a Council vehicle as part of your job, it is your responsibility to take care of the vehicle, keeping it in a clean and roadworthy condition, including checking the oil/water levels are at the required levels. You should report any damage or fault immediately. The Council will arrange for appropriate maintenance or servicing to be carried out. If you incur any reasonable expenses in connection with the vehicle then these will be reimbursed, but you must check with the Town Clerk first and comply

fully with our expenses policy. The Council will not be obliged to reimburse any expenses incurred without authorisation.

Any personal use of a Council vehicle, other than a vehicle provided for your exclusive use as part of your contract is at the sole discretion of the Council and must in any event be kept within reasonable limits. Your manager may at any time instruct you not to use – or to cease using - a Council vehicle for private purposes.

If you have possession of a Council vehicle overnight or at the weekend then you must ensure that it is securely parked in an appropriate location. In general, equipment or stock should not be left in a vehicle overnight. Where this is unavoidable then you must ensure that the vehicle is parked in a locked garage. If this is not possible then you should discuss appropriate parking and security arrangements with your line manager.

2.12 Expenses

You will be reimbursed for authorised and legitimate expenditure reasonably incurred in the course of the proper performance of your duties, i.e. travel, accommodation, agreed out-of-pocket expenditure.

In order to claim expenses you must complete an expense claim form and support the claim by submitting valid receipts.

2.13 Council Property

You are not permitted to use Council property for any purpose other than its intended use. Council property must not be removed from the premises unless with prior approval.

Damage to Council Property

Any damage to or loss of Council property must be immediately reported to your manager.

If, following an investigation, it is found that as a result of your carelessness, negligence, or failure to comply with Council procedures, or by wilful act, the Council suffers loss or damage of cash, stock, fixtures and fittings or property (including vehicles) , this will be construed as serious breach of the rules, which could result in your summary dismissal on grounds of gross misconduct.

You may also be liable to pay the full, or part, cost of making good the Council's loss in respect of cash, stock, fixtures and fittings, or property -(including vehicles).

In the event that the Council makes a claim to its insurers, for repair or replacement, or other losses incurred, it reserves the right to require you to pay any insurance excess that may accrue.

If Council property is damaged, lost or stolen through your negligence or fault, then the Council may deduct the cost of repair or replacement from your salary.

Before any decision is made to deduct, the matter will be fully investigated, and you will be given an opportunity to state your case and appeal any decision.

Return of Council Property

Upon termination of employment for whatever reason, you must return to the Council all property belonging to the Council including Council vehicle, computer equipment, mobile phone, keys, uniform, records and documents within your possession or control belonging or relating to the affairs and business of the Council and its customers.

The Council may deduct the cost of replacement of any items not returned, or repair of items that are returned damaged, on termination of your employment from your salary or any monies owed to you.

Employees' Property

The Council does not accept liability for any loss of, or damage to, property that you bring onto the premises. You are requested not to bring personal items of value onto the premises, and in particular, not to leave any items overnight.

Any loss or theft of items must be reported to your manager.

Lost Property

If you find any items of lost property they should be handed to your immediate Manager, who will retain the items [for](#) two months. The property will either be handed over to the police or disposed of accordingly.

2.14 General

Statements to the Media

Any statements to reporters from newspapers, radio, television etc. in relation to our business will be given only in accordance with the Council's Media Policy.

Parking

If parking is provided by the Council, all cars parked in such parking areas are parked at the owner's risk and must be parked so as not to obstruct access. It is your responsibility to ensure that your vehicle is parked in a safe area.

CCTV/Security Cameras

The Council reserves the right to use closed circuit television (CCTV) systems throughout its premises as deemed necessary and employees should expect all areas (other than those where use would contravene common decency) to be visible on a television monitoring system. Information obtained from systems will only be used in appropriate circumstances and with strict adherence to Data Protection Laws. This may include using recorded images as evidence in disciplinary proceedings.

3

ABSENCE

This section sets out the approach the Council takes when you are unable to attend work, are taking annual leave or need time off.

3.1 Unauthorised Absence

Employees who deliberately fail to attend work without proper excuse or in breach of management instructions will be committing gross misconduct which could result in dismissal without notice or payment in lieu.

3.2 Medical Appointments

In general, appointments to see a GP, dentist or optician should be made for outside working hours. Paid leave will not normally be granted for non-emergency visits.

The Council appreciates that it is not always possible to avoid appointments during the working day and will judge each case individually in deciding whether any paid time off should be granted. In most cases, employees will be required either to use part of their annual holiday entitlement, TOIL, or to make up any lost time.

Employees who have a medical condition which will require regular appointments during the working day should discuss their situation with their manager so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

You may be required to provide evidence of any appointment for which time off is needed.

Necessary paid time off will be granted for cancer screening.

3.3 Ante-natal Care/Adoption Appointments

Pregnancy Related Appointments

Employees who are pregnant are entitled to paid-time off to attend ante-natal appointments provided that attendance is based on medical advice. For second and subsequent appointments you may be required to produce an appointment card or similar evidence of the date and time of the appointment.

While there is no limit on the number of appointments that an employee can attend, the Council does have the right to refuse time off where it is reasonable to do so. Employees are therefore expected to take reasonable steps to arrange antenatal appointments at a time that will require the minimum amount of time off. Part-time workers should attempt to arrange appointments for days when they are not required to work.

If your partner is pregnant, you are entitled to unpaid time off for up to two antenatal appointments. If you wish to exercise this right you should notify your manager of the date and time of the appointment. You may be asked to provide written evidence that an appropriate appointment has in fact been made.

Adoption Appointments

Employees who are adopting on their own or have elected to be the primary adopter may take paid time off to attend up to five adoption appointments in certain circumstances.

If you are the partner of the primary adopter, you may take unpaid time off on up to two occasions to attend an adoption appointment.

3.4 Sickness Absence

Regular and reliable attendance at work is an important commitment that the Council asks all employees to make. Unjustified or excessive absence can put unfair pressure on colleagues and seriously damage the Council's business, to everybody's detriment.

Nevertheless the Council will always try to be supportive when an employee is genuinely too ill to attend work. This policy sets out the Council's approach and the steps that you need to take if you are off sick.

Industrial disease and accidents at work

If an employee contracts an industrial disease or is involved in an accident or assault arising out of, or in the normal course of their employment, this will be considered entirely separately from normal sickness absence and therefore will not be off set against an employee's sick pay entitlement under the sick pay scheme.

Reporting Sickness Absence

If you are too ill to come into work you should personally inform your line manager of this fact as soon as possible and in any event by no later than your designated start. When you phone in sick you must make every effort to speak to your manager directly. Do not simply leave a message with a colleague or send an email or text. If you need to leave a message for your manager then they (or another member of the management team) will contact you during the day to discuss your absence with you.

It is important that you keep in touch with your manager about the likely length of your absence so that appropriate arrangements can be made for cover, and you should phone in sick on every day of your absence unless either you have previously informed your manager that you will be off sick for a particular period of time, or your absence is certified by a 'Fit Note' (Form Med 3).

Hangovers are not regarded as legitimate reasons to take sickness absence. Absence by reason of hangovers will be regarded as a disciplinary offence which may result in dismissal without notice or payment in lieu. You should also be aware of the rules governing the consumption of alcohol set out in the Alcohol and Drugs Policy.

The Council requires any absence of 4 days or more to be certified by a 'self-certification form' (Form SC2). Any absence of more than a week must be certified by a 'Fit Note' (Forms Med 3 or Med 10). Uncertified absence may be treated as misconduct and will not be paid.

Where any period of sickness absence occurs immediately before or immediately after a period of annual leave then the Council may require such absence to be certified by a Fit Note at your own expense.

Where you are absent for an extended period of time (three weeks or more) the Council may refer you to an occupational health professional or seek a medical report from your GP. The purpose of this will be to ascertain when you are likely to be able to return to work and to identify any measures that can be taken to help you return as soon as possible.

Employees who are off sick should not undertake any activities likely to be detrimental to their recovery and should cooperate with the appropriate medical professionals in taking steps to ensure that their recovery is as swift as possible.

The Council will maintain regular contact with employees who are off sick for an extended period.

Employees will be required to attend a return-to-work meeting after any period of sickness absence. The purpose of the meeting is to check on the employee's general health and wellbeing, to catch up with regards to anything that the employee may have missed, and to discuss whether there are any concerns in respect of absence levels.

Annual Leave and Sickness Absence

Employees may request annual leave during any period of sickness absence in the normal way. If you intend to spend any time away from home during your sickness absence you should inform your manager of this fact in advance and provide contact details. The Council does not expect employees to take holidays while off sick. In exceptional cases only, where this may assist in an employee's recovery, the Council may agree to holidays being taken during sick leave. It is essential however that any such holidays are agreed in advance with the Council following the normal holiday request procedure.

Phased Return to Work

As an employee recovers from illness or injury it may be possible for them to undertake a limited range of duties as a preparation for returning to normal work. The Council will try whenever appropriate in light of medical advice to allow for a phased return to work from any long-term illness. This may involve reducing the employee's hours, or the scope of their duties or both. The purpose of a phased return, however, is to provide a bridge between sickness absence and normal working and so any such arrangements will be time-limited and will not normally extend over more than three months.

Alternative Work

The Council may consider agreeing changes to an employee's duties or other working arrangements when it becomes clear that due to sickness or injury they will not be able to return to normal working. Any such changes will be subject to the needs of the business and there is no guarantee that permanent arrangements of this sort will be possible.

Where duties or working hours are varied in this way then the job being done by the employee will need to be reassessed to determine the appropriate level of remuneration. This will then need to be agreed with the employee. If an agreement is not reached then the Council may proceed to dismiss the employee in accordance with the procedure for long-term sickness absence.

Disability and Reasonable Adjustments

The Council is committed to making reasonable adjustments to an employee's duties or working arrangements where they would otherwise suffer a disadvantage arising from any disability.

In order to make appropriate adjustments the Council needs to know about any disability the employee may have. Employees who feel that they may require an adjustment should discuss their situation with their line manager. Any such discussions will be in the strictest confidence although when an adjustment is made it may be necessary to inform other employees of the reason for this. The extent to which details of any disability will be discussed with other employees will be agreed as part of the process of making the adjustment itself.

The purpose of any adjustment will be to ensure that the employee can work effectively in an appropriate role and on appropriate terms and conditions. The Council is not obliged to maintain an employee's level of pay if hours are reduced or the employee is moved to a less senior role as a result of any adjustment. Nor will the Council agree to an adjustment which will not result in a commercially practicable working arrangement.

Contractual Sick Pay

In addition to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) the Council also offers an enhanced Sick pay scheme in line with the Green book provisions. An employee's entitlement under this scheme is linked to their length of service, and will be as follows:

- During 1st year of service: 1 month's full pay, which after having completed 4 months continuous service, also increases by 2 months' half pay;
- During 2nd year of continuous service: 2 months' full pay and 2 months' half pay;
- During 3rd year of continuous service, 4 months' full pay and 4 months' half pay;
- During 4th and 5th years of continuous service, 5 months' full pay and 5 months' half pay; and
- After 5 years' continuous service, an employee would be entitled to 6 months' full pay and 6 months' half pay.

NB: 'Full Pay' period = Sick Pay shall include SSP and any Incapacity Benefit

'Half Pay' period = Half pay plus SSP and Incapacity Benefit, so long as this total does not exceed an employee's normal pay.

Statutory Sick Pay

If you are sick the Council will pay you Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) if you are eligible. Further details of this are contained within your contract of employment.

3.5 Jury Service/Other Time Off

There are a number of circumstances in which employees have a right to time off from work either with or without pay. These include jury service and certain public duties such as serving as a local councillor, magistrate, or school governor. Where a need

for such time off arises you should discuss the matter with the Town Clerk who will consider what arrangements should be put in place.

While the Council will do its best to accommodate time off in these circumstances, the requirements of an employee's role may mean that the amount of time off granted may be limited.

Where serving on a jury would lead to a level of absence that would be detrimental to the business, the Council may require you to seek a deferment.

Employees undertaking jury service or serving on public bodies, or undertaking public duties, will be entitled to paid time off. Where an allowance is available for loss of earnings, the employee should claim and pay the allowance to the employing authority.

3.6 Compassionate/Bereavement Leave

In the event an employee suffers a bereavement in their family, the Council will exercise its discretion to allow reasonable time off to attend a funeral. What is reasonable will be determined on a case-by-case basis and the type of leave, whether paid or unpaid, will depend on the circumstances and the relationship the employee had with the individual.

In addition, there may be occasions where it may be necessary for an employee to take compassionate leave. Again, this will be considered on a case-by-case basis and dependant on circumstances, may be paid or unpaid.

An employee will not be eligible to receive paid bereavement or compassionate time-off benefits while off, or absent from work because of holiday, sickness (paid or unpaid) or for any other reason.

3.7 Parental Bereavement Leave

Employees are entitled to statutory parental bereavement leave (SPBL) if a child for whom they have or were due to have parental responsibility has died or been stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy.

Leave can be taken as one week, two consecutive weeks, or two separate weeks, at any time within the first 56 weeks after the child's death.

Notification

During the first eight weeks after a child has died, you, or someone on your behalf as necessary, need only give notice to the Council to take SPBL before you are due to start work on the first day of leave. If you have already started work, then officially your SPBL period will start on the following day. If you want to cancel it at any time during the first seven weeks you can do so as long as it has not started.

After eight weeks, you need to give at least a week's notice to the Council to take SPBL. You can cancel it with a week's notice, or re-book it by giving a week's notice.

When giving notice to take SPBL, you must tell the Council: the date of the child's death; when you want your leave to begin; and whether you want to take 1 or 2 weeks leave. You can give notice by telephone or by email or by letter.

Parental Bereavement Pay

To qualify for statutory parental bereavement pay (SPBP) during such leave you must have at least six months' continuous employment and normal weekly earnings of at least the lower earnings limit. It is paid at the same rate as other statutory family leave pay, which is subject to change every year. You can check the most up-to-date figure with your line manager.

To claim SPBP, you must confirm the following information in writing within 28 days of starting any period of SPBL: your name; your entitlement to SPBP; the dates of SPBL you want to claim the pay for; the date of the child's death; and your relationship to the child. You can provide this information at the same time as giving notice to take SPBL, as set out above, so long as it is in writing.

Other leave entitlements

In addition to parental bereavement leave if you qualified for:

- maternity or paternity leave and pay and your child has died or been stillborn, you are still entitled to such leave and pay.
- adoption leave and pay, then the adoption leave entitlement runs for another eight weeks from the end of the week in which the child died (unless it would already have ended sooner).

If your planned period of SPBL coincides with another statutory family leave right, your SPBL will end at the start of that other leave. If you wish to take SPBL at the end of the other statutory family leave period, then a fresh notice to take the leave will be required, as per the above notice requirements.

Compassionate or Dependants leave may be available under our Compassionate or Dependants Leave Policy at our discretion. Please speak to your manager if you require time off in addition to parental bereavement leave.

3.8 Emergency Time Off for Dependants

The Council recognises that situations arise where you need to take time off work to deal with an emergency involving someone who depends on you. Your husband, wife or partner, child or parent, or someone living with you as part of your family can all be considered as depending on you. Others who rely solely on you for help in an emergency may also qualify. For further detail as to who counts as depending on you and guidance on individual circumstances, please speak to your manager.

Provided the reasons for such a request are genuine and you inform the Council as soon as possible that you need this time off, you will be allowed reasonable unpaid time off work to deal with such emergencies.

The right to time off only covers emergencies. If you know in advance that you are going to need time off, you will not qualify for this type of leave and you therefore should arrange this with the Council by taking another form of leave, such as annual leave, parental leave etc.

If an emergency occurs and it is not possible for you to inform your manager in advance of any absence you should contact your manager as soon as possible to inform them of the situation. Appropriate arrangements may then be put in place.

If you suffer some other personal emergency you should talk to the Town Clerk who will discuss what arrangements can be made to grant you compassionate leave. These arrangements will always be at the discretion of the Council and will depend on the circumstances of the case and the impact that any absence on your part may have on the business. However, the Council will be sympathetic to your need for time off (which may be paid or unpaid at our discretion) to deal with the situation and make any arrangements that may be necessary.

3.9 Annual Leave

Your individual holiday entitlement, including the calculation of any holiday pay, is set out in your contract of employment. This section of the handbook outlines the general approach taken by the Council to requests for annual leave.

All annual leave must be agreed in advance with the Town Clerk who may delegate this to your line manager. You should not make firm travel plans or commitments until a request for leave has been granted and the Council will not take such plans into account when dealing with conflicting holiday requests.

What notice do I need to give?

All requests for leave should be made at least twice as many days in advance of the intended leave. The means of requesting leave may change from time to time and you should comply with whatever procedure is in place at the time of the request.

Your manager may refuse any request for leave if it would result in the workplace being understaffed or otherwise prejudice the business. Leave is likely to be refused if it is requested for a particularly busy period or a time when other employees have already had leave approved.

Certain times of year are particularly popular times for requesting holiday. Generally, subject to the needs of the business, leave will be granted on a first come first served basis, but exceptions may be made in the interests of ensuring that holiday is spread through the year on a fair and equitable basis.

Our Holiday Year

All employees are encouraged to take their full holiday entitlement during the holiday year which runs from 01 April to 31 March. However it is your responsibility to schedule your holiday so that it can be taken at an appropriate time.

Employees will not usually be permitted to carry over holiday entitlement into the following holiday year.

In certain circumstances, where the law provides, or otherwise at the Council's discretion and subject to certain rules, the carrying over of a proportion of annual leave may be allowed.

Employees who leave their employment during the course of a holiday year will be entitled to a pro-rata payment reflecting leave accrued but not taken. Where an employee has, at the time their employment ends, taken a larger proportion of their leave entitlement than the proportion of the holiday year that has expired, then a deduction will be made from the final payment of salary to reflect the holiday which has been taken but not accrued.

The Council may insist on annual leave being taken at particular times depending on the needs of the business and these are set out in your contract of employment. We will give reasonable notice of any such requirement (the length of the notice given will be at least twice the duration of the leave the Council requires the employee to take).

The Council may require annual leave to be taken during the notice period of any employee who has resigned or been dismissed.

3.10 Reserve Forces

The Council supports employees who are also members of the reserve forces. Such employees have specific entitlements relating to time off including arrangements for them returning to work after a period of deployment. Employees who are members of the reserve forces or who are considering joining should discuss the implications with the Town Clerk.

4

FLEXIBLE WORKING AND FAMILY RELATED LEAVE

The Council understands the particular issues faced by employees trying to balance their work and family life. This section sets out the Council's policies in this area and the specific rights given to new parents.

4.1 Flexible Working

The Council will try, subject to the needs of the business, to accommodate requests from employees who wish to make changes to their working hours or place of work.

Requests for a change in working arrangements can be made by any employee. Two requests per employee may be made in any 12 month period (which includes requests that have been withdrawn). However, you may have only one live request for flexible working with the Council at any one time. The request must:

1. be made in writing and state this is a flexible working request;
2. be dated;
3. set out the change requested, including when you would like the change to come into effect; and
4. set out if and when you have made a previous request for flexible working to the Council..

When a request is received, you will be invited to a meeting to discuss the potential change.

The meeting will normally be conducted by your line manager.

You are entitled to be accompanied by a fellow employee to assist in making any representations that may be appropriate.

The application may be refused on one or more of several grounds, these being that the proposed changes will result in:

5. a burden of additional cost;
6. a detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand;
7. an inability to re-organise work among existing staff;
8. an inability to recruit additional staff;
9. a detrimental effect on quality;
10. a detrimental effect on performance;
11. an insufficiency of work during the periods you propose to work;
12. a planned structural change; and
13. any other ground allowed by regulations.

Before refusing a request, the Council will consult with you to discuss the application further, which may include exploring any alternatives that may be available. If no agreement is reached and the request is rejected, this will be confirmed in writing and your terms and conditions will remain unchanged, subject to your right to appeal the decision. The process (including any appeal) will be concluded within 2 months of the request being made, unless a longer period is agreed.

Any meetings should take place in a spirit of cooperation with both sides seeking to reach agreement on an appropriate way forward.

Any change in working arrangements which results from this process will be confirmed to you in writing.

This policy will not prevent managers agreeing to ad hoc arrangements from time to time. However, any such arrangement will not amount to a variation in your terms and conditions of employment unless specifically agreed to the contrary and confirmed in writing. The Company may terminate any such ad hoc agreement at any time and require you to revert to your agreed working arrangements.

As there will inevitably be a limit to the amount of flexibility the Company can tolerate without detriment to its interests, employees must accept that the fact that a particular working arrangement has been granted to one employee does not oblige the Company to grant it to another.

4.2 Home and Hybrid Working Policy

We support homeworking in appropriate circumstances, either occasionally (to respond to specific circumstances or particular tasks) or on a regular (full or part-time) basis. Homeworking can also be a means of accommodating a disability and can be requested as a means of flexible working under our Flexible Working Policy. If you are permitted to work from home, you must comply with this policy.

We recognise that there are a number of homeworking arrangements that you may request, and that these arrangements may be requested as part of a flexible working application, such as:

- a) working from home as your main place of work;
- b) working from home on a part-time basis on fixed days of the week; or
- c) splitting your working time between the workplace and your home subject to business factors and manager approval.

If you want to vary your working arrangements so that, either permanently or temporarily, you work from home for all or part of your working week, you will need to make a flexible working request in accordance with our Flexible Working Policy. Any request to work from home must meet the needs of our business as well as your needs.

A hybrid working arrangement is an informal flexible working arrangement which allows you to split your working time between the workplace and an agreed remote working location, such as your home. Hybrid working arrangements will differ depending on the nature of your role, duties and responsibilities and so are discretionary and subject to agreement with the Town Clerk. Any hybrid working arrangement may be subject to you spending a minimum proportion of your work time working from your workplace. Your remaining working time may be worked from your workplace or your remote working location, as agreed with the Town Clerk.

Any agreed hybrid working arrangement is subject to the requirement for you to attend the workplace on our request to accommodate the needs of our business, such as to attend training or meetings. All hybrid working arrangements are subject to ongoing review and may be modified for reasons including a change in business needs or performance concerns.

Conditions Necessary For Homeworking/Hybrid Working

Not all roles and not all jobs are suitable for homeworking/hybrid working. You should not assume that a flexible working application to work from home will automatically give you the right to amend your working hours or any other aspect of your working arrangements.

A request for homeworking or hybrid working is unlikely to be approved, on either an occasional or permanent basis, if:

- a) you need to be present in the workplace to perform your job (for example, because it involves a high degree of personal interaction with colleagues or third parties, or involves equipment that is only available in the workplace);
- b) your most recent appraisal identifies any aspect of your performance as unsatisfactory;
- c) your line manager has advised you that your current standard of work or work production is unsatisfactory;
- d) you have an unexpired warning, whether relating to conduct or performance; or
- e) you need training or supervision to deliver an acceptable quality or quantity of work.

If you wish to apply to work from home or are working under a hybrid working arrangement, you will need to be able to show that you can:

- a) have a suitable working environment at your home that enables you to carry out your role effectively;
- a) continue to work the hours required by your contract of employment;
- b) work independently, motivate yourself and use your own initiative;
- c) manage your workload effectively and complete work to set deadlines;
- d) identify and resolve any new pressures created by working at home;
- e) adapt to new working practices, including maintaining contact with your line manager and colleagues at work;
- f) make arrangements for the care of any children or other dependants when you are working from home; and
- g) determine any resulting tax implications for yourself.

Location

If a homeworking arrangement is in place, you will be required to work from your home address. If you wish to work from a different location at any time, you will need to agree this with the Town Clerk in advance.

Under a hybrid working arrangement, your primary remote working location should be agreed with the Town Clerk in advance.. Your primary remote working location must be within commuting distance of your workplace unless written approval has been

provided by the Town Clerk. You will be required to finance any travel and/or related expenses incurred when travelling to and from your remote working location and your workplace.

Management, Training And Workplace Attendance

Your line manager will remain responsible for supervising and assessing you in the same way as staff based in the workplace and will agree the best way to appraise your performance and provide ongoing supervision in a remote way. Your line manager will regularly review your working arrangements and take steps to address any perceived problems. They will ensure that you are kept up to date with any changes to the workplace or information relevant to your work.

You will be subject to the same performance measures, processes and objectives that would apply if you worked permanently in the workplace.

If you receive an unsatisfactory grade in an appraisal or informal review or are subject to a written warning for any reason, your homeworking/hybrid working arrangements may be terminated immediately, in which case you will be expected to return to work in the workplace.

You will be provided with the same opportunities for training, development and promotion as provided to staff based in the workplace. If your working arrangements will impact on your ability to apply for certain roles, your line manager will discuss this with you to ensure that you are not denied any opportunity unfairly.

You agree to attend the workplace or other reasonable location for meetings, training courses or other events which we expect you to attend.

You understand that when you do attend the workplace, you may have to hot desk or share a desk with someone else.

Health And Safety

When working at home, you have the same health and safety duties as other staff. You must take reasonable care of your own health and safety and that of anyone else who might be affected by your actions and omissions. You must attend our usual health and safety courses, read the Health and Safety Policy, which is on the intranet and undertake to use equipment safely. If you do not have access to the intranet an email copy can be requested.

To identify any potential health and safety hazards in the home and take appropriate steps to minimise risk, we retain the right to carry out a health and safety risk assessment (either remotely or by arranging a home visit) before or shortly after you begin homeworking. We will contact you to arrange completion of the risk assessment. The need for these inspections will depend on the circumstances, including the nature of the work you undertake.

You must not have meetings in your home with customers or give customers your home address or telephone number.

You must ensure that your working patterns and levels of work when working at home are not detrimental to your health and wellbeing. If you have concerns about your health or wellbeing arising as a result of your workload or working pattern, you should inform your line manager without delay so that we can discuss measures to deal with this.

You must use your knowledge, experience, and training to identify and report any health and safety concerns to the Town Clerk or your line manager.

Equipment and Suitable Workspace

We will provide the equipment that we consider you reasonably require to work from home. We will make all necessary arrangements for and bear the cost of installing, maintaining, repairing, or replacing (where necessary), and removing equipment from your home. Where equipment is provided, it remains our property and you must:

- a) ensure it is only used by you and only for the purposes for which we have provided it;
- b) take reasonable care of it and use it only in accordance with any operating instructions and our policies and procedures;
- c) make it available for collection by us or on our behalf when requested to do so; and
- d) not use any personal device or computer for work.

When travelling between your remote working location and your workplace, you agree to keep equipment provided by us secure at all times.

On termination of your homeworking/hybrid working arrangement or on termination of your employment, you must return all equipment provided by us. Where necessary, we may need to arrange a home visit to reclaim equipment and will contact you to make the appropriate arrangements.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have a suitable workspace at home with adequate lighting for working from home. We are not responsible for the associated costs of you working from home, including the costs of heating, lighting, electricity, broadband internet access, mobile or telephone line rental, or calls.

If you have a disability, you should inform us if you require any specialised equipment to work from home comfortably.

Insurance Requirements

We are responsible for taking out and maintaining a valid policy of insurance covering any equipment we provide against fire, theft, loss, and damage throughout your employment.

We are not liable for any loss, injury or damage that may be caused by any equipment that is not provided by us but required by you to work from home.

You are responsible for ensuring that working from home will not invalidate the terms of your home insurance. You should ensure that you check your home insurance policy before commencing homeworking and inform your home and contents insurance provider of your working arrangements as required.

You should check the terms of your mortgage, lease, or rental agreement before commencing working from home to ensure this does not breach any of the terms. It is your responsibility to inform your bank, mortgage provider or landlord that you are working from home and seek any necessary approval before commencing homeworking.

When you are working at or from home, you are covered by our insurance policy. Any accidents must be reported immediately to the Town Clerk or your line manager in accordance with our Health and Safety Policy.

Data Security and Confidentiality

Your line manager must be satisfied that you are taking all reasonable precautions to maintain confidentiality of material in accordance with our requirements.

You are responsible for ensuring the security of confidential information in your home and when travelling to and from your workplace. You must not use your personal computer equipment for storing any confidential information.

When working from home, you undertake to:

- a) comply with our instructions relating to software security and to implement all updates to equipment as soon as you are requested to do so;
- b) send work-related emails and messages through our designated communication facilities;
- c) share data only through our designated systems;
- d) make all work-related calls through our designated video-conferencing software or work mobile phone;
- e) maintain a private space for confidential work calls;
- f) ensure that any display screen equipment is positioned so that only you can see it, or a privacy screen is used;
- g) lock your computer terminal whenever it is left unattended;
- h) ensure no one else in your home has access to confidential information stored on our equipment;
- i) ensure any wireless network used is secure;
- j) ensure your wireless network is password protected and that your wireless network router has software security updates applied;
- k) keep all papers containing confidential information in filing cabinets that are locked when not in use, and ensure that no one else in your home has access to those papers; and
- l) shred or otherwise dispose securely of confidential information when it is no longer required and at all times comply with our instructions on document retention.

To comply with data protection obligations, you will only store or process Council data or personal data on equipment which has been provided by or authorised by us.

To comply with data protection legislation, we retain the right to conduct a data protection impact assessment (DPIA) to assess the risks involved with data processing in the home. Where this is necessary, we will contact you to arrange the DPIA.

If you discover or suspect that there has been a data breach or an incident involving the security of information relating to us, our clients, our customers, or anyone working with or for us, you must report it immediately to your line manager.

Termination Of Homeworking or Hybrid Working Arrangement

We reserve the right to terminate your homeworking or hybrid working arrangement, for example, due to a change in business needs, performance concerns or if your role changes such that homeworking or hybrid working is no longer suitable, subject to the notice period specified in the original agreement.

If you want to terminate your homeworking or hybrid working arrangement, you must give us as specified in the original to allow us to arrange a desk space for you in the workplace and collect any equipment that is no longer required.

4.3 Maternity Leave

All employees who give birth are entitled to take maternity leave which lasts for a maximum of 52 weeks. Employees with at least six months' service immediately before the 15th week prior to the expected week of childbirth will also be entitled to be paid Statutory Maternity pay (SMP) for up to 39 weeks of their absence. Because this is a statutory payment there are a number of procedural requirements that must be met in order to make sure that an employee qualifies. The most important requirements are set out below, but if you have any doubts about the rules that apply you should speak to a member of the management team who will make sure that you have all the appropriate information.

Notification

To qualify for maternity leave you must provide the Council, no later than the end of the 15th week before your EWC (when you are approximately 6 months' pregnant) with the following information:

- 14.** that you are pregnant;
- 15.** the date of the week your baby is due (your expected week of childbirth or EWC);
- 16.** when you intend your maternity leave to start (this date can be changed later – see below); and
- 17.** you must also provide the Council with the original Maternity Certificate (MAT B1) issued by your doctor.

In some circumstances the Council may be able to accept other medical evidence of when your baby is due, so if there is any difficulty in providing the MATB1 certificate you should discuss this with your manager.

If you intend to take advantage of the right to shared parental leave, you should inform the Council of this fact at the same time as you notify the intended start date of your leave.

Start of Maternity Leave

Generally it is up to you to decide when to start your maternity leave. However, your leave cannot begin any earlier than the beginning of the 11th week before your EWC.

Where it is safe to do so, you may choose to continue working right up to your child's birth. However, your maternity leave will begin automatically if you are off sick for a pregnancy-related reason at any stage in the four weeks immediately before your EWC.

If your baby is born before the date that you have notified as the start date for your maternity leave then your maternity leave will begin on the day following the birth.

You may change the date on which you intend to start your maternity leave, but you must notify the Council of your new start date at least 28 days before the original date given (or the new date if that is sooner). If there is a reason why you cannot give this notice then you should explain the situation to an appropriate manager and the Council will attempt to accommodate your changed circumstances. However, the Council may need to insist on delaying the start of your leave until at least 28 days have passed since your notification of a changed date.

When your baby is born you should inform the Council of this fact as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Duration of Maternity Leave

The standard length of maternity leave is 52 weeks. Once you indicate the intended start date of your leave, the Council will send you a written notification of your expected date of return.

Unless you give due notice to the Council of an earlier date of return, it will be assumed that you intend to take your full 52-week entitlement and you will not be expected back at work before your leave ends. You do not then have to give any notice of your return although it would be sensible to contact your manager some time in advance to discuss any arrangements that may need to be made.

At the end of your maternity leave you are generally entitled to return to the same job as you had before your leave began. If you are away for more than 26 weeks, however, there may be circumstances in which that is not reasonably practicable. In that case, the Council will provide you with a suitable and appropriate role at the same level of seniority and on no-less favourable terms and conditions.

Dismissal or Resignation

While on maternity leave you remain employed by the Council and bound by your contract of employment. If you decide that you want to leave your employment you will need to submit your resignation in the normal way.

The Council will not dismiss you for any reason related to your pregnancy or your exercise of any right which arises from it. However, if separate circumstances require your dismissal (for instance, because of redundancy) then that will bring your maternity leave to an end.

If your position becomes redundant during your maternity leave then you will be offered any suitable alternative work that is available.

Enhanced Maternity Pay

The Council offers enhanced maternity pay in line with the provisions of the Green book. An employee who meets the other qualifying criteria listed in this policy, and who have more than one year's continuous service at the point of the 11th week before the expected week of childbirth will be entitled to enhanced Maternity pay as follows:

- 6 weeks' leave payable at 90% of normal pay;
- 12 weeks' leave payable at 50% of normal pay, plus Statutory Maternity Pay at the relevant rate; (capped at 100% of normal pay) and
- 21 weeks' leave payable at the relevant rate of SMP

NB: Normal pay includes all earnings that would be paid during a period of normal working, but excluding any payments not made on a regular basis.

Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) is paid to employees who have at least 26 weeks' service immediately before the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth and whose pay is above the Lower Earnings Limit for paying National Insurance Contributions (this changes each year). Employees who earn below that amount may be entitled to a state benefit called Maternity Allowance. The Council will provide you with an appropriate form to help you claim this, where appropriate.

To pay SMP, the Council needs to be given at least 28 days' notice that you intend to claim it. This will normally be given when you inform the Council of your intended start date for maternity leave. If it is not possible to give 28 days' notice, you should give as much notice as is reasonably practicable.

SMP is paid for a maximum total of 39 weeks. The first 6 weeks are paid at 90 per cent of your normal weekly earnings (this is based on an average of your total earnings in the eight weeks immediately preceding the 14th week before your expected week of childbirth) and the remaining 33 weeks are paid at a flat rate specified in legislation (this changes each year).

Your entitlement to SMP will be affected if you undertake any paid work (other than 'Keeping in Touch' days, described below) or are taken into legal custody at any time during your period of SMP entitlement. You should inform the Council immediately of any such change in your circumstances.

Returning to Work Early

Not every employee will want to take the full 52 weeks of maternity leave. Some may simply want to return to work early, and others may wish (with their partner) to take advantage of the right to shared parental leave (see below).

In order to make arrangements to accommodate an early return the Council is entitled to ask for 8 weeks' notice of the new date, and if that is not given may delay your return until 8 weeks have passed since your notification.

In any event the law requires that you must not be permitted to return to work during the two weeks immediately following the birth.

Returning to Work Late

Following your maternity leave, you are required to return to work on the date notified to you as your expected date of return. If you are unwell on that date then you should follow the sickness absence procedure set out in Section 5.2 of this handbook.

If you are entitled to begin some other period of leave (such as annual leave or parental leave) then you should ensure that you have followed the appropriate procedure for taking such leave as set out in this handbook.

Maternity Suspension (Health and Safety Reasons)

Depending on the nature of your job there may be circumstances in which it is unsafe for you to continue working while you are pregnant. In some circumstances the law requires a pregnant employee to be suspended on full pay or transferred to alternative duties. Jobs which may come under this category are identified in the risk assessments that the Council has carried out under its health and safety policy. If you are affected by any health and safety issues connected with your pregnancy then the Council will discuss any detailed arrangements that need to be made until it is safe for you to return to your original duties.

Maternity Support Leave

Paid Maternity support leave of 5 days will also be granted to the child's father or the partner or the nominated carer of the expectant mother at or around the time of the birth. A nominated carer is the person nominated by the mother to assist in the care of the child and to provide support to the mother at or around the time of the birth.

4.4 Adoption Leave

Employees who are matched with a child for adoption may be entitled to take up to 52 weeks' adoption leave.

Adoption leave is also available to individuals fostering a child under the "Fostering for Adoption" scheme.

Where two parents are adopting a child, only one of them may take adoption leave, and the other (regardless of gender) is entitled to take paternity leave. If both adoptive parents qualify, they may each take shared parental leave.

The arrangements for taking adoption leave are similar to the arrangements for taking maternity leave, but there are several important differences. The key ones are set out below, but if you believe you are entitled to adoption leave you should discuss the situation with an appropriate manager who will ensure that you have all the necessary information.

Notification

If you intend to take adoption leave you should notify the Council of this within seven days of being notified that you have been matched with a child for adoption (or as soon as is reasonably practicable).

Your notification should set out:

- the date when the child is expected to be placed with you; and

- the date when you want to start your adoption leave.

As with maternity leave, you can change your mind about the start date provided the Council is given at least 28 days – or as much notice as is reasonably practicable.

The Council is entitled to require proof of the adoption which usually takes the form of a matching certificate provided by the agency placing the child.

Adoption leave is the same in duration as that of maternity leave and will last for 52 weeks unless you choose to return early or take advantage of shared parental leave. You may choose to start the leave from the date when the child is placed with you or at any time in the preceding two weeks.

If, for any reason, the placement is brought to an end – for example because the match turns out to be unsuitable – then adoption leave will continue for 8 weeks beyond the end of the placement. After that period you will be expected to return to work as normal.

Adoption Pay

The arrangements for statutory adoption pay are similar to those for SMP (set out above).

Enhanced Adoption Pay

The Council offers enhanced Adoption pay in line with the provisions of the Green book. An employee who meets the other qualifying criteria listed in this policy, and who have more than one year's continuous service at the point of the 11th week before the expected week of childbirth will be entitled to enhanced Adoption pay as follows:

- 6 weeks' leave payable at 90% of normal weekly earnings;
- 12 weeks' leave payable at 50% of normal weekly earnings, plus Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP) at the relevant rate (capped at 100% of normal pay); and
- 21 weeks' leave payable at the relevant rate of SAP

NB: Normal pay includes all earnings that would be paid during a period of normal working, but excluding any payments not made on a regular basis.

Returning to Work Following Adoption Leave

Your return to work at the end of your adoption leave is on the same basis as for the end of maternity leave (set out above).

4.5 Paternity Leave

Employees with 26 weeks' continuous service, either ending with the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth or ending the week in which agency notifies you have been matched with a child, will be entitled to take paternity leave if they expect to have parental responsibility for a child and they are either the mother's partner or one of the adoptive parents. The purpose of the leave must be either to care for the child or to provide support for the child's mother or adoptive parent. This policy relates to a child whose expected week of childbirth (EWC) is after 6 April 2024 or whose placement date, or expected date of entry into Great Britain for adoption, is on or after 6 April 2024. For a child whose EWC or placement date is before this, please speak to your manager in order to discuss your rights regarding paternity leave.

There are a number of administrative requirements that must be met in relation to taking paternity leave and employees should discuss their plans with their line manager at as early a stage as possible. The following paragraphs set out the basic requirements, but there are additional requirements that must be met when adopting a child from overseas and employees in this position should talk to their manager who will make sure that full information is provided.

Employees entitled to take paternity leave are entitled to two weeks of leave, which can be taken as two consecutive weeks, or two non-consecutive blocks of one week.

Paternity leave cannot start before a child is born or placed and must be taken at some stage within the first year following birth or adoption (except when the child is born prematurely in which case the leave must be taken within the 52 weeks following the expected week of childbirth).

Most new parents choose to begin paternity leave on the date their child is born, but you may if you wish begin the leave at any time you choose provided that the whole of the leave is taken by the end of that year.

In order to qualify for paternity leave with regards to birth, you must notify the Company at least 15 weeks before the expected week of your child's birth, and give at least 28 days' notice before the date you would like to take each period of leave. For adoption cases, you must notify the Council within 7 days of having been notified that a child will be placed for adoption. Your notification should specify how much leave you intend to take and when you intend the leave to begin. Should your plans change, you will need to give the Council 28 days' notice of any revision.

Paternity leave is payable at the statutory rate, which is subject to change every year. You can check the most up-to-date figure with your line manager.

4.6 Parental Leave

Parental leave is a flexible form of unpaid leave designed to help employees spend time caring for their children. Parental leave can be taken up until the child's 18th birthday and is available to employees who have at least one year's service and who have formal parental responsibility for a child.

The basic entitlement is to 18 weeks of unpaid leave in respect of each child.

Parental leave must usually be taken in blocks of one week or more and no more than four weeks' leave will be granted in a single year. However, more flexibility is available in respect of disabled children, and you should discuss your requirements with the Town Clerk if this applies to you.

A request to take parental leave should be submitted 21 days in advance. While the Council will always try to accommodate requests for parental leave, it has the right to postpone any leave for up to six months in order to accommodate business need.

No postponement will be required if you choose to take your first instalment of leave immediately after the birth or adoption of your child. In such circumstances you need only inform the Council of your intention 21 days before the expected date of birth or placement. The leave will then begin automatically when your child is born or placed with you.

Parental leave is an entitlement that can be transferred from one employment to another. You may therefore join the Council with some outstanding parental leave

attaching to a particular child. In such circumstances you should be aware that the qualifying period for taking parental leave still applies and you will need to have been employed for at least one year before you can resume taking parental leave.

4.7 Shared Parental Leave

Shared parental leave is a flexible form of leave available to both parents designed to encourage shared parenting in the first year of a child's life. It allows a more flexible pattern of leave than the traditional arrangement under which the mother takes extensive maternity leave and the father takes a short period of paternity leave.

Employees who give birth or adopt remain entitled to take the full 52 weeks of leave if they choose to do so and the arrangements described above for maternity and adoption leave continue to apply. However, an employee may choose to share part of that leave with their partner provided that certain qualifying conditions are met. When leave is shared in this way, there is no need for the 'primary' leave taker to have returned to work. Both parents can be on leave at the same time, provided that the combined amount of leave taken by the parents does not exceed 52 weeks and provided that all of the leave is taken before the end of 52 weeks following the birth of the child or its placement for adoption.

Generally, parents will qualify for shared parental leave provided that both are working and that each has at least 26 weeks' service with their respective employers. To exercise the right, both parents must inform their employer that they intend to take shared parental leave – usually at the same time as the employer is notified that an employee is pregnant or plans to adopt. They must also give an indication of the pattern of leave that they propose to take.

A parent proposing to take a period of shared parental leave must give the Council 8 weeks' notice of any such leave. Depending on the circumstances, it may be possible for the Shared Parental Leave to be taken in intermittent blocks, with one parent returning to work for a time before taking another period of shared parental leave. Such an arrangement can only be made with the agreement of the Council. While every effort will be made to accommodate the needs of individual employees, the Council may insist on shared parental leave being taken in a single instalment. Any decision as to whether to permit intermittent periods of leave is entirely at the Council's discretion.

An employee absent on shared parental leave will be entitled to a weekly payment equivalent to the lower fixed rate of SMP. The number of weeks for which payment will be made will vary depending on the amount of SMP paid to the mother while on maternity leave. Essentially, if the mother ends (or proposes to end) her leave with 10 weeks of SMP entitlement remaining, the parent taking shared parental leave will be entitled to be paid for the first 10 weeks of leave.

Because of the number of options available, shared parental leave can be quite a complicated entitlement. If you want to take advantage of shared parental leave you should discuss this with the Town Clerk who will check that you qualify and help guide you through the procedure.

4.8 Keeping in Touch Days

Employees during a period of maternity, adoption or shared parental leave are entitled to 10 keeping in touch days (KIT days). These allow the employee to attend work to catch up on the latest developments, undergo training or some other development

activity, or to take part in important meetings without losing their right to subsequent pay entitlements. Employees on shared parental leave are entitled to a further 20 KIT days.

These 'keeping in touch days' are entirely voluntary and employees will not be required to take part, nor is the Council under any obligation to arrange for keeping in touch days.

Any payment for attending work on such days will be agreed between the Council and the employee at the time the keeping in touch day is arranged.

There is no legal requirement to receive pay for these days.

4.9 During Maternity/Adoption or Shared Parental Leave

The Council is keen to keep in touch with employees who are on extended periods of leave, to inform them of any news and consult them over any changes which may take place in the business. However, we appreciate that many employees would prefer to be left alone at this very important time in their lives. In order to get the balance right, your manager may, before your leave begins, discuss with you how best we can keep in touch while you are away.

Please be aware, however, that if an important issue arises on which you need to be consulted, the Council may have a legal obligation to discuss the issue with you and keep you informed.

4.10 Carer's Leave Act 2023

All employees are entitled to one week's unpaid leave in any 12-month period to provide or arrange care for a dependant with a long term care need. A "week" for these purposes will be equal in duration to the period you are normally expected to work in a week at the time of making the request. How that is calculated will depend on whether you have non-variable or variable hours of work.

A dependant is:

- your spouse, civil partner, child or parent;
- someone who lives in the same household as you, otherwise than by reason of being your boarder, employee, lodger or tenant, or;
- anybody else who reasonably relies on you to provide or arrange their care.

A dependant has a long-term care need if:

- they have an illness or injury (whether physical or mental) that requires, or is likely to require, care for more than three months,
- they have a disability for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010, or
- they require care for a reason connected with their old age.

The minimum period of carer's leave that can be taken at one time is half a working day, with the maximum period being one continuous week. Leave need not be taken on continuous days.

You must give notice of your request to take a period of carer's leave. This can relate to all or part of the leave to which you are entitled. The notice must:

- Specify that you are entitled to take carer's leave;
- Specify the days on which you would like to take carer's leave and if you will take a full or a half day; and
- Be given with at least three days' notice for one half/full/1.5 day of leave. Or, for 2 or more days' leave, with at least double the length of notice to the time you want off.

The notice does not need to be in writing, but it would be helpful if it was in order to maintain an accurate record of what is being requested.

The Council may, in our absolute discretion, waive the notice length requirement above, and as long as the other requirements are met, the request will be treated as one for carer's leave.

If the Council reasonably considers that the operation of the business would be unduly disrupted if your request was granted, we may postpone the start of the carer's leave after consulting with you to agree an alternative date(s) which is/are no later than one month after the earliest day or half day of the request. In these circumstances, the Council will give written notice to you of the postponement, setting out the reason for the postponement and the agreed dates you can take the leave. This notice will be given no later than the earlier of: (a) seven days after your notice was given to the Company, or (b) before the earliest day or half day requested in your notice.

5

HOW WE RESOLVE ISSUES

When problems arise in the employment relationship it is important that they are dealt with fairly and promptly. This section sets out the procedures that the Council will follow in such cases.

Recording of meetings: Due to the confidential nature of disciplinary and grievance proceedings you must not make electronic or audio recordings of any meetings or hearings conducted under the procedures set out in section 5. You should ensure that any companion you may bring with you to such meetings is also aware of this rule.

5.1 Performance Improvement Procedure

It is in everybody's interest for employees to perform well at their jobs and the Council aims to ensure that all employees are given the support needed to ensure that they do so. Where there are issues with performance then the employee should receive feedback from their manager setting out any concerns. Discussions should take place about how that performance can be improved. This procedure is designed to be used when such informal discussions do not lead to the employee's performance improving to an acceptable level.

Where an employee's poor performance is believed to be the result of deliberate neglect, or where serious errors have been made to the detriment of the Council then it may be more appropriate to use the disciplinary procedure. Which procedure to use shall be at the discretion of the Council.

The Council also reserves the right not to follow this procedure in full for employees who are within their first two years of employment with the Council.

The Right to be Accompanied

Employees are entitled to be accompanied at any formal meeting held under this procedure by a fellow employee or trade union official of their choice. The Council will provide any chosen companions with appropriate paid time off to allow them to attend the meeting. It is, however, up to the employee in question to arrange for a companion to attend the meeting.

If your chosen companion cannot attend on the day scheduled for the meeting then the Council will agree a new date. This will usually be within 5 working days of the date originally scheduled. If your companion is not available within that timescale then you may need to find someone else to take their place.

The Companion's role is to advise you during the meeting and make representations on your behalf. However, both you and your companion are required to cooperate in ensuring a fair and efficient meeting. The companion is not entitled to answer questions on your behalf.

Stage One

The employee's manager will inform them of the nature of the problem and confirm this in writing. The employee will be invited to a formal performance management

hearing to discuss the issues raised by the manager's concerns. The invitation will set out the respects in which the line manager believes that the employee's performance still falls short of an acceptable standard. The hearing will be conducted by the employee's line manager and will consider any representations the employee may make about their performance, whether it needs to be improved, and if so what steps can be taken to help the employee reach the appropriate level.

Following discussion of the problem, the line manager may choose to take no further action; to refer the matter for investigation under the disciplinary procedure (if it appears the issues are linked to conduct rather than performance) or to issue a **written warning** and Performance Improvement Plan which will remain current for a period of 12 months.

Performance Improvement Plan

A Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) is a series of measures designed to help improve the employee's performance. Each measure will ideally be agreed with the employee, though the Council reserves the right to insist on any aspect of the PIP in the absence of such agreement.

Each PIP will be tailored to the particular situation, but will contain the following elements:

Timescale: the overall timescale in which the necessary improvement must be achieved will be set out, together with the timescale for reaching individual milestones where appropriate.

Targets: The PIP will specify the particular areas in which improvement is needed and set out how and on what criteria the employee's performance will be assessed. Where appropriate, specific targets will be set which will need to be achieved either by the end of the plan or at identifiable stages within it.

Measures: The PIP will specify what measures will be taken by the Council to support the employee in improving their performance. Such measures may include training, additional supervision, the reallocation of other duties, or the provision of additional support from colleagues.

Feedback: As part of the PIP the employee will be given regular feedback from their line manager indicating the extent to which the employee is on track to deliver the improvements set out in the plan

If at any stage the Council feels that the PIP is not progressing in a satisfactory way, a further meeting may be held with the employee to discuss the issue. As a result of such a meeting the employer may amend or extend any part of the plan.

Review

At the end of the PIP the employee's performance will be reviewed. If satisfactory progress has been made the employee will be notified of this fact in writing. If the manager feels that progress has been insufficient then they may decide to extend and/or amend the PIP to such extent as seems appropriate. Alternatively the manager may refer the matter to a meeting under Stage Two of this procedure.

Following the successful completion of a PIP the employee's performance will continue to be monitored. If at any stage during the lifetime of the first written warning the

employee's performance again starts to fall short of an acceptable standard, their line manager may decide to institute stage two of this procedure.

Stage Two

If a PIP has not led to sufficient improvement in the employee's performance, the employee will be invited to attend a formal performance management hearing. The invitation will set out the respects in which the line manager believes that the employee's performance still falls short of an acceptable standard.

The hearing will be conducted by the employee line manager or a member of the senior management team.

At the hearing, the employee will be given an opportunity to respond to any criticism of their performance and to make representations about any aspect of the way in which the process has been managed.

If the hearing concludes that reasonable steps have been taken which should have allowed the employee to perform to an acceptable standard but that these measures have not worked then a **formal final warning** may be issued. The warning will explain the nature of the improvement which is required in the employee's performance and state that the improvement must be immediate and sustained. It will also explain that if this improvement does not take place then the employee may be dismissed. Where it is appropriate, the warning may be accompanied by an extended or revised PIP.

The warning will remain current for a period of 12 months, after which time it will cease to have effect.

Stage Three

If an employee has been issued with a warning under Stage Two which remains current, and the appropriate manager believes that the employee's performance is still not acceptable then the matter may be referred to a further performance management hearing.

The employee will be informed in writing of the grounds of which the hearing is being convened and in particular will be told of the respects in which their performance continues to fall below an acceptable standard.

The hearing will be conducted by an appropriate manager.

At the meeting the employee will be able to respond to any criticisms made of their performance and make representations about how the situation should be treated.

The manager conducting the meeting may take such action as is judged appropriate up to and including a decision to dismiss the employee.

Any dismissal under this procedure will be with notice or payment in lieu of notice and the decision to dismiss together with the reasons for dismissal will be set out in writing and sent to the employee.

Appeals

An employee may appeal against any decision taken under this procedure. The appeal should be submitted in writing stating your full grounds of appeal within one week of the action complained of. An appeal hearing will then be convened to consider the

matter. Any PIP that is in force, together with any measures or objectives included within it, will continue in place during the appeal process.

The outcome of the appeal will be confirmed to the employee in writing explaining the grounds of which the decision was reached. The outcome of the appeal will be final.

Redeployment

There may be circumstances in which it becomes clear that an employee would be better suited to a different role within the Council. However, any offer to redeploy the employee will be entirely at the Council's discretion and will only be made when the Council is confident that the employee will be able to perform well in the redeployed role and where there is a suitable available vacancy.

Redeployment may be offered as an alternative to dismissal where the Council is satisfied that the employee should no longer be allowed to continue to work in their current role. While the employee is free to refuse any offer of redeployment, the only alternative available in these circumstances will usually be dismissal.

5.2 Sickness Absence Procedure

The Council may need to dismiss an employee whose attendance does not meet an acceptable standard either because of a long-term absence or because of a series of short-term absences. Such dismissals do not depend on any wrongdoing on the employee's part and do not mean that the Council does not accept that their absences are genuinely due to illness or injury. Rather, dismissal is recognition that unfortunately the employee is no longer able to perform their role or attend work on a sufficiently regular basis to make their continued employment a viable option.

Short-term Absence

An employee who is absent on more than three occasions within a 3-month period, is absent for longer than 2 continuous weeks or if there is an unacceptable pattern of absence, for example, regular time off; may be invited to a meeting to discuss their attendance.

The meeting will usually be conducted by the employee's line manager and the employee will have a right to be accompanied by a fellow employee or a trade union official on the same basis as set out in the performance management procedure.

At the meeting the employee will be asked to explain the level of their absence. Where there is any indication that the absences are caused by an underlying medical condition then the matter may be dealt with under the procedure for long-term absence set out below. The Council may also seek medical evidence from either the employee's doctor or an occupational health specialist in which case the meeting will be adjourned for a report to be obtained

Subject to any medical evidence, the manager conducting this first-stage meeting may decide to issue a warning to the employee setting out the Council's expectations regarding attendance and indicating the level of improvement needed. A review period will normally be set which may range from one month to 12 months depending on the circumstances.

If the employee's attendance does not improve to the extent required they may at any stage in the review period be invited to attend a second-stage meeting to discuss the matter. The meeting will again be conducted by the line manager and the employee

will be entitled to be accompanied by a fellow employee or trade union official. This meeting may result in an extension of the review period, or the issuing of a final written warning requiring the employee's attendance to improve and setting out the level of improvement required over a specified period of up to one year.

If the employee does not meet this standard and there is no underlying condition where reasonable adjustments would assist the employee to attend then they may be dismissed. A final meeting will be convened which shall be conducted by a manager with appropriate authority to dismiss and will consider any representations made by or on behalf of the employee who will once again have the right to be accompanied by a fellow employee or trade union official.

Any dismissal arising out of this meeting will be with notice.

There is a right of appeal against a decision to dismiss which must be exercised in writing stating your full grounds for appeal within five working days of the decision being communicated.

Long-term Sickness Absence

Where an employee is absent for an extended period – or it is clear that their absence is likely to continue for some time – then the Council will want to investigate the prospects for their return and consider what actions can be taken to facilitate this. The extent to which the Council can continue to accommodate an employee's absence will depend on a range of factors, including the role of the employee and the prevailing circumstances of the business.

The Council may seek medical advice as to the employee's condition either from the appropriate professionals caring for the employee or from a specialist occupational health practitioner. The focus will be on ascertaining when the employee will be able to return to work and what steps the Council can take to facilitate this.

An employee is not obliged to consent to any medical reports or records being shared with the Council as part of this process. However, in the absence of medical evidence the Council will have to work on the basis of what information is available in reaching its decision.

One or more meetings will be arranged with the employee to discuss their condition, the prospects for any return to work, and whether anything more can be done by the Council to help. The employee will be entitled to be accompanied at the meeting by a fellow employee or trade union official.

Every effort will be made to make suitable arrangements for the meeting to allow the employee to attend. Where the employee is simply too ill to take part in the process, however, the Council may proceed to dismissal in the absence of a meeting taking into account any representations made on the employee's behalf.

Where it appears that the employee will be unable to return to work within a reasonable time frame then the Council may need to consider dismissal. Any dismissal will be with notice.

There is a right of appeal against a decision to dismiss which must be exercised within five working days of the decision being communicated. You should submit your appeal in writing stating your full grounds of appeal.

The Council reserves the right not to follow these procedures in full for employees who are within their first two years of employment with the Council.

5.3 Disciplinary Procedure

The Council always tries to deal with disciplinary issues fairly and promptly. This procedure sets out the framework under which allegations of misconduct will be investigated and considered. While the procedure set out in this policy will be appropriate in most cases, there may be situations in which it is not practicable to comply with a particular requirement of it. When this happens the Council will do its best to deal with the matter fairly and will pay particular attention to the need to give the employee every opportunity to explain their version of events.

The Council reserves the right not to follow this procedure in full for employees who are within their first two years of employment with the Council.

Definition of Misconduct

Behaviour which is disruptive, disrespectful to colleagues, or which falls short of the requirements set out in this handbook will be treated as misconduct under the disciplinary procedure. While employees will not usually be dismissed for a first offence a failure to remedy the behaviour or to adhere to required standards may ultimately lead to dismissal once appropriate warnings have been given.

Definition of Gross Misconduct

Gross misconduct is behaviour which is fundamentally at odds with the employee's duty to the Council and their colleagues. In accordance with the disciplinary procedure, gross misconduct will usually result in dismissal without notice, or payment in lieu of notice, even in cases of a first offence.

It is not possible to list every example of gross misconduct which may arise, but the following provides an illustration of the sort of conduct that may fall into this category – some of which are then explained in more detail below:

- Theft;
- Fraud, forgery, or other dishonesty, including fabrication of expense claims and time sheets;
- Deliberate acts of discrimination, harassment, or victimisation;
- Refusal to carry out reasonable instructions;
- Violent or intimidating behaviour;
- Wilful damage to property;
- Causing loss, damage, or injury through serious negligence;
- Serious misuse of our property or name;
- Serious insubordination;
- Reckless behaviour posing a risk to health and safety;

- Any act or omission constituting serious or gross negligence/or dereliction of duty;
- Sleeping on duty;
- Bringing the organisation into serious disrepute;
- Unauthorised use or disclosure of confidential information or failure to ensure that confidential information in your possession is kept secure;
- Recording audio and/or video of any meeting, conversation or discussion with another person or people without the express prior consent of the person or people being recorded;
- Making untrue allegations in bad faith against a colleague;
- Making a disclosure of false or misleading information under our Whistleblowing Policy maliciously, for personal gain, or otherwise in bad faith;
- Repeatedly working from home contrary to the terms of your employment contract and without the prior written approval of management;
- Failing to work your contractual hours while working from home or as part of a hybrid working arrangement, or giving false or misleading information relating to your hours of work and activities while working from home;]
- Any illegal act during working time or on Council premises; and
- Any act described as gross misconduct elsewhere in this handbook.

Informal Action

Most minor acts of misconduct can be dealt with informally through discussions between an employee and their line manager. This may consist of management guidance, or an informal warning given orally or in writing. These steps are an everyday part of the management process, and no formal procedure needs to be followed in respect of them.

Where informal action of this kind fails to resolve an issue, or where the misconduct alleged is considered too serious, then the matter will be dealt with formally under this procedure.

Investigation

If it is alleged that you have committed misconduct, an appropriate investigation will be carried out aimed at gathering all of the relevant evidence. You may be interviewed as part of this investigation and will have the opportunity to point the investigator towards any evidence that you feel is relevant. The right to be accompanied (see below) does not apply to any investigatory interview.

Suspension

If an allegation of misconduct is made against you, then you may be suspended from your duties on full pay while the matter is being dealt with. The Council will make every effort to ensure that any period of suspension is kept as short as possible. The purpose of a suspension is either to allow an unhindered investigation to take place, or to

protect the interests of the Council and its employees. During any period of suspension you may be instructed not to contact other members of staff except for the purposes of preparing for any disciplinary hearing, where specific arrangements will be made with you. This is not a disciplinary sanction and should not be seen as a predetermination of any disciplinary process.

Hearing

Once the investigation has been carried out, the investigating officer will make a decision about whether there is sufficient evidence to warrant a disciplinary hearing. If there is you will be informed of this and an appropriate date for the hearing will be arranged. This will take place within normal working hours wherever possible.

To ensure that you have adequate time to prepare for the hearing, the Council will provide you in advance with a copy of all of the written evidence that will be considered at the hearing. In exceptional cases the Council may need to withhold the identities of certain witnesses or hold back sensitive items of evidence. This will only be done where it is considered necessary to protect individuals or the essential interests of the Council and every effort will be made to ensure that you are given as much information as possible so that a fair hearing can be conducted.

You will be given sufficient notice of any hearing to allow you to prepare for it. While this will vary from case to case, the Council will generally try to give at least two days' notice of any hearing and in complicated cases a longer period of notice may be given.

The purpose of the hearing will be to consider the evidence gathered during the investigation and to consider any representations made by you or on your behalf. The hearing will be conducted by an appropriate manager who, wherever possible, has not previously been involved in the case and who was not responsible for carrying out the investigation.

The Right to be Accompanied

Employees are entitled to be accompanied at any disciplinary hearing by a fellow employee or trade union official of their choice. The Council will provide any chosen companion with appropriate paid time off to allow them to attend the hearing. It is, however, up to the employee in question to arrange for a companion to attend the hearing.

If your chosen companion cannot attend on the day scheduled for the hearing then the Council will agree a new date. This will usually be within 5 working days of the date originally scheduled. If your companion is not available within that timescale then you may need to find someone else to take their place.

The companion's role is to advise you during the hearing and make representations on your behalf; it is not to answer questions for you. However, both you and your companion are required to cooperate in ensuring a fair and efficient hearing. The companion cannot answer questions on your behalf.

Evidence

The hearing will consider any evidence you choose to present. Should witnesses be prepared to appear on your behalf they will be permitted to do so provided that their evidence is relevant to the issues that need to be decided. The Council will not compel or require any employee to appear as a witness on your behalf and in most circumstances evidence arising from the investigation will be presented in written form.

You will be entitled to challenge any of the evidence presented but will not be entitled to cross-examine witnesses.

Disciplinary Action

After considering all of the evidence, including any submissions made by you or on your behalf, the manager conducting the hearing will decide on the outcome. If misconduct is found to have taken place then the usual outcome will be a **written warning** which will be placed on your personnel file.

A warning will stay active for a period of 1 year, after which it will not be taken into account in any future disciplinary action.

If however a further instance of misconduct is found to have occurred (in accordance with this procedure) during the currency of a warning – or if any misconduct is considered to be serious enough to warrant it – then, subject to the formal process above being followed, you will be issued with a **final written warning**.

A **final written warning** will usually remain active for one year, but a longer period may be specified if the manager conducting the hearing feels that the circumstances warrant it.

An employee who is found to have committed further misconduct during a period covered by a final written warning will, following a hearing conducted in accordance with this procedure, generally be dismissed.

Dismissal

An employee will not normally be dismissed under this procedure for a single instance of misconduct unless a final written warning is already in place. However, where gross misconduct is found to have occurred then dismissal without notice or payment in lieu will be the usual outcome.

Gross misconduct is misconduct that is so serious that it fundamentally undermines the relationship between employer and employee. If you are accused of gross misconduct this will be made clear when you are invited to a disciplinary hearing. A wide range of behaviours can amount to gross misconduct but the most common involve dishonesty, violent or aggressive behaviour, the wilful destruction of Council property or a deliberate refusal to obey a reasonable instruction.

Appeal

An employee may appeal against the outcome of a disciplinary hearing by doing so in writing stating your full grounds of appeal within one week of being notified of the outcome. The person to whom an appeal should be directed will be detailed in the disciplinary outcome letter. An appeal hearing will be convened and conducted by an appropriate member of the senior management team.

The appeal will consider any grounds the employee chooses to put forward and they will have the same right to be accompanied as at a disciplinary hearing. The result of the appeal hearing will be final.

Employee Absence

It is important that disciplinary issues are dealt with promptly. The Council may therefore need to proceed with a disciplinary hearing even if the employee is absent

due to ill health or simply does not attend. Before hearing the matter in an employee's absence, the Council will attempt to arrange the hearing in such a way that the employee will be able to attend or to submit written representations to the hearing and/or to arrange for an appropriate representative to attend the hearing on their behalf.

5.4 Grievance Procedure

The Council aims to be responsive to concerns raised by employees and if you are unhappy with something affecting you at work you are encouraged to raise this with your manager or in the case of the Town Clerk this should be addressed to the Chair of the Council on an informal basis. If that is not possible then you should speak to another manager who will try to assist you in resolving any issue you may have. The following procedure is designed to be used when these informal attempts to resolve any dispute have not been successful.

Any written complaint or grievance raised which alleges that a member or co-opted member of the authority has failed to comply with the authority's Code of Conduct will be dealt with under the Code of Conduct Procedure.

Examples of issues that could be dealt with under the grievance procedure include:

- (a) terms and conditions of employment;
- (b) health and safety;
- (c) work relations;
- (d) bullying and harassment;
- (e) new working practices;
- (f) working environment;
- (g) organisational change; and
- (h) discrimination.

The Grievance Procedure should not be used to complain about issues which do not directly relate to, or impact on, you and your work/ working environment.

The Grievance Procedure should not be used to complain about disciplinary action, reasonable action taken under the Performance Management Procedure or Sickness Absence Procedure. Any such complaints should be dealt with under the relevant appeal procedure.

Raising a Grievance

If you feel that the matter needs to be raised formally you should raise a grievance by making a written complaint, stating that it is being made under this procedure. You should give as much information about your grievance, including any relevant dates and times, as you can, so as to allow for any investigation into your concerns to take place.

We would expect you to raise any grievance as soon as possible and, in any event, unless in exceptional circumstances, no later than 6 months after the occurrence of the issue complained of.

A grievance will normally be dealt with by your manager and should be addressed to them directly. In the case of the Town Clerk this should be addressed to the Staffing (confidential matters) Committee on a formal basis. Where the grievance is directly concerned with your manager's behaviour, however, you should submit your grievance to another member of the management team who will arrange for somebody who is not directly involved in the issue to deal with it.

Grievance Hearing

A grievance hearing will then be arranged so that you can explain the issue and suggest how it can be resolved. You will have the right to be accompanied by a fellow employee or trade union official as described in Section 5.1, above. The manager conducting the hearing will consider what you have said and may either deal with the matter immediately or decide to carry out further investigations. In that case the hearing will be adjourned until the investigation has been completed.

Once the investigations are concluded, if new information comes to light, if it is considered appropriate, you may be invited [in](#) to a reconvened meeting, to have the opportunity to consider and respond to the findings of the investigation. Following this a decision on the outcome of your grievance will be made.

Allegations of Misconduct

Where an employee is making allegations of misconduct on the part of other employees then the Council may need to carry out an investigation into the allegations and pursue the matter through the disciplinary procedure. Where this happens, the grievance will be held over until the disciplinary process has been concluded.

Relationship with Other Procedures

Where your grievance relates to the conduct of other procedures such as the disciplinary or performance management procedures then the Council may choose to either delay the consideration of the grievance until that procedure has been completed or to deal with the grievance in the course of that procedure or by way of appeal if that appears to be a fairer or more straightforward way of dealing with the issue.

Appeals

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of a grievance then you may appeal. You should submit your appeal in writing within one week of being informed of the outcome of your grievance. Your appeal should be directed to the Town Clerk who will conduct an appeal hearing. Should the Town Clerk have already been involved in the process, then the appeal should be directed to the Chair of the Council. An appeal hearing will then be convened and conducted by the Staffing (confidential matters) Committee. You will have the right to be accompanied at the appeal by a fellow employee or trade union official as described in Section 5.1. The outcome of any appeal will be final.

The Council aims to be responsive to concerns raised by employees and if you are unhappy with something affecting you at work you are encouraged to raise this with your line manager. If that is not possible then you should speak to a member of the management team who will try to assist you in resolving any issue you may have. The

following procedure is designed to be used when these informal attempts to resolve any dispute have not been successful.

6 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES & BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

6.1 Equal Opportunities Statement

We are equal opportunity employer and are fully committed to a policy of treating all of our employees and job applicants equally in all aspects of employment including recruitment and selection, promotion, transfer, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, other terms of employment, discipline, selection for redundancy and dismissal.

We will take all reasonable steps to employ, train and promote employees on the basis of their experience, abilities, and qualifications, without regard to race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment, age, marriage and civil partnership or disability. In this Policy these are known as the "Protected Characteristics".

We will appoint, train, develop and promote on the basis of merit and ability alone. We will also take all reasonable steps to provide a work environment in which all employees are treated with respect and dignity and that is free of harassment based upon any of the Protected Characteristics. We will not condone any form of harassment, whether engaged in by employees or by outside third parties who do business with us, such as clients, customers, contractors, and suppliers.

Employees have a duty to co-operate with us to ensure that this policy is effective in ensuring equal opportunities and in preventing discrimination, harassment, or bullying. Action will be taken under our Disciplinary Procedure against any employee who is found to have committed an act of improper or unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying or intimidation. Serious breaches of this policy will be treated as potential gross misconduct and could render the employee liable to summary dismissal.

Employees must not harass, bully, or intimidate other employees for reasons related to one or more of the Protected Characteristics. Such behaviour will be treated as potential gross misconduct under our Disciplinary Procedure. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may also be guilty of a criminal offence.

You should draw to the attention of your line manager any suspected discriminatory acts or practices or suspected cases of harassment. You must not victimise or retaliate against an employee who has made allegations or complaints of discrimination or harassment or who has provided information about such discrimination or harassment. Such behaviour will be treated as potential gross misconduct. Employees should support colleagues who suffer such treatment and are making a complaint.

Discrimination

You must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people, including current and former employees, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers, and visitors. This applies in the workplace, outside the workplace (when dealing with customers, suppliers, or other work-related contacts or when wearing a work uniform), and on work-related trips or events including social events.

The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:

- Direct discrimination – when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a Protected Characteristic.
- Associative discrimination or discrimination by association – direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a Protected Characteristic.
- Discrimination by perception – direct discrimination against someone because it is thought that they possess a particular Protected Characteristic even if they do not actually possess it.
- Indirect discrimination - occurs where an individual's employment is subject to an unjustified provision criterion or practice which e.g. one sex or race or nationality or age group finds more difficult to meet, although on the face of it the provision, criterion or practice is 'neutral'.
- Harassment – unwanted conduct related to a relevant Protected Characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual. You may complain of such offensive behaviour even if it is not directed towards you personally.
- Victimisation – when an employee is treated less favourably because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance about unlawful discrimination or are suspected of doing so.
- Disability discrimination: this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified unfavourable treatment because of something arising in consequence of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

Our Commitment

Recruitment

The recruitment process will be conducted in such a way as to result in the selection of the most suitable person for the job in terms of relevant abilities and qualifications. We are committed to applying our equal opportunities policy statement at all stages of recruitment and selection.

Recruitment publicity will aim to positively encourage applications from all suitably qualified people when advertising job vacancies, in order to attract applications from all sections of the community.

Where vacancies may be filled by promotion or transfer, they will be published to all eligible employees in such a way that they do not restrict applications from employees with a particular Protected Characteristics. However, where having regard to the nature and context of the work, having a particular Protected Characteristics is an occupational requirement and that occupational requirement is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim, we will apply that requirement to the job role, and this may therefore be specified in the advertisement.

The selection process will be carried out consistently for all jobs at all levels. We will ensure that this equal opportunities policy is available to all staff, and in particular is given to all staff with responsibility for recruitment, selection, and promotion.

The selection of new staff will be based on job requirements and the individual's suitability and ability to do, or to train for, the job in question. Person specification and job descriptions will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the

effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment, promotion or transfer will be assessed objectively against the requirements of the job.

With disabled job applicants, we will have regard to our duty to make reasonable adjustments to work provisions, criteria, and practices or to physical features of work premises or to provide auxiliary aids or services in order to ensure that the disabled person is not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled.

All applications will be processed consistently. The staff responsible for short listing, interviewing, and selecting candidates will be clearly informed of the selection criteria and of the need for their consistent application. All questions that are put to the applicants will relate to the requirements of the job.

Training, transfer, and promotion

We will take such measures as may be necessary to ensure the proper training, supervision, and instruction for all line managers in order to familiarise them with our policy on equal opportunities, and in order to help them identify discriminatory acts or practices and to ensure that they promote equal opportunity within the departments for which they are responsible. The training will also enable line managers to deal more effectively with complaints of bullying and harassment.

We will also provide training to all employees to help them understand their rights and responsibilities under the equal opportunities and anti-harassment policies and what they can do to create a work environment that is free of bullying and harassment.

All persons responsible for selecting new employees, employees for training or employees for transfer or promotion to other jobs will be instructed not to discriminate because of one or more of the Protected Characteristics. Where a promotional system is in operation, the assessment criteria will be examined to ensure that they are not discriminatory. The promotional system will be checked from time to time in order to assess how it is working in practice.

When a group of workers who predominantly have a particular Protected Characteristic appear to be excluded from access to promotion, transfer, and training and to other benefits, our systems and procedures will be reviewed to ensure there is no unlawful discrimination.

Terms of employment, benefits, facilities, and services

All terms of employment, benefits, facilities, and service will be reviewed from time to time, in order to ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination on the grounds of one or more of the Protected Characteristics.

Equal pay and equality of terms

We are committed to equal pay in employment. We believe our male and female employees should receive equal pay for like work, work rated as equivalent or work of equal value. In order to achieve this, we will endeavour to maintain a pay system that is transparent, free from bias and based on objective criteria.

Disabilities

If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can support you as appropriate.

If you experience difficulties at work because of your disability, you may wish to contact your line manager to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. Your line manager may wish to consult with you and your medical adviser about possible adjustments. We will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate your needs within reason. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.

We will monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether they might place anyone with a disability at a substantial disadvantage. Where necessary, we will take reasonable steps to improve access.

6.2 Menopause Policy

We are committed to supporting staff affected by the menopause. We recognise that many members of staff will experience the menopause and that, for some, menopause will have an adverse impact on their working lives.

All women will experience menopause at some point during their life. Menopause can also impact trans and non-binary people who may not identify as female. Most of those who experience menopause will do so between the ages of 45 and 55. However, some start experiencing symptoms much earlier. Often, symptoms last between four to eight years, but they can continue for longer.

The majority of those going through menopause will experience some symptoms, although everyone is different, and symptoms can fluctuate. Symptoms can include, but are not limited to, sleeplessness, hot flushes, memory loss or poor concentration, headaches, muscle and joint pains, depression, and anxiety.

Menopause is preceded by perimenopause, during which the body prepares itself for menopause. Perimenopause can also last several years and can involve similar symptoms to menopause itself. For the purpose of this policy, any reference to menopause includes perimenopause.

Open Conversations

Menopause is not just an issue for women. All staff should be aware of menopause so that they can support those experiencing it or otherwise affected by it.

We encourage an environment in which colleagues can have open conversations about menopause. We expect all staff to be supportive of colleagues who may be affected by menopause in the workplace.

Anyone affected by menopause should feel confident to talk to their line manager about their symptoms and the support they may need to reduce the difficulties menopause can cause them at work.

Line managers and the HR Department should be ready to have open conversations with staff about menopause and what support is available. These conversations should be treated sensitively, and any information provided should be handled confidentially and in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

Risk Assessments

We are committed to ensuring the health and safety of all our staff and will consider any aspects of the working environment that may worsen menopausal symptoms. This

may include identifying and addressing specific risks to the health and well-being of those experiencing menopause.

Support and Adjustments

While many who experience menopause are able to carry on their working lives as normal, we recognise that others may benefit from adjustments to their working conditions to mitigate the impact of menopause symptoms on their work. If you believe that you would benefit from adjustments or other support, you should speak to your line manager in the first instance.

Physical adjustments could include temperature control, provision of electric fans or access to rest facilities. Depending on individual and business needs, adjustments such as flexible working, we may also consider more frequent rest breaks or changes to work allocation. These are examples only and not an exhaustive list.

We may refer you to a doctor nominated by us or seek medical advice from your GP to better understand any adjustments and other support that may help alleviate symptoms affecting you at work.

If you need additional support, you also have access to our confidential employee support helpline 0800 328 1437. The access code is BuckTC.

6.3 Bullying and Harassment

We are committed to providing a working environment free from harassment and bullying and ensuring all staff are treated, and treat others, with dignity and respect. This includes harassment or bullying which occurs at work and out of the workplace, such as on business trips or at work-related events or social functions.

Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal, or non-verbal conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. A single incident can amount to harassment. It also includes treating someone less favourably because they have submitted or refused to submit to such behaviour in the past.

Unlawful harassment may involve conduct of a sexual nature (sexual harassment), or it may be related to a Protected Characteristic. Harassment is unacceptable even if it does not fall within any of these categories.

Harassment may include (this is a non-exhaustive list), for example:

- (a) unwanted physical conduct or "horseplay", including touching, pinching, pushing, and grabbing;
- (b) unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless);
- (c) offensive e-mails, text messages or social media content;
- (d) mocking, mimicking, or belittling a person's disability.

A person may be harassed even if they were not the intended "target". For example, a person may be harassed by racist jokes about a different ethnic group if the jokes create an offensive environment.

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour involving the misuse of power that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated, undermined, or threatened. Power does not always mean being in a position of authority but can include both personal strength and the power to coerce through fear or intimidation.

Bullying can take the form of physical, verbal, and non-verbal conduct. Bullying may include (this is a non-exhaustive list), by way of example:

- (a) physical or psychological threats;
- (b) overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision;
- (c) inappropriate derogatory remarks about someone's performance;

Legitimate, reasonable, and constructive criticism of a worker's performance or behaviour, or reasonable instructions given to workers in the course of their employment, will not amount to bullying on their own.

If you are being harassed or bullied

If you are being harassed or bullied, consider whether you feel able to raise the problem informally with the person responsible. You should explain clearly to them that their behaviour is not welcome or makes you uncomfortable. If this is too difficult or embarrassing, you should speak to your line manager who can provide confidential advice and assistance in resolving the issue formally or informally. If informal steps are not appropriate, or have not been successful, you should raise the matter formally under our Grievance Procedure.

We will investigate complaints in a timely and confidential manner. The investigation will be conducted by someone with appropriate experience and no prior involvement in the complaint, where possible. Details of the investigation and the names of the person making the complaint and the person accused must only be disclosed on a "need to know" basis. We will consider whether any steps are necessary to manage any ongoing relationship between you and the person accused during the investigation.

Once the investigation is complete, we will inform you of our decision. If we consider you have been harassed or bullied by an employee the matter will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure as a case of possible misconduct or gross misconduct. If the harasser or bully is a third party such as a customer or other visitor, we will consider what action would be appropriate to deal with the problem. Whether or not your complaint is upheld, we will consider how best to manage any ongoing working relationship between you and the person concerned.

Staff who make complaints or who participate in good faith in any investigation must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result. Anyone found to have retaliated against or victimised someone in this way will be subject to disciplinary action under our Disciplinary Procedure.

Information about a complaint by or about an employee may be placed on the employee's personnel file, along with a record of the outcome and of any notes or other documents compiled during the process. These will be processed in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

6.4 Monitoring equal opportunities and dignity at work

We will regularly monitor the effects of selection decisions and personnel and pay practices and procedures in order to assess whether equal opportunity and dignity at work are being achieved. This will also involve considering any possible indirectly discriminatory effects of its working practices. If changes are required, we will implement them. We will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.

Breaches of this Policy

We take a strict approach to breaches of this policy, which will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.

If you believe that you have suffered discrimination you can raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure or Bullying & Harassment Procedure. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.

You must not be victimised or retaliated against for complaining about discrimination. However, making a false allegation deliberately will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

Related Policies

This policy is supported by the following other policies and procedures (in the Employee Handbook):

- (a) Grievance Procedure.
- (b) Disciplinary Procedure.
- (c) Flexible Working Procedure.
- (d) Maternity, Paternity, Adoption and Shared Parental Leave Policies.
- (e) Parental Leave Policy.
- (f) Time Off for Dependants Policy.
- (g) Data Protection Policy.

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK RECEIPT

This Handbook has been drawn up by the Council to provide you with information on employment policies and procedures.

The policies and procedures contained within this handbook do not form part of your contract of employment; therefore the Council reserves the right to make amendments as necessary, for example reflecting changes to the law. Any change will be communicated to all staff. However, you are expected to read and comply with the policies and procedures contained within this handbook. Failure to do so could result in disciplinary action.

If you have any questions or any part of the Handbook is unclear to you, please do not hesitate to raise any queries with a member of management.

I acknowledge I have read and understood the policies and procedures contained within this handbook

Received by (Employee)

Signed

Date

BUCKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL
FULL COUNCIL
MONDAY 13th May 2024

Contact Officer: Steve Beech, Compliance and Projects Manager

Freedom of Information and Data Protection Policies

1. Recommendations

1.1. It is recommended that there are no amendments to the Council's policies, procedures, and practices in respect of its obligations under freedom of information and data protection legislation.

2. Background


2.1. This is being discussed because Standing Order 5j (xvii) requires that the Council undertakes a review of its procedures for handling requests made under freedom of information and data protection legislation annually. They were last reviewed in May 2022.

2.2. At their meeting on 28 April 2024 the Resources Committee resolved the following recommendation (minute 781/23):

"It is recommended that Members recommend to Full Council that there are no amendments to the Council's policies, procedures, and practices in respect of its obligations under freedom of information and data protection legislation."

3. Amendments

3.1. No amendments are recommended.

	<p>Buckingham Town Council</p> <p>Freedom of Information Act</p> <p>Publication Scheme</p>	<p>Date last reviewed/amended: May 2023</p> <p>Minute Number: 18/23.12</p>
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Introduction

The Council's Commitment to the Act

Buckingham Town Council believes in maintaining the transparency of the Council and strives to maintain an open approach to its business.

The Council is committed to openness and accountability and currently makes large amounts of information available to the public through the website, via the telephone, email and by post. Should a personal visit to view information be required, an appointment will be necessary.

The Freedom of Information Act 2000

The Freedom of Information Act grants to members of the public rights of access to all kinds of recorded information held by a wide range of public authorities. Information about the Act is available from the Information Commissioners Officers at [Information Commissioner's Office \(ICO\)](#)

Publication Scheme

The Act requires every public authority to adopt and maintain a generic model publication scheme which should be adopted and operated by all public authorities from 1 January 2009. Buckingham Town Council adopted the generic model scheme on 5th November 2012. This policy is designed to provide everyone with a comprehensive guide to the information that the Council will automatically or routinely publish or otherwise make available to the public.

Freedom of Information Requests and the Publications Scheme

The purpose of this publication scheme is to set out the information that is routinely available. Information that is not listed in the Information Available Guide of this document can still be requested and will be made available unless there is a reason for it to be legitimately withheld. Application for any information not included in the guide below can be made by making a written request to the Town Clerk who will reply within 20 working days after receipt of the request.

Model Publication Scheme

This Model Publication Scheme has been prepared and approved by the Information Commissioner. It may be adopted by any public authority without further approval and will be valid until further notice.

This publication commits an authority to make information available to the public as part of its normal business activities. The information covered is included in the classes of information mentioned below, where this information is held by the authority. Additional assistance is provided to the definition of these classes in sector specific guidance manuals issued by the Information Commissioner.

The scheme commits an authority:

1. To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information, including environmental information, which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below;
2. To specify the information which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below;
3. To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information in line with statements contained within this scheme;
4. To produce and publish the methods by which the specific information is made routinely available so that it can be easily identified and accessed by members of the public;
5. To review and update on a regular basis the information the authority makes available under this scheme.
6. To provide a schedule of any fees charged for access to information which is made proactively available;
7. To make this publication scheme available to the public.

Classes of information

- **Who we are and what we do.**

Organisational information, locations and contacts, constitutional and legal governance.

- **What we spend and how we spend it.**

Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, tendering, procurement, and contracts

- **What our priorities are and how we are doing.**

Strategy and performance information, plans, inspections, and reviews.

- **How we make decisions.**

Policy proposals and decisions. Decision making processes, internal criteria and procedure, consultations.

- **Our policies and procedures.**

Current written protocols for delivering our functions and responsibilities.

- **Lists and Registers.**

Information held in registers required by law and other lists and registers relating to the functions of the authority.

- **The services we offer.**

Advice and guidance, booklets and leaflets, transactions, and media releases. A description of the services offered.

The classes of information will not generally include:

- Information the disclosure of which is prevented by law, or exempt under the Freedom of Information Act, or is otherwise properly considered to be protected from disclosure.
- Information in draft form.
- Information that is no longer available as it is contained in files that have been placed in archive storage or is difficult to access for similar reasons.

The method by which information published under this scheme will be made available.

1. The authority will indicate clearly to the public what information is covered by this scheme and how it can be obtained.
2. Where it is within the capability of a public authority, information will be provided on a website. Where it is impractical to make information available on a website or when an individual does not wish to access the information by the website, a public authority will indicate how information can be obtained by other means and provide it by those means.
3. In exceptional circumstances some information may be available only by viewing in person. Where this manner is specified, contact details will be provided. An appointment to view the information will be arranged within a reasonable timescale.
4. Information will be provided in the language in which it is held or in such language that is legally required. Where an authority is legally required to translate any information, it will do so.
5. Obligations under disciplinary and discrimination legislation to provide information in other forms and formats will be adhered to when providing information in accordance with this scheme.

Charges which may be made for information published under this scheme.

The purpose of this scheme is to make the maximum amount of information readily available at minimum inconvenience and cost to the public. Charges made by the authority for routinely published material will be justified and transparent and kept to a minimum.

Material which is published and accessed on a website will be provided free of charge.

Charges may be made for information subject to a charging regime specified by Parliament.

Charges may be made for actual disbursements incurred such as:

- Photocopying
- Postage and packaging
- The costs directly incurred as a result of viewing information

Charges may also be made for information provided under this scheme where they are legally authorized, they are in all the circumstances, including the general principles of the right of access to information held by public authorities, justified and are in accordance with a published schedule of fees which is readily available to the public.

If a charge is to be made, confirmation of the payment due will be given before the information is provided. Payment may be requested prior to provision of the information.

Written Requests

Information held by a public authority that is not published under this scheme can be requested in writing, when its provision will be considered in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act

Information available from Buckingham Town Council under the Model Publication Scheme.

Information to be Published	How the information can be obtained	Cost
Class 1 – Who we are and what we do (Organisational information, structures, locations, and costs) Current information only.	Website Hard Copy	Free 20p per A4 Sheet
Who's who on the Council and it's Committees	Website Hard Copy	Free 20p per A4 Sheet
Contact details for Town Clerk and Council Members (named contacts where possible with telephone number and email address (if used))	Website Hard Copy	Free 20p per A4 Sheet
Location of Main Council office and accessibility details	Website Hard Copy	Free 20p per A4 Sheet
Staffing Structure	Hard Copy	20p per A4 Sheet
Class 1 – What we spend and how we spend it (Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts, and financial audit) Current and previous financial year as a minimum	Hard Copy	20p per A4 Sheet
Annual return and report by Auditor	Hard Copy	20p per A4 Sheet
Finalised Budget	Hard Copy	20p per A4 Sheet
Precept	Hard Copy	20p per A4 Sheet
Borrowing Approval letter (if available)	Hard Copy	20p per A4 Sheet
Financial Standing Orders and Regulations	Hard Copy	20p per A4 Sheet
Grants given and received	Hard Copy	20p per A4 Sheet
List of current contracts awarded and value of contract	Hard Copy	20p per A4 Sheet
Members' allowances and expenses	Website Hard Copy	Free 20p per A4 Sheet
Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing (Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections, and reviews)	Hard Copy	20p per A4 Sheet
Buckingham Plan (current and previous year as a minimum)	Hard Copy	20p per A4 Sheet
Annual report to Parish or Community Meeting (current and previous year as a minimum)	Hard Copy	20p per A4 Sheet
Quality Status	Hard Copy	20p per A4 Sheet
Local Charters drawn up in accordance with DLUHC guidelines	Hard Copy	20p per A4 Sheet
Class 4 – How we make decisions (Decision making process and records of decisions) Current and previous Council year as a minimum	Website Hard Copy	Free 20p per A4 Sheet
Timetable of meetings (Council, and Committee, Sub Committee, Working Group meetings and Town	Website Hard Copy	Free 20p per A4 Sheet

Meetings)		
Agendas of meetings (as above) – N.B. This will exclude information that is properly regarded as confidential and private to the meeting	Website Hard Copy	Free 20p per A4 Sheet
Minutes of meetings (as above) – N.B. This will exclude information that is properly regarded as confidential and private to the meeting	Website Hard Copy	Free 20p per A4 Sheet
Reports presented to Council meetings – N.B. This will exclude information that is properly regarded as confidential and private to the meeting	Hard Copy	20p per A4 Sheet
Responses to consultation papers	Hard Copy	20p per A4 Sheet
Byelaws	Hard Copy	20p per A4 Sheet
Class 5 – Our policies and Procedures Current recent Protocols, policies, and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities) Current information only	Website Hard Copy	Free 20p per A4 Sheet
Policies and procedures for the conduct of Council business: Procedural Standing Orders (<i>on website</i>); Committee and Sub-Committee terms of Reference; Delegated authority in respect of officers; Code of Conduct (<i>on website</i>); Policy Statements	Website <i>where indicated</i> Hard Copy	Free 20p per A4 Sheet
Policies and procedures for the provision of services and about the employment of staff: Internal policies relating to the delivery of services; Equality and diversity policy; Health and Safety Policy Recruitment policies; Policies and Procedures; Complaints procedures (including those covering requests for information and operating the publication scheme)	Website Hard Copy	Free 20p per A4 Sheet
Information Security Policy	Hard Copy	20p per A4 Sheet
Records Management Policy (records retention, destruction, and archive)	Hard Copy	20p per A4 Sheet
Data Protection Policy	Website Hard Copy	Free 20p per A4 Sheet
Class 6 – Lists and Registers Currently maintained lists and registers only	Hard Copy Some information may only be available by Inspection	20p per A4 Sheet
Any publicly available register or list (if any are held, this should be publicised; in most circumstances existing provisions will suffice)	Hard Copy	20p per A4 Sheet
Assets Register	Hard Copy	20p per A4 Sheet
Disclosure log (indicating the information that has been provided to requests; recommended as good practice, but may not be held by Parish Councils)	Hard Copy	20p per A4 Sheet
Register of Members' interests	Hard Copy	20p per A4 Sheet
Register of gifts and hospitality	Hard Copy	20p per A4 Sheet
Class 7 – the services we offer	Hard Copy	20p per A4 Sheet

(Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public and businesses) Current information only	Some information may only be available by inspection	
Allotments	Hard Copy	20p per A4 Sheet
Burial grounds and closed churchyards	Hard Copy	20p per A4 Sheet
Community Centres and Village Halls	Hard Copy	20p per A4 Sheet
Parks, playing fields and recreational facilities	Hard Copy	20p per A4 Sheet
Seating, litter bins, clocks, memorials, and lighting	Hard Copy	20p per A4 Sheet
Bus shelters	Hard Copy	20p per A4 Sheet
Markets	Hard Copy	20p per A4 Sheet
Public convenience	Hard Copy	20p per A4 Sheet
Agency agreements	Hard Copy	20p per A4 Sheet
A summary of services for which the Council is entitled to recover a fee; together with those fees (e.g., burial fees)	Hard Copy	20p per A4 Sheet
Other additional information	Upon request by Hard Copy if available	20p per A4 Sheet

Contact details:

Website address: www.buckingham-tc.gov.uk

Request for hard copies:

Mr Steve Beech
Compliance and Projects
Manager
Buckingham Town Council
The Buckingham Centre
Verney Close
Buckingham
MK18 1JP

Email: office@buckingham-tc.gov.uk

Telephone: 01280 816426

SCHEDULE OF CHARGES

This describes how the charges have been arrived at and should be published as part of the guide.

TYPE OF CHARGE	DESCRIPTION	BASIS OF CHARGE
Disbursement cost	Photocopying @ 10p per sheet (black & white)	Actual cost *
	Photocopying @ 20p per sheet (colour)	Actual cost *
	Postage	Actual cost of Royal Mail standard 2 nd class

Statutory Fee		In accordance with the relevant legislation (quote the actual statute)
Other		

* the actual cost incurred by the Town Council

DATA PROTECTION ACT 2018 POLICY

This policy applies to:

- All employees of this Council;
- All regional staff or home workers operating on behalf of this Council.

This policy is operational from 25 May 2018.

The purpose of this policy is to enable the Council to:

- Comply with our legal, regulatory, and corporate governance obligations and good practice
- Gather information as part of investigations by regulatory bodies or in connection with legal proceedings or requests
- Ensure business policies are adhered to (such as policies covering email and internet use)
- Fulfil operational reasons, such as recording transactions, training, and quality control, ensuring the confidentiality of commercially sensitive information, security vetting, credit scoring and checking
- Investigate complaints
- Check references, ensuring safe working practices, monitoring, and managing staff access to systems and facilities and staff absences, administration, and assessments
- Monitor staff conduct, disciplinary matters
- Market our business
- Improve services

This policy applies to information relating to identifiable individuals e.g., staff, applicants, former staff, clients, suppliers, and other third-party contacts.

We will:

- Comply with both the law and good practice
- Respect individuals' rights
- Be open and honest with individuals whose data is held
- Provide training and support for staff who handle personal data, so that they can act confidently and consistently

We recognise that its first priority under the GDPR is to avoid causing harm to individuals. In the main this means:

- Complying with your rights,

- Keeping you informed about the data we hold, why we hold it and what we are doing with it,
- Keeping information securely in the right hands, and
- Holding good quality information.

Secondly, DPA aims to ensure that the legitimate concerns of individuals about the ways in which their data may be used are taken into account. In addition to being open and transparent, we will seek to give individuals as much choice as is possible and reasonable over what data is held and how it is used. This includes the right to erasure where data is no longer necessary and the right to rectification where the data is incorrect. Full details are available in the Privacy Notice issued at the point of gathering the data.

The Council has identified the following potential key risks, which this policy is designed to address:

- Breach of confidentiality (information being given out inappropriately).
- Insufficient clarity about the range of uses to which data will be put — leading to Data Subjects being insufficiently informed
- Failure to offer choice about data use when appropriate
- Breach of security by allowing unauthorised access.
- Failure to establish efficient systems of managing changes, leading to personal data being not up to date.
- Harm to individuals if personal data is not up to date
- Insufficient clarity about the way personal data is being used e.g., given out to general public.
- Failure to offer choices about use of contact details for staff, client's workers, or employees.

In order to address these concerns, to accompany this policy, we have a Privacy Policy, and we will issue Privacy Notices to explain what data we have, why we have it and what we will do with it. The Privacy Notice will also explain the data subject's rights. We will offer training to staff where this is necessary and appropriate in the circumstances to ensure compliance with DPA. Such training will vary according to the role, responsibilities, and seniority of those being trained.

We aim to keep data only for so long as is necessary which will vary from according to the circumstances.

We have no intention to transfer data internationally.

The person responsible for Data Protection is currently Steve Beech with the following responsibilities:

- Briefing Council on Data Protection responsibilities
- Reviewing Data Protection and related policies
- Advising other staff on Data Protection issues
- Ensuring that Data Protection induction and training takes place

- Notification
- Handling subject access requests
- Approving unusual or controversial disclosures of personal data
- Approving contracts with Data Processors
- Ensuring Data is stored securely
- Maintain a Data Audit and keep this up to date
- Reporting breaches to the Information Commissioners Office and the relevant Data Subject(s)

Significant breaches of this policy will be handled under the Council's disciplinary procedures which may amount to gross misconduct.

Subject Access Request

Any subject access requests will be handled by the Compliance and Projects Manager.

Subject access requests must be in writing. All staff are required to pass on anything, which might be a subject access request to the Compliance and Projects Manager without delay. The applicant will be given their data within 1 month unless there are complexities in the case which justify extending this to 2 months. You will be notified of any extensions to the deadline for response and the reasons as soon as possible.

The Council has the right to refuse a subject access request where data is requested at unreasonable intervals, manifestly unfounded or excessive. You will be notified of the reasons as soon as possible.

Where the individual making a subject access request is not personally known to the Compliance and Projects Manager their identity will be verified before handing over any information.

The required information will be provided in a permanent and portable form unless the applicant makes a specific request to be given supervised access in person.

You have the right to request the information we hold is rectified if it is inaccurate or incomplete. You should contact the Compliance and Projects Manager and provide with the details of any inaccurate or incomplete data. We will then ensure that this is amended within one month. The Council may, in complex cases, extend this period to two months.

You have the right to erasure in the form of deletion or removal of personal data where there is no compelling reason for its continued processing. We have the right to refuse to erase data where this is necessary in the right of freedom of expression and information, to comply with a legal obligation for the performance of a public interest task, exercise of an official authority, for public health purposes in the public interest, for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific research, historical research, statistical purposes or the exercise or defence of legal claims. You will be advised of the grounds of our refusal should any such request be refused.

END

Buckingham's Annual Town Meeting

Thursday, 18th April 2024

This year's Annual Town Meeting offered residents and businesses an opportunity to have their say on 'the future of Buckingham'. There were six topic-based tables, chaired by Officers and Councillors, where people were able to discuss their ideas, voice concerns and have their questions answered:

- Planning and Transport
- Buckingham Neighbourhood Development Plan
- Eco Matters
- Accessibility and Diversity
- Shopping and Tourism
- The River and Green Spaces

Committee Chairs hosted stalls showing the achievements of their Committee throughout the year.

There were excellent information stalls from Waste Busters, the Repair Café, and the Climate Café, highlighting how residents can reuse, repair, and recycle. The Old Gaol Museum brought along some wonderful and interesting artefacts and the Shopmobility stall offered information about hiring wheelchairs and free scooters.

Feedback on spending and the benefits to the town from this year's grant recipients was presented as a 'looped' video on a large screen.

The Mayor formally opened the meeting at 6:30pm.

Planning and Transport

Cllr. Howard Mordue, Buckingham Town Councillor and Buckinghamshire County Councillor, chaired the Planning and Transport table, assisted by Cllr. Ralph, Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee.

Points/ideas raised:

1. Pedestrianise the town centre.
2. Stop cars cutting through the town centre.
3. Traffic calming.
4. Bus transport for late night visits to Milton Keynes and Bicester.
5. Put cycle racks outside Tesco Express.
6. Make the ford in Ford Street passable and improve landscape features.
7. Lack of sustainability in rural areas surrounding Buckingham.
8. Quality of new house builds for private buyers.
9. Lack of self-build options.
10. Lack of eco-friendly build options.

11. More bollards in the town centre to stop cars from parking on the paths.
12. More signage in the centre pointing to interesting aspects of Buckingham.
13. Stop HGV lorries coming into town.
14. Controlled hire of e-bikes and scooters.
15. Improve small craft access along the river.
16. Over emphasis on building in Buckingham.
17. Infrastructure needed.
18. More local power.

Buckingham Neighbourhood Development Plan

The Deputy Town Clerk and the Town Plan Officer chaired the BNDP table.

Points/ideas raised:

1. What is happening with the Lace Hill health centre?
2. Building of cycleways/bridleways with recycled materials, e.g. recycled plastic paths.
3. Importance of green walks through parks and rivers.
4. Biodiversity of natural spaces, not generic sterile fields.
5. Sewage capacity.
6. Wildlife corridors.
7. Motion sensor footpath lights.
8. Line up dropped kerbs.
9. Ask Local Authority about dropped kerbs on Summer House Hill.
10. How many houses are occupied - is there a low occupancy issue?
11. Green space impressive but concern about children being able to buy/rent and stay here.
12. Concern about biodiversity in canal area – development, people and wildlife don't mix.
13. Southern area beyond Lace Hill looks very large as a development in comparison to Lace Hill.
14. Cycleway along the bridleway Page Hill to Lace Hill.
15. Protecting the native corridor balance.
16. Maximise brownfield sites – high density.
17. Buckingham cannot support more housing without a proper by-pass linking Milton Keynes and the Tingewick Bypass.
18. Western relief road needed to protect the town centre and conservation area.

Eco Matters

The Estates Administrator, Nina Stockill, chaired the Eco Matters table.

Points/ideas raised:

1. Environmental considerations for developers to be built into the BNDP.
2. Exemplar work of the Royal Latin School's Green Touch Team.
3. Climate change resilient planting.
4. Community gardening.

5. Businesses – how do they dispose of waste, and do they recycle enough?
6. Importance of volunteer groups such as river and tree wardens and those here tonight.
7. Create a network for climate change eco groups.
8. Litter on highway verge near Starbucks/Shell.
9. Corporate responsibility.
10. Community gardening.
11. Volunteer gardening in public spaces.
12. Need a litterbin in the layby after the Tingewick Road roundabout.
13. Weeding Wednesday volunteers.

Accessibility and Diversity.

Jackie Ohene-Djan, Vice-Chair of the Equality, Community Diversity, and Inclusion Working Group, and Cllr. Margaret Gateley chaired the Accessibility and Diversity table.

Points/ideas raised:

1. Some parts of the town are not accessible to wheelchair users and for pushchairs.
2. No parent/child parking spaces.
3. Bins obstructing pathways.
4. Review of salt boxes needed.
5. Difficulty pushing trolleys to the car park – uneven pavements are potentially dangerous.
6. Ban pavement parking.
7. More wheelchair-accessible picnic tables in the park.
8. Properly aligned dropped kerbs.

Shopping and Tourism

The Town Centre and External Services Manager chaired the Shopping and Tourism table.

Points/ideas raised:

1. More could be done to entice people into town – make Buckingham a foodie destination because we cater for everyone. People love a range of eateries.
2. Focus on local offers/produce because it attracts people in – speak with local farms/ farm shops.
3. Love the independent shops, just need more variety and a mix.
4. No clothes shops for children, other than infants.
5. Shuttle bus from Buckingham to Winslow once the station is open.
6. The banking hub has improved the town.
7. Pop-up shop/gallery.
8. Buckingham water course idea – promote it like Olney/Newport Pagnell.
9. The street market has declined – there are not enough traders.
10. Used to have more shops.
11. Somewhere to buy household home items.

12. No white goods shop.
13. Lack of men's clothing shops.

River and Green Spaces

Claire Molyneux, Buckingham's Town Clerk, assisted by the Compliance and Projects Manager, chaired the River and Green Spaces table.

Points/ideas raised:

1. Improvements to the river – open up for recreation.
2. Flooding – how to drain the water away – what more can be done?
3. Can more be done to clean the river?
4. I like the green spaces.
5. I have no complaints.
6. Great Ouse:
 - Fish ladders
 - Modify weirs to encourage white water and paddle sports.
 - Improve the ford as a feature.
 - Portage points.

At 8pm the Town Mayor thanked residents for attending the meeting and presented a short summary of the discussions and points raised from each table.



Public consultation

Five questions were presented to residents via social media (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) in the week preceding the meeting:

Q1 How can we make Buckingham an even better place to shop and visit?

- Cheaper/free car parking – the majority of comments were about this.
- Lower rent for independent small businesses to be able to establish shops in the town.
- Pedestrianise the market square to enable restaurant outside eating.
- More charity events in the cattle pens/market square.
- Lobby for lower rates for independent businesses.
- Fight to stop extending hours of charged parking.
- More greenery/planting.
- Build something useful for the townspeople on the old Hartridges site.
- Pavements are lethal to disabled people in particular.
- Open Town Hall for dances.
- Community minibus for theatre trips as no late buses back.
- Build a ring road that's actually a ring road.
- Police station.
- Encourage a more diverse range of shops.
- Add bench seating.
- Tidy the town's buildings.
- Update the market – frames etc. look dated and unappealing.
- Lower cost retailers.
- Indoor family attractions.
- A bank of decent EV chargers.
- Encourage landlords to offer lower rent.
- Less charity shops, hairdressers, and coffee shops.
- Parent/child bays.
- Clean up the public loos – they are a disgrace or incentivise businesses/library etc. to open their toilets to the public.

Q2 What are your special buildings in Buckingham and why?

- The Railway Walk in its entirety is special.
- Will there be news about the health centre on Lace Hill?

Q3 How can we make Buckingham more accessible for everyone?

- Remind people that their hedges should not cover paths.
- The buildings are all old, which makes some pubs like the White Hart difficult for wheelchair users.
- Maybe provide ramps that can be borrowed from the Town Council so that people can access buildings more easily.
- Pedestrian areas need to be improved.
- The town should be accessible and welcoming to all.
- Repair the pavements please.
- Provide dropped kerbs where needed.

- More disabled parking in the town.
- Places to sit and rest, perhaps with a shelter.
- Difficulty navigating trees at the bus stop - makes it difficult to cross the road safely on a rollator.
- Some of the pavements are very narrow and are not passable on bin day with a buggy or wheelchair meaning you have to enter the road to get by.

Q4 What more can be done to reduce Buckingham's carbon footprint individually as well as collectively?

- Buildings in town have rotten windows that need to be replaced. They will let out huge sums of heat. Better insulated buildings would help. Are there restrictions around the small tile solar panels?
- Solar panels on buildings instead of in fields. Electric buses/shuttles, reduced traffic/traffic calming, safer cycling, wider pavements to encourage walking.

Q5 What are your hopes for the future of Buckingham?

- It continues to develop into a thriving town with affordable housing so all generations can live here.
- Better infrastructure, we've had so much building but no expansion of services, doctors, dentists, buses.
- Pop-up shops, more interactive activities for all age groups, there's not much for teens in the town.
- More doctors' surgeries and NHS dentists.
- Stability in terms of infrastructure to meet and match the growth of the town (health centre, roads, parking, sports facilities, youth, disabled and older people provision etc.)
- Security in terms of antisocial behaviour, drugs, sense of belonging, community.
- I think a period of understanding where we are, what we have and making that work well and sustainably before we move to any more change or expansion.

BUCKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL**FULL COUNCIL****MONDAY 13th May 2024**

Contact Officers: Claire Molyneux, Town Clerk; Steve Beech, Compliance and Projects Manager.

Financial Regulations, Financial and Management Risk Assessment, and Scheme of Delegation**1. Recommendations**

- 1.1. It is recommended that Members review and readopt the current Financial Regulations without amendment.
- 1.2. It is recommended that Members review and readopt the current Financial and Management Risk Assessment without amendment.
- 1.3. It is recommended that Members review and readopt the current Scheme of Delegation without amendment.

2. Background

- 2.1. It is a requirement of Standing Order 5j(ix) for Full Council to review the Financial Regulations in May annually. They were last reviewed in March 2024.
- 2.2. It is best practice to review the Financial and Management Risk Assessment, and Scheme of Delegation annually. The Risk Assessment was last reviewed in March 2024 and the Scheme of Delegation in May 2023.
- 2.3. It is expedient to review all three documents simultaneously.
- 2.4. NALC have commissioned a full review and rewrite of their Model Financial Regulations. The revised document was only received by Buckingham Town Council 2 working days prior to the deadline to issue the meeting agenda.
- 2.5. Officers are in the process of reviewing the new NALC Model Standing Orders and will then make recommendations to members.
- 2.6. It would be appropriate therefore that officers review the Financial and Management Risk Assessment and Scheme of Delegation at the same time in order to take any relevant changes in the Model Standing Orders into account.

3. Amendments to the Financial Regulations

- 3.1. No amendments to the Financial Regulations, Financial and Management Risk Assessment, or Scheme of Delegation are recommended at this time.



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To be reviewed: Annually/May

Buckingham Town Council

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

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1. General

1.1. These Financial Regulations govern the conduct of financial management by the Council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council. Financial Regulations are one of the Council's three governing policy documents providing procedural guidance for members and officers. Financial Regulations must be observed in conjunction with the Council's Standing Orders and any individual financial regulations relating to contracts.

1.2. The Council is responsible in law for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective, and that the Council has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions, including arrangements for the management of risk.

1.3. The Council's accounting control systems must include measures:

- for the timely production of accounts;
- that provide for the safe and efficient safeguarding of public money;
- to prevent and detect inaccuracy and fraud; and
- identifying the duties of officers.

1.4. These Financial Regulations demonstrate how the Council meets these responsibilities and requirements.

1.5. At least once a year, prior to approving the Annual Governance Statement, the Council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control which shall be in accordance with proper practices.

1.6. Deliberate or wilful breach of these Regulations by an employee may give rise to disciplinary proceedings.

1.7. Members of Council are expected to follow the instructions within these Regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow instructions within these Regulations brings the office of Councillor into disrepute.

1.8. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office to be appointed by the Council.

1.9. The RFO;

- acts under the policy direction of the Council;
- administers the Council's financial affairs in accordance with all Acts, Regulations, and proper practices;
- determines on behalf of the Council its accounting records and accounting Control systems;



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- ensures the accounting control systems are observed;
- maintains the accounting records of the Council up to date in accordance with proper practices;
- assists the council to secure economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in the use of its resources; and
- produces financial management information as required by the Council.

1.10. The accounting records determined by the RFO shall be sufficient to show and explain the Council's transactions and to enable the RFO to ensure that any income and expenditure account and statement of balances, or record of receipts and payments and additional information, as the case may be, or management information prepared for the Council from time to time comply with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

1.11. The accounting records determined by the RFO shall in particular contain:

- entries from day to day of all sums of money received and expended by the Council and the matters to which the income and expenditure or receipts and payments account relate;
- a record of the assets and liabilities of the Council; and
- wherever relevant, a record of the Council's income and expenditure in relation to claims made, or to be made, for any contribution, grant, or subsidy.

1.12. The accounting control systems determined by the RFO shall include:

- procedures to ensure that the financial transactions of the Council are recorded as soon as reasonably practicable and as accurately and reasonably as possible;
- procedures to enable the prevention and detection of inaccuracies and fraud and the ability to reconstruct any lost records;
- identification of the duties of officers dealing with financial transactions and division of responsibilities of those officers in relation to significant transactions;
- procedures to ensure that uncollectable amounts, including any bad debts are not submitted to the Council for approval to be written off except with the approval of the RFO and that the approvals are shown in the accounting records; and
- measures to ensure that risk is properly managed.

1.13. The Council is not empowered by these Regulations or otherwise to delegate certain specified decisions. In particular any decision regarding:

- setting the final budget or the precept (council tax requirement);
- approving accounting statements;
- approving an annual governance statement;
- borrowing;



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- approve any grant or a single commitment in excess of £15000 not already specifically approved in any budget;
- writing off bad debts following a recommendation of the Resources Committee;
- declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and
- addressing recommendations in any report from the internal or external auditors, shall be a matter for the Full Council only, following a recommendation of the Resources Committee.

1.14. In addition, the Resources Committee shall:

- determine and keep under regular review the bank mandate for all Council bank accounts;
- in respect of the annual salary for any employee have regard to recommendations about annual salaries of employees made by the relevant committee in accordance with its terms of reference;
- make recommendations to Full Council for the writing off of bad debts; and
- make recommendations to Full Council to address recommendations in any report from the internal or external auditors.

1.15. In these financial regulations, references to the Accounts and Audit Regulations or 'the regulations' shall mean the regulations issued under the provisions of section 27 of the Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and then in force unless otherwise specified.

In these financial regulations the term 'proper practice' or 'proper practices' shall refer to guidance issued in *Governance and Accountability for Local Councils - a Practitioners' Guide (England)* issued by the Joint Practitioners Advisory Group (JPAG), available from the websites of NALC and the Society for Local Council Clerks (SLCC).

2. Accounting and audit (internal and external)

2.1. All accounting procedures and financial records of the Council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations, appropriate guidance, and proper practices.

2.2. On a regular basis, at least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, the Deputy Chair of the Resources Committee (unless a signatory in which case the Resources Committee shall appoint an alternative member) shall verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The member shall sign the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of verification. This activity shall on conclusion be reported, including any exceptions, to and noted by the Resources Committee.



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2.3. The RFO shall complete the annual statement of accounts, annual report, and any related documents of the Council contained in the Annual Return (as specified in proper practices) as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and having certified the accounts shall submit them and report thereon to the Council within the timescales set by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

2.4. The Council shall ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records, and of its system of internal control in accordance with proper practices. Any officer or member of the Council shall make available such documents and records as appear to the Council to be necessary for the purpose of the audit and shall, as directed by the Council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the Council considers necessary for that purpose.

2.5. The internal auditor shall be appointed by and shall carry out the work in relation to internal controls required by the Council in accordance with proper practices.

2.6. The internal auditor shall:

- be competent and independent of the financial operations of the Council;
- report to Council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one annual written report during each financial year;
- to demonstrate competence, objectivity, and independence, be free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
- has no involvement in the financial decision making, management or control of the Council.

2.7. Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:

- perform any operational duties for the Council;
- initiate or approve accounting transactions; or
- direct the activities of any Council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.

2.8. For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms 'independent' and 'independence' shall have the same meaning as is described in proper practices.

2.9. The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors' rights in relation to the accounts including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and statements of account required by Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

2.10. The RFO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all Councillors any correspondence or report from internal or external auditors.



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3. Annual estimates (budget) and forward planning

3.1. Each committee shall review its three-year forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments. Having regard to the forecast, it shall thereafter formulate and submit proposals for the following financial year to the Council including any proposals for revising the forecast.

3.2. The RFO must each year prepare detailed estimates of all receipts and payments including the use of reserves and all sources of funding for the following financial year in the form of a budget to be considered by the relevant committee and the Council.

3.3. The Council shall consider annual budget proposals in relation to the Council's three-year forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments including recommendations for the use of reserves and sources of funding and update the forecast accordingly.

3.4. The Council shall fix the precept (council tax requirement), and relevant basic amount of council tax to be levied for the ensuing financial year not later than by the end of January each year. The RFO shall issue the precept to the billing authority and shall supply each member with a copy of the approved annual budget.

3.5. The approved annual budget shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

4. Budgetary control and authority to spend

4.1. Expenditure on revenue items may be authorised up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget. This authority is to be determined by:

- the Council for all items over £15,000;
- a duly delegated committee of the Council for items over £5000 up to £15000;
- the Clerk, in conjunction with the Mayor or Chair of the appropriate committee, for items over £2500 up to £5000;
- the Clerk, for any items up to £2500; or
- nominated Council staff in accordance with limits set in the Scheme of Delegation.

Such authority is to be evidenced by a minute or by an authorisation slip duly signed by the Clerk, or other nominated Council staff and where necessary also by the appropriate Chair. A confirmation email from the appropriate person's email address is acceptable.

Contracts may not be disaggregated to avoid controls imposed by these regulations.

Variations with the Scheme of Delegation: The Scheme of Delegation is intended to give more specific detail than the Financial Regulations in the above areas. If there is found to be any contradiction between the two documents, then the Scheme of Delegation shall override the Financial Regulations.



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4.2. No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the amount provided in the revenue budget for that class of expenditure other than by resolution of the Council, or duly delegated committee. During the budget year and with the approval of Council having considered fully the implications for public services, unspent and available amounts may be moved to other budget headings or to an earmarked reserve as appropriate ('virement').

4.3. Unspent provisions in the revenue or capital budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year.

4.4. The salary budgets are to be reviewed at least annually for the following financial year. The RFO will inform committees of any changes impacting on their budget requirement for the coming year in good time.

4.5. In cases of extreme risk to the delivery of Council services, the Clerk may authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of the Council which in the Clerk's judgement it is necessary to carry out. Such expenditure includes repair, replacement, or other work, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £5000. The Clerk shall report such action to the Resources Committee as soon as practicable thereafter.

4.6. No expenditure shall be authorised in relation to any capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving capital expenditure unless the Council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available, and the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained.

4.7. All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations relating to contracts.

4.8. The RFO shall regularly provide the Council with a statement of receipts and payments to date under each head of the budgets, comparing actual expenditure to the appropriate date against that planned as shown in the budget. These statements are to be prepared at least at the end of each financial quarter and shall show explanations of material variances. For this purpose, "material" shall be in excess of £250 or 15% of the budget.

4.9. Changes in earmarked reserves shall be approved by Council as part of the budgetary control process.

5. Banking arrangements and authorisation of payments

5.1. The Council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO, and approved by the Council; banking arrangements may not be delegated to a committee. They shall be regularly reviewed for safety and efficiency.

5.2. The RFO/Assistant RFO shall prepare a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, which will be emailed to members of the Resources Committee two days before payment



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allowing time for members to comment or otherwise query the specific payments. This schedule, countersigned by the RFO, accompanied with relevant invoices will be presented to two councillors who are authorised bank signatories for signature, as per a rota prepared by the RFO. The signed schedule shall include a unique sequential number allocated to each payment list and be presented to the next appropriate Full Council or Resources committee as an agenda item for endorsement. The Full Council or Resources committee shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself shall endorse payment by a resolution of the Council or Resources committee. The unique sequential reference number, together with the total amount on the payment list that is being endorsed, will be listed, and shown in the minutes.

5.3. All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified, and certified by the RFO to confirm that the work, goods, or services to which each invoice relates has been received, carried out, examined, and represents expenditure previously approved by the Council.

5.4. The RFO shall examine invoices for arithmetical accuracy and analyse them to the appropriate expenditure heading. The RFO shall take all steps to pay all invoices submitted, and which are in order, at the next available Council or Resources Committee meeting.

5.5. The RFO shall have delegated authority to authorise the payment of items only in the following circumstances:

a) If a payment is necessary to avoid a charge to interest under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998, and the due date for payment is before the next scheduled Meeting of council, where the RFO certifies that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of the Resources Committee;

b) An expenditure item authorised under 5.6 below (continuing contracts and obligations) provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of the Resources Committee; or

c) fund transfers within the Council's banking arrangements up to the sum of £100,000, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of the Resources committee.

5.6. For each financial year the RFO shall draw up a list of due payments which arise on a regular basis as the result of a continuing contract, statutory duty, or obligation (such as but not exclusively) Salaries, PAYE and NI, Superannuation Fund and regular maintenance contracts and the like for which Resources Committee, may authorise payment for the year provided that the requirements of regulation 4.1 (Budgetary Controls) are adhered to, provided also that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of the Resources Committee.



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5.7. A record of regular payments made under 5.6 above shall be drawn up and be signed by two members on each and every occasion when payment is authorised - thus controlling the risk of duplicated payments being authorised and / or made.

5.8. In respect of grants a duly authorised committee shall approve expenditure within any limits set by Council and in accordance with any policy statement approved by Council. Any Revenue or Capital Grant in excess of £5,000 shall before payment, be subject to ratification by resolution of the Council.

5.9. Members are subject to the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the Council and shall comply with the Code and Standing Orders when a decision to authorise or instruct payment is made in respect of a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary or other interest unless a dispensation has been granted.

5.10. The Council will aim to rotate the duties of members in these Regulations so that onerous duties are shared out as evenly as possible over time.

5.11. Any new suppliers or changes in the recorded details of suppliers, such as bank account records, shall be approved in writing by the RFO.

6. Instructions for the making of payments

6.1. The council will make safe and efficient arrangements for the making of its payments.

6.2. Following authorisation under Financial Regulation 5 above, the Council, a duly delegated committee or, if so delegated, the RFO shall give instruction that a payment shall be made.

6.3. All payments shall be affected by cheque or other instructions to the Council's bankers, or otherwise, in accordance with a resolution of Council or duly delegated committee.

6.4. Cheques or orders for payment drawn on the bank account in accordance with the schedule as presented to Council or committee shall be signed by two members of Council in accordance with a resolution instructing that payment. A member who is a bank signatory, having a connection by virtue of family or business relationships with the beneficiary of a payment, should not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to the payment in question.

6.5. To indicate agreement of the details shown on the cheque or order for payment with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall each also initial the cheque counterfoil.

6.6. Cheques or orders for payment shall not normally be presented for signature other than at a Council or committee meeting (including immediately before or after such a meeting). Any signatures obtained away from such meetings shall be reported to the Resources Committee at the next convenient meeting.



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6.7. If thought appropriate by the Council, payment for utility supplies (energy, telephone, and water) and any National Non-Domestic Rates may be made by variable direct debit provided that the instructions are signed by two members and any payments are reported to Council as made. The approval of the use of a variable direct debit shall be renewed by resolution of the Council at least every two years.

6.8. If thought appropriate by the Council, payment for certain items (principally salaries) may be made by banker's standing order provided that the instructions are signed, or otherwise evidenced by two members are retained and any payments are reported to Council as made. The approval of the use of a banker's standing order shall be renewed by resolution of the Council at least every two years.

6.9. If thought appropriate by the Council, payment for certain items may be made by BACS or CHAPS methods provided that the instructions for each payment are signed, or otherwise evidenced, by two authorised bank signatories, are retained and any payments are reported to Council as made. The approval of the use of BACS or CHAPS shall be renewed by resolution of the Council at least every two years.

6.10. If thought appropriate by the Council payment for certain items may be made by internet banking transfer provided evidence is retained showing which members approved the payment.

6.11. Where a computer requires use of a personal identification number (PIN) or other password(s), for access to the Council's records on that computer, a note shall be made of the PIN and Passwords and shall be handed to and retained by the Mayor in a sealed dated envelope. This envelope may not be opened other than in the presence of two other councillors. After the envelope has been opened, in any circumstances, the PIN and / or passwords shall be changed as soon as practicable. The fact that the sealed envelope has been opened, in whatever circumstances, shall be reported to all members immediately and formally to the next available meeting of the Council. This will not be required for a member's personal computer used only for remote authorisation of bank payments.

6.12. No employee or councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the working of the Council or its bank accounts, to any person not authorised in writing by the Council or a duly delegated committee.

6.13. Regular back-up copies of the records on any computer shall be made and shall be stored securely away from the computer in question, and preferably off site.

6.14. The Council, and any members using computers for the Council's financial business, shall ensure that anti-virus, anti-spyware, and firewall software with automatic updates, together with a high level of security, is used.



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6.15. Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the RFO shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The bank mandate approved by the Council shall identify a number of councillors who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts. The bank mandate will state clearly the amounts of payments that can be instructed by the use of the Service Administrator alone, or by the Service Administrator with a stated number of approvals.

6.16. Access to any internet banking accounts will be directly to the access page (which may be saved under “favourites”), and not through a search engine or e-mail link. Remembered or saved passwords facilities must not be used on any computer used for Council banking work. Breach of this Regulation will be treated as a very serious matter under these regulations.

6.17. Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk, Deputy Clerk and Estates Manager and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £1000 unless authorised by Council or Resources committee in writing before any order is placed.

6.18. The RFO may provide petty cash to officers for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses. Vouchers for payments made shall be forwarded to the RFO with a claim for reimbursement.

a) The RFO/Assistant RFO shall maintain a petty cash float of a maximum of £500 for the purpose of providing change, defraying operational and other expenses. Vouchers for payments made from petty cash shall be kept to substantiate the payment. The float may be split between the Council Offices, Lace Hill, Shopmobility and the Tourist Information Centre, and will be kept under the control of the most senior person present at each location.

b) Income received must not be paid into the petty cash float but must be separately banked, as provided elsewhere in these regulations.

c) Payments to maintain the petty cash float shall be shown separately on the schedule of payments presented to Council under 5.2 above.

6.19. Any corporate credit card or trade account opened by the Council will be specifically authorised by the RFO. Authorisation of purchases are restricted to the Clerk, Deputy Clerk, or Estates Manager, and shall be subject to automatic payment in full at each month-end.

7. Payment of salaries

7.1. As an employer, the Council shall make arrangements to meet fully the statutory requirements placed on all employers by PAYE and National Insurance legislation. The payment of all salaries shall be made in accordance with payroll records and the rules of PAYE



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and National Insurance currently operating, and salary rates shall be as agreed by Council, or duly delegated committee.

7.2. Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salary such as may be required to be made for tax, national insurance, and pension contributions, or similar statutory or discretionary deductions must be made in accordance with the payroll records and on the appropriate dates stipulated in employment contracts, provided that each payment is reported to the next available Council meeting, as set out in these regulations above.

7.3. No changes shall be made to any employee's pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the relevant committee.

7.4. Each and every payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a separate confidential record (confidential cash book). This confidential record is not open to inspection or review (under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or otherwise) other than:

- a) by any councillor who can demonstrate a need to know;
- b) by the internal auditor;
- c) by the external auditor; or
- d) by any person authorised under Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation.

7.5. The total of such payments in each calendar month shall be reported with all other payments as made as may be required under these Financial Regulations, to ensure that only payments due for the period have actually been paid.

7.6. An effective system of personal performance management should be maintained for the senior officers.

7.7. Any termination payments shall be supported by a clear business case and reported to the Council. Termination payments shall only be authorised by Council.

7.8. Before employing interim staff, the Council must consider a full business case.

8. Loans and investments

8.1. All borrowings shall be affected in the name of the Council, after obtaining any necessary borrowing approval. Any application for borrowing approval shall be approved by Council as to terms and purpose. The application for borrowing approval, and subsequent arrangements for the loan shall only be approved by Full Council.



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8.2. Any financial arrangement which does not require formal borrowing approval from the Secretary of State (such as Hire Purchase or Leasing of tangible assets) shall be subject to approval by the Full Council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to Council in respect of value for money for the proposed transaction.

8.3. All loans and investments shall be negotiated in the name of the Council and shall be for a set period in accordance with Council policy.

8.4. The Council shall consider the need for an Investment Strategy and Policy which, if drawn up, shall be in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices, and guidance. Any Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by the Council at least annually.

8.5. All investments of money under the control of the Council shall be in the name of the Council.

8.6. All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.

8.7 Payments in respect of short term or long-term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, or branch, shall be made in accordance with Regulation 5 (Authorisation of payments) and Regulation 6 (Instructions for payments).

9. Income

9.1. The collection of all sums due to the Council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.

9.2. Particulars of all charges to be made for work done, services rendered, or goods supplied shall be agreed annually by the Council, notified to the RFO and the RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all accounts due to the Council.

9.3. The Council will review all fees and charges at least annually, following a report of the RFO.

9.4. Any sums found to be irrecoverable, and any bad debts shall be reported to the Council and shall be written off in the year.

9.5. All sums received on behalf of the Council shall be banked intact as directed by the RFO. In all cases, all receipts shall be deposited with the Council's bankers with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary.

9.6. The origin of each receipt shall be entered on the paying-in slip.

9.7. Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the Council.



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9.8. The RFO shall promptly complete any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim due in accordance with VAT Act 1994 section 33 shall be made at least annually coinciding with the financial year end.

9.9. Where any significant sums of cash are regularly received by the Council, the RFO shall take such steps as are agreed by the Council to ensure that more than one person is present when the cash is counted in the first instance, that there is a reconciliation to some form of control such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken in the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.

10. Orders for work, goods, and services

10.1. An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods, and services unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained.

10.2. Order books shall be controlled by the RFO.

10.3. All members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. An officer issuing an official order shall ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction, usually by obtaining three or more quotations or estimates from appropriate suppliers, subject to any de minimis provisions in Regulation 11.1 below.

10.4. A member may not issue an official order or make any contract on behalf of the Council.

10.5. The RFO shall verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of any order, and in the case of new or infrequent purchases or payments, the RFO shall ensure that the statutory authority shall be reported to the meeting at which the order is approved so that the minutes can record the power being used.

11. Contracts

11.1. Procedures as to contracts are laid down as follows:

a) Every contract shall comply with these Financial Regulations, and no exceptions shall be made otherwise than in an emergency provided that this regulation need not apply to contracts which relate to items (i) to (vi) below:

- i. for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage, and telephone services;
- ii. for specialist services such as are provided by legal professionals acting in disputes;



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- iii. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant;
 - iv. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the Council;
 - v. for additional audit work of the external auditor up to an estimated value of £500 (in excess of this sum the RFO shall act after consultation with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor); and
 - vi. for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and / or are only sold at a fixed price.
- b) Where the Council intends to procure or award a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract as defined by The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (“the Regulations”) which is valued at £30,000 or more, the Council shall comply with the relevant requirements of the Regulations¹.
- c) The full requirements of The Regulations, as applicable, shall be followed in respect of the tendering and award of a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract which exceed thresholds in The Regulations set by the Public Contracts Directive 2014/24/EU (which may change from time to time).
- d) When applications are made to waive Financial Regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the Council.
- e) Such invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the RFO shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases. The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the RFO in the ordinary course of post. Each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract.
- f) All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the RFO in the presence of at least one member of Council.
- g) Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Order 18d and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.

¹ The Regulations require councils to use the Contracts Finder website to advertise contract opportunities, set out the procedures to be followed in awarding new contracts and to publicise the award of new contracts



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h) When it is to enter into a contract of less than £30,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk or RFO shall obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply); where the value is below £3,000 and above £100 the Clerk or RFO shall strive to obtain 3 estimates. Otherwise, Regulation 10.3 above shall apply.

i) The Council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote, or estimate.

j) Should it occur that the Council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated, and the Council requires further pricing, provided that the specification does not change, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate, or quote who was present when the original decision-making process was being undertaken.

12. Payments under contracts for building or other construction works (Public Works Contracts)

12.1. Payments on account of the contract sum shall be made within the time specified in the contract by the RFO upon authorised certificates of the architect or other consultants engaged to supervise the contract (subject to any percentage withholding as may be agreed in the particular contract).

12.2. Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments. In any case where it is estimated that the total cost of work carried out under a contract, excluding agreed variations, will exceed the contract sum of 5% or more a report shall be submitted to the council.

12.3. Any variation to a contract or addition to or omission from a contract must be approved by the Council and RFO to the contractor in writing, the Council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision.

13. Stores and equipment

13.1. The officer in charge of each section shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment in that section.

13.2. Delivery notes shall be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.

13.3. Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.

13.4. The RFO shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stores at least annually.



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14. Assets, properties, and estates

14.1. The RFO shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the Council. The RFO shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties held by the Council, recording the location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.

14.2. No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased, or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the Council, together with any other consents required by law, save where the estimated value of any one item of tangible movable property does not exceed £250.

14.3. No real property (interests in land) shall be sold, leased, or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the Council, together with any other consents required by law. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to Council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).

14.4. No real property (interests in land) shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the Full Council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to Council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).

14.5. Subject only to the limit set in Regulation 14.2 above, no tangible moveable property shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the Full Council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council with a full business case.

14.6. The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.

15. Insurance

15.1. Following the annual risk assessment (per Regulation 16), the RFO shall affect all insurances and oversee negotiations for all claims on the Council's insurers.

15.2. The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the Council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.

15.3. The RFO shall be notified of any loss liability or damage or of any event likely to lead to a claim and shall report these to the relevant Committee at the next available meeting.



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15.4. All appropriate members and employees of the council shall be included in a suitable form of security or fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined by the Council, or duly delegated committee.

16. Risk management

16.1. The Council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The RFO shall prepare, for approval by the Council, risk management policy statements in respect of all activities of the Council. Risk policy statements and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the Council at least annually.

16.2. When considering any new activity, the RFO shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration and adoption by the Council.

17. Suspension and revision of Financial Regulations

17.1. It shall be the duty of the Council to review the Financial Regulations of the Council from time to time. The RFO shall make arrangements to monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and shall advise the Council of any requirement for a consequential amendment to these Financial Regulations.

17.2. The Council may, by resolution of the Council duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of Council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been drawn up and presented in advance to all members of Council.

END

RISK AREA	RISK(S) IDENTIFIED	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Assessment (with mitigation)	MITIGATION CONTROL OF RISK	REVIEW / ASSESS / REVISE
1. To provide and maintain standards for Town Council services to the residents of Buckingham	Legislative change which will have an impact on the Town Council's powers, duties and funding	1	3	3	RFO, Councillors & staff keep apprised of developments & good practice, including through SLCC, BMKALC & NALC membership. Appointed Compliance Manager Dec 22	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Loss or damage to physical assets owned by the Town Council including buildings and equipment	1	4	4	All physical assets insured	Existing Procedures are adequate
					All assets checked regularly, including review of the asset register each year in preparation for the Annual Return	By annual resolution of Full Council
					Assets recorded and managed through RBS asset tool.	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Damage to third party property or individuals as a consequence of the Town council providing services (public liability)	2	3	6	Public liability Insurance renewed annually	By annual resolution of Full Council
					In addition, weekly and annual checks of play equipment are made using ROSPA standards	
Insufficient staff or other resources to deliver the service needs	2	3	6	Staff have general awareness of other team member's essential tasks and can provide cover when required; each service role can be delivered by at least three staff members	Existing Procedures are adequate	
				Town Clerk to formally monitor and review staff and work levels, including through the annual appraisal process. Any concerns regarding this to then be brought to Council	Review annually through appraisal process	
2. To provide a safe and fulfilling working environment for staff	Employees contravene H & S policy and legislation	2	3	6	H & S & First Aid training, insurance, Risk Assessments regularly checked and updated	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Potential legal proceedings up to corporate manslaughter	1	4	4	Employer's Liability insurance is in place	Existing Procedures are adequate
					Employee training and awareness	Existing Procedures are adequate

RISK AREA	RISK(S) IDENTIFIED	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Assessment (with mitigation)	MITIGATION CONTROL OF RISK	REVIEW / ASSESS / REVISE
	Staff retention issues	3	3	9	Staff training where appropriate. Annual appraisals review four year goals in addition to reviewing annual performance and setting annual objectives and where appropriate plans put in place to support career progression. The organisation is too small to enable career progression for all staff, so the likelihood is significant.	Existing Procedures are adequate
3. To maintain financial records that are correct and comply with all recommended accounting practice	Adverse audit reports, legal action and loss of confidence in Town Council	1	3	3	RFO keeps up to date with legislative changes, discusses latest requirements with internal and external auditors.	Existing Procedures are adequate
					RBS used to manage accounts and provide regular reports to Resources Committee to provider assurance	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Loss of income through error or fraud	1	3	3	Fidelity Guarantee Insurance RFO continually reviews controls and current procedures	Existing Procedures are adequate Existing Procedures are adequate
4. To ensure that all actions taken by the Town Council comply with all current Legislation	Non-compliance with legislation or practice result in Council being 'Ultra Vires'	1	3	3	RFO to keep appraised of developments and good practice and seek advice as needed, including through SLCC, BMKALC and NALC membership. Internal and external audit process.	Existing Procedures are adequate
5. Cemetery	Inadequate space to meet demand	3	4	12	Additional 64 burial spaces created 2018/19 in Brackley Road Cemetery. Additional Garden of Rest created during 2021. New cemetery project in progress.	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Loss of income	3	4	12	Additional 64 burial spaces created 2018/19 in Brackley Road Cemetery. Additional Garden of Rest created during 2021. New cemetery project in progress.	For six monthly review; operational site required by 2024
6. Employment Contract	Compensation claims from employee for contractual employment defects (including statutory failure)				Contract of employment in place, accompanied for all staff by handbook containing key policies which has been quality assured by a specialist partner company.	Annual review
					Matters relating to staff discussed by Staffing (Confidential Matters) Committee	Existing Procedures are adequate
					Town Clerk to keep up to date with employment law and seek HR advice where appropriate	Existing Procedures are adequate
		2	3	6		

RISK AREA	RISK(S) IDENTIFIED	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Assessment (with mitigation)	MITIGATION CONTROL OF RISK	REVIEW / ASSESS / REVISE	
					Contract with a specialist partner company in to quality assure contracts, policies and processes and provide expert advice as required	Existing Procedures are adequate	
					Other policies in place	Existing Procedures are adequate	
					Legal insurance in place	Existing Procedures are adequate	
7. Staff	Impact of staff loss	4	2	8	By distributing knowledge and roles ensure, so far as reasonably practical, that loss of any one employee does not cause unrecoverable damage to business. All service roles able to be delivered by at least three staff	Existing Procedures are adequate	
	Loss of key staff trained in financial systems, process or rules	4	2	8	Staffing arranged so that knowledge is distributed between RFO and at least two other staff	Existing Procedures are adequate	
					Use of common systems, including popular accounts system, and retention of detailed manuals.	Existing Procedures are adequate	
8. Financial Control	Inappropriate expenditure made	1	4	4	Payments reported to Resources committee for review and corrective action if necessary	bi-monthly reports	
					Financial procedures ensure no individual has unique access to expenditure	By annual resolution of Full Council	
	Financial Regulations become out of date with change in technology, regulation or business					Council to review financial regulations once a year	By annual resolution of Full Council
			2	3	6	Annual internal audit to comment on any need to make updates	Annual review
						The RFO and Clerk react to any changes in legislation or other areas in order to ensure the regulations are fully compliant and also provide a strong framework compatible with Council's practices	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Lack of budgetary overview/overspend against budget		1	3	3	Quarterly review of nominal ledger	Quarterly review
						Monthly review of income and expenditure	Monthly review
					Seven week review by Resources Committee	bi-monthly reports	
Lack of finance to meet unbudgeted, urgent commitments (with safety or other critical implications)					Contingency included in budget	By annual resolution of Full Council	

RISK AREA	RISK(S) IDENTIFIED	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Assessment (with mitigation)	MITIGATION CONTROL OF RISK	REVIEW / ASSESS / REVISE
		2	3	6	Further Reserves of equivalent to at least three more month's spend available for use within 24 hours	Existing Procedures are adequate
9. Systems & Record keeping	Lack of accurate or effective account records and control	1	3	3	The RBS Omega accounts system is used which is an accepted accounts package All data is saved to a cloud server offsite, which is backed up by the Council's contractor daily.	Existing Procedures are adequate Existing Procedures are adequate
	Loss of data	1	3	3	Hard copies linked to council reports are held on file together with bank reconciliation reports, invoices/receipts/payments and cheques issued	Existing Procedures are adequate
					All cheques issued from the main account are authorised and signed by 2 Councillors with retrospective approval by the Resources Committee. (Approval is given by email by at 2 councillors where cheque signing is not possible)	Existing Procedures are adequate
					Documents are retained for 12 years	Existing Procedures are adequate
	VAT not accurately managed	1	3	3	The RBS Omega system incorporates a VAT schedule which is an accepted package that allows differentiation between tax rates etc. and is itemised in a full report relating back to the original item within the accounts.	Existing Procedures are adequate
					VAT is applied to all mileage payments at the rate applicable at the time as advise by HMR&C	
					VAT returns are lodged digitally on a quarterly basis in line with accepted procedures	Existing Procedures are adequate
					Procedures are inspected by HMR&C every three/four years and have been approved	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Payroll / Pension				Payroll is outsourced to a specialist company	Existing Procedures are adequate
					The Town Clerk authorises any overtime, mileage or special duty payments act, on a monthly basis	Existing Procedures are adequate
Hard copies linked to payroll reports are held on file together with payslips, BACs payments and cheques issued to the pension fund and HMRC					Existing Procedures are adequate	

RISK AREA	RISK(S) IDENTIFIED	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Assessment (with mitigation)	MITIGATION CONTROL OF RISK	REVIEW / ASSESS / REVISE
		1	3	3	All BACs payments and cheques to the pension fund & HMRC are authorised by council on a meeting cycle basis	Review by Councillors
					The monthly pay is issued via BACs payments which have been established for some time with the bank	Existing Procedures are adequate
					Payments can only be issued for the nominated employees, which must be authorised in advance of the payment, with accuracy checked by a further officer.	Existing Procedures are adequate
					Documents are retained for 12 years	Existing Procedures are adequate
					Annual pension and year end payroll returns are issued in a timely manner to the appropriate bodies that inspect the information & highlight and discrepancies	Existing Procedures are adequate
					The Council agrees the salary scales for Town Council staff	By annual resolution of Full Council
10. Banking Arrangements & Procedures	Lloyds Bank is used which offers no Bank charges	1	3	3	One bank account used daily with RFO, Finance Officer & DTC	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Accounts	1	3	3	Reserves above two months expenditure are placed into a higher rate deposit account to maximise income while not affecting cash flow	Existing Procedures are adequate
11. Banking Security/Access to Finances	Cheques	1	3	3	Each cheque is drawn from the main account and must be signed by 2 Councillors as detailed on the back mandates (which are amended when required to ensure that sufficient signatories are available at all times)	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Transfers	1	3	3	Transfers to the higher rate deposit account or the CCLA deposit account are done via telephone or online banking by the RFO. Funds in the higher rate deposit accounts can only be transferred into the general savings account.	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Bank Reconciliation				All accounts are reconciled using the RBS Omega system within 10 days of receipt of any statement	Existing Procedures are adequate
					Any discrepancies are immediately reported to the bank for investigation	Existing Procedures are adequate

RISK AREA	RISK(S) IDENTIFIED	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Assessment (with mitigation)	MITIGATION CONTROL OF RISK	REVIEW / ASSESS / REVISE
		1	3	3	All petty cash accounts which do not have statements are reconciled on a monthly basis by the Finance Officer against the cash held and any discrepancies are immediately reported to the RFO	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Separation of Duties	1	3	3	The office has established separation of duties to ensure that no one person has access to the bank balances and cash. Two Councillor's signatories are required at all times. Petty cash is overseen by each location manager.	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Access to the main bank accounts	1	4	4	As detailed under Banking arrangements & Procedures above, no one person has access to monies held in the main accounts. Any new bank accounts would require agreement from the Town Council and two signatures	Existing Procedures are adequate
					All invoices are checked by the Finance officer in advance of payment and if related to an order, this has passed through the ordering procedure which has numerous stages of authorisation to ensure that fraudulent activities are not taking place (please refer to the Ordering Procedure section)	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Access to petty cash accounts	1	3	3	The Financial Regulations specify maximum balances to ensure that individuals do not have access to large amounts of money. The petty cash is kept in a locked drawer and access is restricted to Finance Officer and DTC.	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Cheques	1	3	3	All invoices will either have a Purchase Order or are authorised by either Clerk, DTC or Estates Manager. They are paid via cheque, which requires 2 Councillor's signatories, or BACs. Councillors also see the related invoice and authorise this with their signature	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Petty Cash – Cash Payments	1	2	2	All payments made in cash must be substantiated by an invoice etc. These are reviewed monthly by the RFO once reconciled.	Existing Procedures are adequate
All payments are reported to Resources with a full reconciliation report					Existing Procedures are adequate	

RISK AREA	RISK(S) IDENTIFIED	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Assessment (with mitigation)	MITIGATION CONTROL OF RISK	REVIEW / ASSESS / REVISE
	Hire Charges	1	3	3	Council agree the charges	Existing Procedures are adequate
					The office must abide by these rates and any requests for preferential rates must be made by the hirer to Council for their approval	Existing Procedures are adequate
					All bookings must be paid for in advance to avoid bad debts. Block bookers are invoiced or given the option of paying the sites on a weekly basis. Hirers pay deposits.	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Hire charges received within the office	1	3	3	All post is logged by an officer and any payments received are itemised & given to the Finance Officer for processing	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Cash collected from community events	1	2	2	All cash collected at events is collected by appointed staff and volunteers in approved charity buckets which are allocated at the start of the event	Existing Procedures are adequate
					Any buckets are locked securely in the Town Council office or Chamber and at the end of the event	Existing Procedures are adequate
					At the office the cash is emptied and counted manually at the latest on the following working day by at least two members of staff	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Processing and banking	1	2	2	When the money is received it is balanced by the Finance Officer within the office against any receipts/invoices and any discrepancies are followed up	Existing Procedures are adequate
					When the monies have been balanced, the details are input onto the RBS Omega system and all entry references are printed out and retained	Existing Procedures are adequate
					The hire charges are banked when received	Existing Procedures are adequate
					The cash element is usually below £500	Existing Procedures are adequate
					A unique pay in reference is applied to each batch of banking which is loaded onto the RBS Omega system which is then checked against the bank reconciliation	Existing Procedures are adequate

RISK AREA	RISK(S) IDENTIFIED	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Assessment (with mitigation)	MITIGATION CONTROL OF RISK	REVIEW / ASSESS / REVISE
					This is a strict routine that ensures that any booked hire cannot proceed without receiving the payments and guarantees that all monies are accounted for	Existing Procedures are adequate
12. Financial Administration	Records non-compliant or inadequate	1	3	3	Internal auditor reviews record keeping twice a year	Existing Procedures are adequate
					Advice taken from internal auditor, external auditor, accountant, SLCC + NALC on changes in regulations	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Expenditure/income coded incorrectly	1	3	3	RFO checks nominal ledger every quarter	Existing Procedures are adequate
					Items are coded	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Standing Orders	1	3	3	The Town Clerk reacts to any changes in legislation, requests from Town Council or other areas in order to ensure the regulations are fully compliant and also provide a strong framework compatible with Council practices	Existing Procedures are adequate
					Standing orders are reviewed and approved by Town Council on an annual basis	
	Non-compliance with statutory deadlines for the completion/approval/submission of accounts and other financial returns	2	3	6	Programme of meetings to meet statutory deadlines	Existing Procedures are adequate
					RFO and Deputy Town Clerk check meeting dates each year against statutory requirements	
	Invoice payment without authority	1	4	4	All payments reviewed against purchase order where one exists, or Nominal Ledger code provided by RFO to authorise payment. Two Councillors sign cheques and Resources Committee review all payments	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Incoming cash and cheque misappropriation	1	3	3	Individual receipts to be issued for all cash payments and for cheque payments on request	Existing Procedures are adequate
Theft of funds	1	3	3	Bank statements reconciled monthly, Fidelity Insurance in place against theft of funds by staff, Councillors and other persons. Chair of Resources checks and signs bank reconciliation once a quarter.	Existing Procedures are adequate	

RISK AREA	RISK(S) IDENTIFIED	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Assessment (with mitigation)	MITIGATION CONTROL OF RISK	REVIEW / ASSESS / REVISE
					Cash and cheques stored securely and banked within 5 working days of receipt	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Incorrect entries by bank	1	3	3	Bank statements reconciled monthly	Existing Procedures are adequate
13. Ordering Procedure	Fraud / expenditure takes place without the correct authority	1	3	3	A comprehensive ordering system is established which ensures that all orders are requested in writing, correctly authorised by the RFO or approved by council & are within acceptable budget limits	Existing Procedures are adequate
					This system incorporates job numbers/minutes and RBS Omega codes so that any order can be traced from origin to finish across a variety of systems	Existing Procedures are adequate
14. Annual Budget & Precept Calculations	The annual budget and precept calculations	1	3	3	The annual budget and precept calculations are initially calculated in October/November based upon the performance of the prior year and incorporating projected requirements which have been lodged by the office and Council members	Existing Procedures are adequate
					The RFO also completes a mid-year review in November for the current year to calculate possible year end surpluses which may be incorporated within the future budget. The actual precept level is then calculated from the balance sheet assuming that the remainder of the current year's budget will be utilised in order to estimate the year end bank balance	Existing Procedures are adequate
					The new budgeted income, expenditure and reserves are then set against this balance in order to calculate a budget shortfall on which the future precept is based	Existing Procedures are adequate
					The new budget is discussed and fine-tuned during December Council and Committee meetings after the up to date number of band D properties have been confirmed by the Principal Authority.	Existing Procedures are adequate
					Minutes are recorded at each stage to substantiate the budget development	Existing Procedures are adequate

RISK AREA	RISK(S) IDENTIFIED	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Assessment (with mitigation)	MITIGATION CONTROL OF RISK	REVIEW / ASSESS / REVISE
					The final budget is discussed by a Precept meeting of Full Council in January. The Principal Authority is advised of the precept for the coming year once agreed	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Loss of income due to a reduction in the Council Tax base	2	1	2	The Council receives the Council Tax base figures in time to set a budget that takes account of them.	
15. Monitoring of Budgets	Comprehensive budgets	1	3	3	Comprehensive budgets are set for each committee & these are loaded onto RBS Omega accounts system at the start of the new financial year	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Monitoring	1	3	3	On-going daily expenditure has already been incorporated within the budget and the RFO monitors invoices etc. against the budget schedule to confirm that they are within the limits	Existing Procedures are adequate
					All orders are checked against the accounts system to verify expenditure within the account code to date and the remaining budget	Existing Procedures are adequate
					Any over expenditure is highlighted and brought to the attention of the RFO	Existing Procedures are adequate
					Each Committee receives a report on the use of its budget at each meeting	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Reporting	1	2	2	A full report of expenditure against budget is lodged with Council at each Resources Committee meeting	Existing Procedures are adequate
					This incorporates a print out of the income and expenditure against each annual budget and the cashbook extract	Existing Procedures are adequate
Any that do not meet the budget levels are highlighted to members if needed along with committed expenditure					Existing Procedures are adequate	
16. Insurable Risks	Employer's Liability	1	3	3	Insurance cover is in place	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Theft of money by third party	1	3	3	Insurance cover is in place	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Theft of money by employee or member	1	3	3	Fidelity Guarantee cover is in place	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Property	2	4	8	Cover for buildings & contents	Existing Procedures are adequate

RISK AREA	RISK(S) IDENTIFIED	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Assessment (with mitigation)	MITIGATION CONTROL OF RISK	REVIEW / ASSESS / REVISE
					All risks cover for selected items	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Officials Indemnity	1	3	3	Continue with existing cover (£250k)	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Libel and Slander	1	3	3	Continue existing cover (£250k)	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Personal Accident	3	4	12	Continue with existing cover (scale benefits)	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Legal disputes	2	3	6	Cover for specified legal disputes	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Long term sickness of employee	3	3	9	Not covered by insurance; managed within the overall staffing budget	Existing Procedures are adequate
					Liability limited by contract	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Business interruption	1	3	3	Potential alternative premises available at the Lace Hill Centre and Council Chamber	Existing Procedures are adequate
					All office staff have laptops and can access all files from home or other sites	
					Use of cloud-based system, which is also backed up off site.	Existing Procedures are adequate
					Ability to restore onto hired equipment	
					Cover in place for excess costs	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Loss/destruction of financial records	1	3	3	Key financial data held electronically and backed up off site	Existing Procedures are adequate
					All electronic documents backed up daily offsite	Existing Procedures are adequate
17. Loss of Records	Loss of documentation	1	3	3	Deeds and other legal documents relating to real estate stored in the office in a fire safe, historic stored at the depot	Existing Procedures are adequate
18. Asset List	Purchased	1	3	3	An asset list is maintained by the Town Council Office using the RBS asset package.	Existing Procedures are adequate
					This is updated throughout the year with new assets and removal of disposed assets. In addition, a schedule of road furniture/bins/dog bins/bus shelters play area equipment etc., is kept on a secondary list.	Existing Procedures are adequate

RISK AREA	RISK(S) IDENTIFIED	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Assessment (with mitigation)	MITIGATION CONTROL OF RISK	REVIEW / ASSESS / REVISE
	Maintained	1	3	3	The asset list is circulated to staff on an annual basis to ensure that all items are correct	Existing Procedures are adequate
					The Town Council has a scheme for maintenance of assets	Existing Procedures are adequate
19. Internal Audit	Internal Audit	1	3	3	The Internal Auditor and scope of audit is approved annually by Council and attends the office to complete the internal audit in May of each year. Additional visits can be arranged as required and at least one interim visit is arranged, during the autumn.	Existing Procedures are adequate
					The report is presented to Council for acceptance.	Existing Procedures are adequate
					The Council review the effectiveness of Internal Audit annually	Existing Procedures are adequate
20. External Audit	External Audit	1	3	3	The external auditor is appointed and directs the format and structure of the audit in line with current legislation and requirements	Existing Procedures are adequate
					Audit costs and levels of requirement are determined by government legislation based upon the annual income or expenditure levels	Existing Procedures are adequate
					The RFO completes the year end accounts to audit trial level and prepares any additional reports required by the external auditor	Existing Procedures are adequate
					The RFO presents the completed Annual Return, Financial Statement and other documentation required to Council in line with the timescales provided by the external auditor	Existing Procedures are adequate
					Once these have been formally adopted and signed by Council, they are lodged with external auditors	Existing Procedures are adequate
					Any queries raised by the auditors are dealt with by the RFO in the first instance	Existing Procedures are adequate
					Final sign-off by the external auditor is presented to Council	Existing Procedures are adequate
21. Insurance	Fidelity Insurance				Fidelity insurance levels have been set after taking into account the possibility of fraudulent activities gaining access to the bank accounts	Existing Procedures are adequate

RISK AREA	RISK(S) IDENTIFIED	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Assessment (with mitigation)	MITIGATION CONTROL OF RISK	REVIEW / ASSESS / REVISE
		1	3	3	Procedures in place (as previously detailed) have been established over the past few years incorporating separation of duties, and cross referenced receipts of income	Existing Procedures are adequate
					These provisions have ensured that no individual is able to gain access to withdraw funds without due process	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Insurance	1	3	3	Zurich has been used as a recognised Town Council provider	Existing Procedures are adequate
					BTC are currently tied into a deal until March 2023 with approval to renew for 12 months.	Existing Procedures are adequate
					Annual reviews are carried out to ensure sufficient cover is in place	Existing Procedures are adequate
22. Pension fund	Poor Management of Pension Fund	1	4	4	The Town Council is part of the Buckinghamshire Council Pension Fund. The Fund is part of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). This ensures that the risks associated with the Fund are managed centrally by a competent authority.	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Loss from Pension Fund	2	3	6	The Council receives an annual valuation report, including details of the valuation method, assumptions and results of the valuation. This enables the Council to review the financial position of the Fund and to set appropriate contribution rates for the next period.	Existing Procedures are adequate
23. Financial loss due to Covid 19 or other public health restrictions	Loss of income from the Lace Hill Sports and Community Centre	2	3	6		Existing Procedures are adequate
					If restrictions are repeated then it is likely the same situation would apply.	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Loss of Income from markets	1	3	3	Loss would occur if the markets were to close again, however this is unlikely, particularly as essential stalls were able to continue through most of the lockdowns.	Existing Procedures are adequate
	Unplanned budget deficit leading to a depletion of reserves below the minimum recommended	1	5	5	The Town Clerk will continue to monitor the likelihood of future restrictions. The first closures did not lead to a depletion of reserves.	Existing Procedures are adequate

RISK AREA	RISK(S) IDENTIFIED	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Assessment (with mitigation)	MITIGATION CONTROL OF RISK	REVIEW / ASSESS / REVISE
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Buckingham Town Council - Risk Assessment Rating Scale

Impact	5	10	15	20	25
	4	8	12	16	20
	3	6	9	12	15
	2	4	6	8	10
	1	2	3	4	5

Likelihood

Mar-23

END OF REPORT



Scheme of Delegation, Buckingham Town Council

1. Power to Delegate Functions

Under the Local Government Act 1972 s 101 (a) the Town Council has the power to arrange for the discharge of its functions by a committee, sub-committee, officer of the authority, or another local authority.

The Town Council does not have the power to delegate a decision to an individual Councillor.

2. Decisions of the Full Council:

The matters below are the sole responsibility of the Full Council:

- a) Approving the precept level of the Town Council;
- b) Authorising borrowing;
- c) Appointing representatives to outside bodies;
- d) Making, amending, revoking, re-enacting, or adopting by-laws;
- e) Agreeing the Town Council's Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement.

3. Committees and Sub-Committees

Procedures for delegation for the specific committees and sub-committees are specified under the Terms of Reference for each committee or sub-committee.

Committees can arrange for the discharge of any of their delegated powers to a sub-committee.

4. Working Parties/Groups

Working Parties or Groups have no delegated powers; they are only able to recommend a course of action to the Council/Committee/Sub-Committee under which they are formed.

5. Town Council Staff

Under the Local Government Act 1972 the Town Council "shall appoint such officers as they think necessary for the proper discharge by the authority of such of their or another authority's functions as fall to be discharged by them".

Decisions can at any time be delegated to Town Council staff.

The following have been delegated to Town Council staff:

- a) General matters
 - i) To sign on behalf of the Council any document to give effect to any decision of the Council;
 - ii) To manage the Council's facilities, property, and assets;
 - iii) To act on behalf of the Council as a designated officer with respect to complying with legislation;
 - iv) To instigate and authorise the repair and maintenance of Town Council equipment, property, or assets so long as the Town Council's Financial



Regulations are adhered to, and the cost does not exceed the current budget;

- v) To purchase equipment and supplies to be used by staff or contractors to repair or maintain Town Council equipment, property, or assets;
- vi) To purchase equipment and supplies to be used by staff or contractors to carry out the work, duties, policies, or resolutions of the Council, so long as the Town Council's Financial Regulations are adhered to, and the cost does not exceed the current budget, to the following limits:
 - 1. The Clerk, £2500
 - 2. The Deputy Clerk, £1000 (£2500 in the absence of the Clerk)
 - 3. Estates Manager, £1000
 - 4. Compliance Manager, £1000
 - 5. Assistant RFO, £1000
 - 6. Admin Asst and External Services Manager, when making regular orders (e.g., stationery, sanitary) £250.
- vii) To dispose of Town Council equipment or assets, where reason to do so, in accordance with the Asset Register and Disposal Policy.

b) Urgent matters


The Town Clerk may incur expenditure on behalf of the Council which is necessary to carry out any repair replacement or other work which is of such extreme urgency that it must be done at once, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £5000.

The Town Clerk shall report the action to the appropriate committee as soon as practicable thereafter.

6. Variances with Financial Regulations

- 6.1. The Scheme of Delegation is intended to give more specific detail than the Financial Regulations in the above areas. If there is found to be any contradiction between the two documents, then the Scheme of Delegation shall override the Financial Regulations.

END

	<p>Buckingham Town Council</p> <p>Terms of Reference</p>	<p>Date agreed: 22/05/2023 Minute number: 18/23.2.1 Prepared by: Claire Molyneux Version: 2.3</p>
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Name

1. The Committee shall be known as the **ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**.

Membership

2. Membership of the Committee is open to any Councillor who wishes to be a member.
 - 2.1. Councillors who are not Members of the Committee may attend the meeting, but they may not vote on a decision.
3. The Committee shall be subject to a quorum of 3 or one third of its membership, whichever is greater.

Chair

4. The Committee shall elect a Chair at the first meeting after the Annual Town Council Meeting. The Chair's period of office is for one year.
5. The Committee shall elect a Vice-Chair at the first meeting after the Annual Town Council Meeting. The Vice-Chair's period of office is for one year.
6. The Chair if present shall Chair the Committee meeting.

Conduct of the Meeting

7. All meetings of the Environment Committee shall be convened in accordance with the Town Council's standing orders and current legislation.


Area of Operations

8. The Committee shall be responsible for and have the authority for (unless stated elsewhere) the following aspects of the Town Council's functions:
 - Town Council property (excluding office accommodation)
 - Open spaces in the town and surrounding area
 - Community facilities in the town and surrounding area
 - Community services in the town and surrounding area
9. In addition to the areas of operation above the Environment Committee has the following responsibilities:
 - 9.1 The Committee has authority to proceed with all items within its budget but must refer to Full Council when non-budgeted expenditure is anticipated.

- 9.2 Ensuring the management of all aspects of upkeep, maintenance and administration of the Council's property including buildings, parks, cemetery and open spaces, and the management and administration of devolved services.
- 9.3 Making recommendations to the Council following any investigation or review of any matter relating to the protection and improvement of Buckingham Town environment.
- 9.4 Ensuring the proper maintenance of all street furniture owned by or supplied by the Council, and to recommend the purchase of additional or replacement street furniture where appropriate. In this context, "street furniture" includes waste bins, dog bins, seating, and signage.
- 9.5 Managing all aspects of upkeep and maintenance of Brackley Road Cemetery, Chandos Park, Bourton Park, the Ken Tagg play area, Railway Walk, the Circular Walk, Castle Hill and any other land or property acquired by the Council.
- 9.6 Liaising with Buckinghamshire Council and other relevant agencies on the maintenance of items falling within their remit, including footpaths, pavements, cycleways, roads, waterways, horticultural and arboricultural works, play areas, play equipment and areas of open public space.
- 9.7 Making recommendations to the Council following any investigation or review of any matter relating to the purchase, sale or disposal of land or property.
- 9.8 Obtaining such professional advice as deemed necessary to ensure the protection of the Council.
- 9.9 Analysing any compulsory purchase proposals and advising the Council accordingly.
- 9.10 Ensuring that any works carried out on the Council's behalf are completed as specified, or otherwise completed to a satisfactory standard.
- 9.11 Taking forward any other matters concerning land or property as required by the Council.
- 9.12 Making representations to the appropriate authority on matters relating to the provision and maintenance of externally controlled lands and buildings within the town, providing leisure facilities for residents and visitors.
- 9.13 Making representation with regard to the external services that affect young people, the elderly, unemployed and impoverished citizens.
- 9.14 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
 - education

Further Information

10. The Committee shall appoint sub-committees and working groups as and when it is deemed necessary and shall set out Terms of References for those bodies.
11. The Committee shall undertake reviews of Terms of Reference as and when appropriate for sub-committees and working groups under its remit and should make recommendations to Full Council regarding its own Terms of Reference.

	<p>Buckingham Town Council</p> <p>Terms of Reference</p>	<p>Date agreed: 22/05/2023 Minute number: 18/23.2.2 Prepared by: Claire Molyneux Version: 2.4</p>
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Name

1. The Committee shall be known as the **RESOURCES COMMITTEE**.

Membership

2. Membership of the committee is open to any Councillor who wishes to be a member.
 - 2.1 Councillors who are not Members of the Committee may attend the meeting, but they may not vote on a decision.
3. The Committee shall be subject to a quorum of 3 or one third of its membership, whichever is greater.

Chair/Chairman

4. The Committee shall elect a Chair at the first meeting after the Annual Town Council Meeting. The Chair's period of office is for one year.
5. The Committee shall elect a Vice-Chair at the first meeting after the Annual Town Council Meeting. The Vice-Chair's period of office is for one year.
6. The Chair if present shall Chair the Committee meeting.

Conduct of the Meeting

7. All meetings of the Resources Committee shall be convened in accordance with the Town Council's standing orders and current legislation.

Area of Operations

8. The Committee shall be responsible for and have the authority for (unless stated elsewhere) the following aspects of the Town Council's functions:
 - Finance
 - Personnel
 - Policy
 - Grants
 - Civic matters
 - Communications
 - Office accommodation

Powers and responsibilities

9. In addition to the areas of operation above the Resources Committee has the following responsibilities:

Finance

- 9.1 To advise the Council on the budget proposals of all Committees and the level of the precept to be levied each year.
- 9.2 To review the long-term financial strategy of the Council with a view to advising the Council on funding for significant projects.
- 9.3 To be responsible for all aspects of the financial administration of the Council including:
- arrangements for preparation of the accounts
 - appointment of an independent internal auditor
 - preparation of, and compliance with, the Council's Financial Regulations
 - maintenance of adequate systems of internal control and internal audit throughout the year
 - control and monitoring of the approved budget throughout the year
 - considering and recommending to Council approval of annual financial reports, together with evidence of adequate systems of internal control and internal audit throughout the year, for presentation for external audit
 - develop and keep under review the Council's Financial Plan and Investment Strategy
- 9.4 To undertake within the overall policies and approved budgets of the Council the following duties and functions:
- have a strategic overview of fees and charges for services provided by the Council as determined by each committee
 - determine subscriptions to be paid by the Council
 - determine the need for and, if necessary, recommend to Council the taking out of loans
- 9.5 To advise the Council on the level of allowances to be payable to Councillors.
- 9.6 To make recommendations to Council in relation to internal policy development based on legislation.
- 9.7 To review the long-term financial strategy of the Council with a view to advising the Council on funding for significant projects.
- 9.8 Ensure adequate insurance of all the Council's property and liabilities.
- 9.9 Oversee the Community Grant process.

- 9.10 Advise the Council on responses to be made to the structure of Local Government.
- 9.11 Make representation to Buckinghamshire Council on their corporate plan and policies when they are likely to or do affect Buckingham.

Personnel

- 9.12 To monitor all matters affecting the promotion, salary and conditions of service of all staff and office holders of the Council (unless stated elsewhere).
- 9.13 To meet as required to discuss and investigate any personnel requirements.
- 9.14 To oversee Officer and Member training and development.
- 9.15 To meet as required by the Council for staff reviews.
- 9.16 To review and agree the policies and procedures regarding personnel.

Civic Matters

Oversee Civic matters including the town crier, mace bearer or any other civic positions.


- 9.17 Be responsible for all Civic Affairs including Civic protocols

General Purpose

- 10. To be responsible for advising the Council on Standing Orders in respect to the conduct of meetings, Code of Conduct for members and all similar documentation relating to the overall administration of the Council's affairs.
 - 10.1. To consider, advise, delegate and make recommendation on any item of the Council's business and responsibilities not otherwise allocated to a committee.
 - 10.2. Oversee the ongoing development of ICT facilities for the Council including the Council's website.
 - 10.3. Oversee the production of the Newsletter.
 - 10.4. Oversee the production of the Annual Report.
 - 10.5. To provide and publish an annual report of the Council's finances both current and budgeted, and also reports from each of the Committee Chair and the Mayor.

Further Information

11. The Committee has authority to proceed with all items within its budget but must refer to Full Council when non-budgeted expenditure is anticipated.
12. The Committee shall appoint sub-committees and working groups to undertake work within its remit, as and when it is deemed necessary and shall set out Terms of References for those bodies.
13. The Committee shall undertake reviews of Terms of Reference as and when appropriate for sub-committees and working groups under its remit and should make recommendations to Full Council regarding its own Terms of Reference.

	<p>Buckingham Town Council</p> <p>Terms of Reference</p>	<p>Date agreed: 22/05/2023 Minute number: 18/23.2.3 Prepared by: Claire Molyneux Version: 6</p>
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Name

1. The Committee shall be known as the **PLANNING COMMITTEE**.
2. The Committee may be referred to as Planning.

Membership

3. Membership of the Committee is open to any Councillor who wishes to be a member
 - 3.1 Councillors who are not Members of the Committee may attend the meeting, but they may not vote on a decision.
4. The Committee shall be subject to a quorum of 3 or one third of its membership, whichever is greater.
5. In the event of an inquorate meeting, the Chair/Chairman, Vice-Chair/Vice-Chairman and the Mayor may agree a response to a time-sensitive application, either by re-arranging the meeting or, should time not allow, agree a decision in line with Council Policy and planning history. Should one or all of the designated Councillors not be present or available then those present, numbering not less than three, shall agree a response.
6. The Committee shall co-opt members from outside bodies as and when it is appropriate on an ongoing basis.

Chairman

7. The Committee shall elect a Chair/Chairman at the first meeting after the Annual Town Council Meeting. The Chair/Chairman's period of office is for one year.
8. The Committee shall elect a Vice-Chair/Vice-Chairman at the first meeting after the Annual Town Council Meeting. The Vice-Chair/Vice-Chairman's period of office is for one year.
9. The Chair/Chairman if present shall Chair the Committee meeting.

Conduct of the Meeting

10. All meetings of the Planning Committee shall be convened in accordance with the Town Council's Standing Orders and current legislation.

Area of Operations

11. The Committee shall be responsible for and have the authority for (unless stated elsewhere) the following aspects of the Town Council's functions:

- Reviewing planning applications (excluding those for more than 10 houses or for new multi-unit retail and multi-unit industrial developments)
- Transport
- Forward planning
- Planning enforcement

12. In addition to the areas of operation above the Planning and Development Committee has the following responsibilities:

12.1 To undertake all powers and duties of the Council in respect of the powers conferred on it from time to time under the Town and Country Planning Acts and the Orders and Regulations including development control and the Local Development Framework process and any other strategic plans for Aylesbury Vale.

12.2 To undertake all powers and duties of the Council in respect of Neighbourhood Planning and Development under the Localism Act.

12.3 To make representations to the Local Planning Authority on applications for planning permission which have been notified in accordance with the relevant legislation which are for fewer than 10 housing units and for non-mixed development.

12.4 To consult with the committee and tree wardens by email in respect of all applications relating to trees and tree preservation orders and convey collated comments to Buckinghamshire Council's Tree Officer.

12.5 To make suggestions in respect of street naming.

12.6 To make representations involving Listed Buildings and the Conservation Area in Buckingham.

12.7 To act as the consultee and make representations as required in respect of all matters relating to roads and highways including: road signs, street furniture, street lighting, car parking, traffic management, footpaths, traffic regulations and bus services.

12.8 To promote all elements of equality in the built environment.

12.9 Public Services – to act as the consultee, make representations, and support as required all matters relating to:


- housing strategy
- public/community transport including Local Transport Plans
- utility services (gas, electricity, telecommunications, water, sewerage, flooding, etc)
- waste infrastructure
- mineral extraction
- planning policy changes

— economic development of the town

Further Information

13. The Committee has authority to proceed with all items within its budget but must refer to Full Council when non budgeted expenditure is anticipated.
14. The Committee shall appoint sub-committees and working groups as and when it is deemed necessary and shall set out Terms of References for those bodies.
15. The Committee shall undertake reviews of Terms of Reference as and when appropriate for sub-committees and working groups under its remit and should make recommendations to Full Council regarding its own Terms of Reference.

Appendix J

	<p>Buckingham Town Council</p> <p>Terms of Reference</p>	<p>Date agreed: 22/05/2023 Minute number: 18/23.2.4 Prepared by: Claire Molyneux Version: 5</p>
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Name

1. The Committee shall be known as the **TOWN CENTRE & EVENTS COMMITTEE.**
2. The Committee may be referred to as TC&E.

Membership

3. Membership of the Committee is open to any Councillor who wishes to be a member.
4. The Committee also includes one representative of Buckingham University.
 - 4.1. Councillors who are not Members of the Committee may attend the meeting, but they may not vote on a decision.
5. The Committee shall be subject to a quorum of 3 or one third of its membership, whichever is greater.

Chair

6. The Committee shall elect a Chair at the first meeting after the Annual Town Council Meeting. The Chair's period of office is for one year.
7. The Committee shall elect a Vice-Chair at the first meeting after the Annual Town Council Meeting. The Vice-Chair's period of office is for one year.
8. The Chair if present shall Chair the Committee meeting.

Conduct of the Meeting

9. All meetings of the Town Centre & Events Committee shall be convened in accordance with the Town Council's Standing Orders and current legislation.

Areas of Operation

- 10 The Committee shall be responsible for and have the authority for (unless stated elsewhere) the following aspects of the Town Council's functions:
 - 10.1 Budgets

The committee has authority to proceed with all items within its budget, but must refer to Full Council when non-budgeted expenditure is anticipated.
 - 10.2 Markets

The day to day running of the Street, Flea, Farmers and Specialist Markets and the promotion of environmentally friendly carrier bags.
 - 10.3 Charter Fair

To organise and co-ordinate the Annual Charter Fair and set up contract.
To liaise with the Showmen's Guild and/or their representatives, the police, and the County Council.
 - 10.4 Annual & Other Events

The Town Centre and Events Committee co-ordinate and supervise various events for the town which may include the following: May Day, Pancake Race, Music in the Market, Band Jam, Buckingham Fringe Week, River Rinse, Spring Fair, Food Fair, Dog Show, Remembrance Parade, Firework Display, Christmas Lights and Carols, Christmas Parade, Best Kept Town, and any other events

involving the Town Council. To organise and co-ordinate the Council's Christmas Lights display; set up and review contracts.

10.5 Promotion

To work towards a range of events that provide access and equality for all.

To promote the town through appropriate media and via the web site.

To work with the town centre traders.

To support any other Council events in the Town Centre.

10.6 Youth Budget


Youth Projects to be facilitated by the TC&E Committee.

10.7 Tourist Information Centre

The day to day running of the Tourist Information Centre located in The Old Gaol.

10.8 The Committee shall undertake reviews of Terms of Reference as and when appropriate.

10.9 The Committee shall co-opt members from outside bodies as and when it is appropriate on an ongoing basis.

	<p>Buckingham Town Council</p> <p>Terms of Reference</p>	<p>Date agreed: 22/05/2023 Minute number: 18/23.2.5 Prepared by: Claire Molyneux Version: 2.4</p>
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Name

- 1.1. The Committee shall be known as the **Staffing (Confidential Matters) Committee**

Composition

- 1.2. Membership of the committee is open to any Councillor who wishes to be a member
1.3. Councillors who are not Members of the Committee may not attend the meeting.
1.4. Any councillor attending this committee cannot be involved in any subsequent staffing matter appeals.
1.5. Given the above, membership should not exceed eight members to be reviewed at the beginning of the new financial year.

Chair

- 1.6. The Committee shall meet as soon as is practically possible after the Annual Town Council Meeting, for the sole purpose of electing a Chair and Vice-Chair, unless other relevant business also requires to be addressed.
1.7. The Committee shall elect a Chair at the first meeting after the Annual Town Council Meeting. The Chair's period of office is for one year.
1.8. The Committee shall elect a Vice-Chair at the first meeting after the Annual Town Council Meeting. The Vice-Chair's period of office is for one year.
1.9. The Chair, if present, shall Chair the Committee meeting.

Quorum

- 1.10. The Committee shall be subject to a quorum of 3 or one third of its membership, whichever is greater.

Area of Operations

The Committee shall be responsible for the Town Council's functions:


- 1.11. Advising the Town Clerk on confidential matters relating to the discipline, capability and sickness management of staff employed by the Town Clerk
1.12. Establishing a panel of members to hear formal cases of misconduct or capability as required by relevant council policies

Powers and Responsibilities

- 1.13. Four or more Staffing Committee Members are required for deciding (as specified in relevant council policies) on whether a member of staff should be dismissed from post on the basis of conduct or capability.
1.14. Make recommendations, in the light of advising on confidential staff matters, towards the revision of staff management policies

Conduct of the Meeting

- 1.15. All meetings of the Staffing (Confidential Matters) Committee shall be convened in accordance with the Town Council's standing orders, current legislation and relevant policies

 <p>Buckingham Town Council</p> <p>Terms of Reference</p>	<p>Date agreed: 22/05/2023</p> <p>Minute number: 18/23.2.6</p> <p>Prepared by: Claire Molyneux</p> <p>Version: 1.6</p>
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Name

1. This Strategy Group of Resources shall be known as the **COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY GROUP**.

Membership

2. Membership of the Strategy Group is open to any Councillor who wishes to be a member.
 - 2.1. Councillors who are not Members of the Strategy Group may attend the meeting, but they may not vote on a decision.
 - 2.2. The Committee has the power to Co-opt other non-voting Members.
3. The Strategy Group shall be subject to a quorum of 3 or one third of its membership, whichever is greater.

Chair/Chairman

4. The Strategy Group shall elect a Chair at the first meeting after the Annual Town Council Meeting. The Chair's period of office is for one year.
5. The Strategy Group shall elect a Vice-Chair at the first meeting after the Annual Town Council Meeting. The Vice-Chair's period of office is for one year.
6. The Chair, if present, shall Chair the Strategy Group meeting.

Conduct of the Meeting

7. All meetings of the Communications Strategy Group shall be convened in accordance with the Town Council's Standing Orders and current legislation.


Area of Operations

8. The Strategy Group has the delegated responsibility from the Resources Committee to make decisions in all aspects relating to Communications, for example newsletters, websites, leaflets, and social media.

Powers and responsibilities

9. In addition to the areas of operation above the Communications Strategy Group has the following specific responsibilities:
 - 9.1. To discuss and agree articles for inclusion within the Town Council's newsletter.
 - 9.2. To compile and arrange for distribution of the Town Council's newsletter.

- 9.3. To agree procedures for the communication methods the Council uses.
- 9.4. To review and arrange for the management of any website under the Town Council's control.
- 9.5. The Strategy Group has authority to proceed with all items within the publicity budget and the website budget, or any budget from time to time which falls within communications. However, the Strategy Group must refer to the Resources Committee when non-budgeted expenditure is anticipated.
- 9.6. To monitor and improve the Council's communications impact in so far as they relate to this committee.

	<p>Buckingham Town Council</p> <p>Appeals Committee</p> <p>Terms of Reference</p>	<p>Date agreed: 22/05/2023</p> <p>Minute number: 18/23.2.7</p> <p>Prepared by: Claire Molyneux</p> <p>Version: 2.1</p>
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1. Name

1.1. The Committee shall be known as the **Appeals Committee**.

2. Composition

Membership will consist of the Mayor of the Council and Chairs of the Council's four Standing Committees. In the absence of any Chair, the Vice-Chair of the relevant Committee would delegate.

2.1. Councillors who are not Members of the Committee may not attend the meeting.

3. Chair

3.1. The Committee shall be chaired by the Mayor, or in their absence the Deputy Mayor.

4. Quorum

4.1. The Committee shall be subject to a quorum of 3.

5. Area of Operations

The Committee shall be responsible for the Town Council's functions:

5.1. Hearing appeals to complaints made to the Council under the Complaints Policy.

5.2. Hearing appeals made to complaints made regarding Freedom of Information Request responses made by the Town Council.

6. Powers and Responsibilities

6.1. Making final decisions on complaints made to the Council.

6.2. Making final decisions on complaints made to the Council regarding responses to Freedom of Information requests.

7. Conduct of the Meeting

7.1. All meetings of the Appeals Committee shall be convened in accordance with the Town Council's Standing Orders, current legislation and relevant policies.

7.2. All business undertaken at the Appeals Committee shall be done so in accordance with the Town Council's Standing Orders, current legislation and relevant policies.

Committee Choices 2023-2024

Councillor	Ward	Full Council	Planning	TC&E	Resources	Environment	Staffing (Confidential Matters)	CSG	N.Plan Working Group	Equality, CD, & Inclusion WG
Ahmed	North	1		1				1		1
Cole	North	1	1						1	
Collins	FF	1			1		1			
Davies	South	1	1	1	1	1	1			
Draper	South	1	1	1		1			1	
Gateley	H&W	1				1		1	1	1
Harvey	South	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Mahi	South	1	1	1	1	1	1			1
Mordue, H	North	1			1		1			
Mordue, J	North	1	1		1					
O'Donoghue	South	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1
Osibogun	South	1								
Ralph	South	1	1		1	1			1	
Schaefer	North	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Stuchbury	South	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	
Try	North	1	1		1			1	1	1
Willett	North	1	1	1	1	1				
Buckingham Society	N/A	N/A	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	N/A
Totals		17	13	9	12	10	8	5	10	7

Key
Chair
Vice Chair

BUCKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL
FULL COUNCIL
MONDAY 13th May 2024

Contact Officer: Steve Beech, Compliance and Projects Manager.

Standing Orders

1. Recommendations

1.1. It is recommended that Members review and readopt the current Buckingham Town Council Standing Orders without amendment.

2. Background

2.1. It is a requirement of Standing Order 5j(ix) to review the Standing Orders annually. The last review was undertaken in May 2023.

2.2. The current version was adopted in May 2023 after a full comparison of the previous version was made with the NALC recommended model document. Standing orders that are in bold type contain legal and statutory requirements and cannot vary from the model document.

2.3. It is understood that NALC is commissioning a full review of their model standing orders document. Once published they will be reviewed by officers and recommendations made to members.

3. Amendments to the Standing Orders

3.1. No amendments to the Standing Orders are recommended at this time.



Standing Orders Buckingham Town Council

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Note: Standing orders that are in bold type contain legal and statutory requirements.



1. RULES OF DEBATE AT MEETINGS

- a Motions on the agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the chair of the meeting.
- b A motion (including an amendment) shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.
- c A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the chair of the meeting as withdrawn.
- d If a motion (including an amendment) has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- e An amendment is a proposal to remove or add words to a motion. It shall not negate the motion.
- f If an amendment to the original motion is carried, the original motion (as amended) becomes the substantive motion upon which further amendment(s) may be moved.
- g An amendment shall not be considered unless early verbal notice of it is given at the meeting and, if requested by the chair of the meeting, is expressed in writing to the chair.
- h A councillor may move an amendment to their own motion if agreed by the meeting. If a motion has already been seconded, the amendment shall be with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- i If there is more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion, the amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the chair of the meeting.
- j Subject to standing order 1(k), only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the chair of the meeting.
- k One or more amendments may be discussed together if the chair of the meeting considers this expedient, but each amendment shall be voted upon separately.
- l A councillor may not move more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion.
- m The mover of an amendment has no right of reply at the end of debate on it.
- n Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply either at the end of debate on the first amendment or at the very end of debate on the final substantive motion immediately before it is put to the vote.
- o Unless permitted by the chair of the meeting, a councillor may speak once in the debate on a motion except:



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- i. to speak on an amendment moved by another councillor;
 - ii. to move or speak on another amendment if the motion has been amended since they last spoke;
 - iii. to make a point of order;
 - iv. to give a personal explanation; or
 - v. to exercise a right of reply.
- p During the debate on a motion, a councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A councillor raising a point of order shall identify the standing order which he/she/they considers has been breached or specify the other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting they are concerned by.
- q A point of order shall be decided by the chair of the meeting and their decision shall be final.
- r When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except:
- i. to amend the motion;
 - ii. to proceed to the next business;
 - iii. to adjourn the debate;
 - iv. to put the motion to a vote;
 - v. to ask a person to be no longer heard or to leave the meeting;
 - vi. to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;
 - vii. to exclude the public and press;
 - viii. to adjourn the meeting; or
 - ix. to suspend particular standing order(s) excepting those which reflect mandatory statutory or legal requirements.
- s Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the chair of the meeting shall be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated and that the mover of the motion under debate has exercised or waived their right of reply.
- t Excluding motions moved under standing order 1(r), the contributions or speeches by a councillor shall relate only to the motion under discussion and shall not exceed 3 minutes without the consent of the chair of the meeting.



2. DISORDERLY CONDUCT AT MEETINGS

- a No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly. If this standing order is ignored, the chair of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.
- b If person(s) disregards the request of the chair of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any councillor or the chair of the meeting may move that the person be no longer heard or be excluded from the meeting. The motion, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.
- c If a resolution made under standing order 2(b) is ignored, the chair of the meeting may take further reasonable steps to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.

3. MEETINGS GENERALLY

- a **Meetings shall not take place in premises which at the time of the meeting are used for the supply of alcohol unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost.**
- b **The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting does not include the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.**
- c **The minimum three clear days' public notice for a meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting unless the meeting is convened at shorter notice.**
- d **Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.**
- e Members of the public may make representations, answer questions, and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.
- f The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 3(e) shall not exceed 15 minutes unless directed by the chair of the meeting.
- g Subject to standing order 3(f), a member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes unless directed by the chair of the meeting.



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- h In accordance with standing order 3(e), a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chair of the meeting may direct that a written response be given.
- i A person shall raise their hand when requesting to speak and stand when speaking in Full Council (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort). The chair of the meeting may at any time permit a person to be seated when speaking.
- j A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct their comments to the chair of the meeting.
- k Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chair of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.
- l Subject to standing order 3(m), a person who attends a meeting is permitted to report on the meeting whilst the meeting is open to the public. To “report” means to film, photograph, make an audio recording of meeting proceedings, use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear the meeting as it takes place or later or to report or to provide oral or written commentary about the meeting so that the report or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later to persons not present.**
- m **A person present at a meeting may not provide an audible report or commentary about a meeting as it takes place without permission.**
- n **The press shall be provided with reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.**
- o **Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Mayor may in their absence be done by, to or before the Deputy Mayor (if there is one).**
- p **The Mayor, if present, shall preside at a Full Council meeting. If the Mayor is absent from a meeting, the Deputy Mayor, if present, shall preside. If both the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor are absent from a meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.**
- q **Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting (save to appoint an honorary freeman) shall be decided by a majority of the councillors and non-councillors with voting rights present and voting.**
- r **The chair of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise their casting vote whether or not they gave an original vote.**

See standing orders 5(h) and (i) for the different rules that apply in the election



of the Mayor at the annual meeting of the Council.

- s Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave their vote for or against that question.** Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.
- t The minutes of a meeting shall include an accurate record of the following:**
- i. the time and place of the meeting;
 - ii. the names of councillors who are present and the names of councillors who are absent;
 - iii. interests that have been declared by councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
 - iv. whether a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;
 - v. if there was a public participation session; and
 - vi. the resolutions made.
- u A councillor or a non-councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest, or another interest as set out in the Council's code of conduct in a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under the code on their right to participate and vote on that matter.**
- v No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one-third of the whole number of members of the Council or committee are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than three.**
- w If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted and the meeting shall be closed. The business on the agenda for the meeting shall be adjourned to another meeting.**
- x A meeting shall not exceed a period of 3 hours or extend beyond 2200 hours.**
- y Members who cannot attend Full Council or a committee meeting physically may attend virtually where this is possible and may be allowed to speak by the Chair. They may not vote, and they may not formally make a motion, propose an amendment to a motion or raise a point of order. They will not be counted as present for the purpose of deciding whether the meeting is quorate. They will also not count as present for the purpose of calculating attendance in regard of Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972. As the Local Government Act 1972 regards being present as being physically present, the**



officially published attendance records of councillors will count only those meetings where members were physically present.

- z There will be no virtual attendance during a confidential session.

4. COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

- a **Unless the Council determines otherwise, a committee may appoint a sub-committee whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by the committee.**
- b **The members of a committee may include non-councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the Council.**
- c **Unless the Council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory committee and a sub-committee of the advisory committee may be non-councillors.**
- d The Council may appoint standing committees or other committees as may be necessary, and:
 - i. shall determine their terms of reference;
 - ii. shall determine the number and time of the ordinary meetings of a standing committee up until the date of the next annual meeting of the Council;
 - iii. shall permit a committee, other than in respect of the ordinary meetings of a committee, to determine the number and time of its meetings;
 - iv. shall, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c), appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee;
 - v. may, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c), appoint and determine the terms of office of the substitute members to a committee whose role is to replace the ordinary members at a meeting of a committee if the ordinary members of the committee confirm to the Proper Officer 3 days before the meeting that they are unable to attend;
 - vi. an ordinary member of a committee who has been replaced at a meeting by a substitute member (in accordance with standing order 4(d)(v)) shall not be permitted to participate in debate or vote on business at that meeting and may only speak during any public participation session during the meeting;
 - vii. may dissolve a committee or a sub-committee.
 - viii. Members of each committee are encouraged to attend training where this is specified during the first 12 months of their role, at four yearly intervals thereafter, and as detailed in the Council's Training Policy.



5. ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS

- a In an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the councillors elected take office.
- b In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on such day in May as the Council decides.
- c If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Council shall take place at 6pm.
- d In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the Council decides.
- e The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the Council shall be the election of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of the Council.
- f The Mayor, unless they have resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office, and preside at the annual meeting until their successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council.
- g The Deputy Mayor, if there is one, unless they resign or become disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Mayor at the next annual meeting of the Council.
- h In an election year, if the current Mayor has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, they shall preside at the meeting until a successor Mayor has been elected. The current Mayor shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Mayor but shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.
- i In an election year, if the current Mayor has been re-elected as a member of the Council, they shall preside at the meeting until a new Mayor has been elected. They may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Mayor and shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.
- j Following the election of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor (if there is one) at the annual meeting, the business shall include:
 - i. In an election year, delivery by the Mayor and councillors of their acceptance of office forms unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date. In a year which is not an election year, delivery by the Mayor of their acceptance of office form unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date;
 - ii. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the



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- iii. Receipt of the minutes of the last meeting of a committee;
- iv. Consideration of the recommendations made by a committee;
- v. Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff, and other local authorities;
- vi. Review of the terms of reference for committees;
- vii. Appointment of members to existing committees;
- viii. Appointment of any new committees in accordance with standing order 4;
- ix. Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations;
- x. Review of arrangements (including legal agreements), including any charters and agency agreements, with other local authorities, not-for-profit bodies and businesses, and review of contributions made to expenditure incurred by other local authorities;
- xi. Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back;
- xii. In an election year, to make arrangements with a view to the Council becoming eligible to exercise the general power of competence in the future;
- xiii. Review of inventory of land and other assets including buildings and office equipment;
- xiv. Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insurable risks;
- xv. Review of the Council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies;
- xvi. Review of the Council's complaints procedure;
- xvii. Review of the Council's policies, procedures and practices in respect of its obligations under freedom of information and data protection legislation (*see also standing orders 11, 20 and 21*);

6. EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL, COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

- a **The Mayor may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council at any time.**



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- b **If the Mayor does not call an extraordinary meeting of the Council within seven days of having been requested in writing to do so by two councillors, any two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council. The public notice giving the time, place, and agenda for such a meeting shall be signed by the two councillors.**
- c The chair of a committee or a sub-committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee or the sub-committee at any time.
- d If the chair of a committee or a sub-committee does not call an extraordinary meeting within 7 days of having been requested to do so by 2 members of the committee or the sub-committee, any 2 members of the committee or the sub-committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee or a sub-committee.

7. PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS

- a A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least 6 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee or a sub-committee.
- b When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 7(a) has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved for a further six months.

8. VOTING ON APPOINTMENTS

- a Where more than two persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the Council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the chair of the meeting.

9. MOTIONS FOR A MEETING THAT REQUIRE WRITTEN NOTICE TO BE GIVEN TO THE PROPER OFFICER

- a A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting for which it is tabled and in any event shall relate to the performance of the Council's statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents.
- b No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover



has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least 7 clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.

- c The Proper Officer may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with standing order 9(b), correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.
- d If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 9(b) is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it, so that it can be understood, in writing, to the Proper Officer at least 7 clear days before the meeting.
- e If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the chair of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included in the agenda or rejected.
- f The decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.
- g Motions received shall be recorded and numbered in the order that they are received.
- h Motions rejected shall be recorded with an explanation by the Proper Officer of the reason for rejection.

10. MOTIONS AT A MEETING THAT DO NOT REQUIRE WRITTEN NOTICE

- a The following motions may be moved at a meeting without written notice to the Proper Officer:
 - i. to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of a meeting;
 - ii. to move to a vote;
 - iii. to defer consideration of a motion;
 - iv. to refer a motion to a particular committee or sub-committee;
 - v. to appoint a person to preside at a meeting;
 - vi. to change the order of business on the agenda;
 - vii. to proceed to the next business on the agenda;
 - viii. to require a written report;
 - ix. to appoint a committee or sub-committee and their members;



- x. to extend the time limits for speaking;
- xi. to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or other information which is prejudicial to the public interest;
- xii. to not hear further from a councillor or a member of the public;
- xiii. to exclude a councillor or member of the public for disorderly conduct;
- xiv. to temporarily suspend the meeting;
- xv. to suspend a particular standing order (unless it reflects mandatory statutory or legal requirements);
- xvi. to adjourn the meeting; or
- xvii. to close the meeting.

11. MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION

See also standing order 20.

- a **The Council shall have in place and keep under review, technical and organisational measures to keep secure information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. Such arrangements shall include deciding who has access to personal data and encryption of personal data.**
- b **The Council shall have in place, and keep under review, policies for the retention and safe destruction of all information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. The Council's retention policy shall confirm the period for which information (including personal data) shall be retained or if this is not possible the criteria used to determine that period (e.g., the Limitation Act 1980).**
- c **The agenda, papers that support the agenda and the minutes of a meeting shall not disclose or otherwise undermine confidential information or personal data without legal justification.**
- d **Councillors, staff, the Council's contractors, and agents shall not disclose confidential information or personal data without legal justification.**

12. DRAFT MINUTES

- a If the draft minutes of a preceding meeting have been served on councillors



with the agenda to attend the meeting at which they are due to be approved for accuracy, they shall be taken as read.

- b There shall be no discussion about the draft minutes of a preceding meeting except in relation to their accuracy. A motion to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes shall be moved in accordance with standing order 10(a)(i).
- c The accuracy of draft minutes, including any amendment(s) made to them, shall be confirmed by resolution, and shall be signed by the chair of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.
- d If the chair of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an accurate record of the meeting to which they relate, they shall sign the minutes and include a paragraph in the following terms or to the same effect:

 “The chair of this meeting does not believe that the minutes of the meeting of the () held on [date] in respect of () were a correct record but their view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.”
- e Subject to the publication of draft minutes in accordance with standing order 19(a) and following a resolution which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, the draft minutes, or recordings of the meeting for which approved minutes exist shall be destroyed.

13. CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISPENSATIONS

See also standing order 3(u).

- a All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the Council.
- b Unless they have been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest. they may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which they had the interest.
- c Unless they have been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which they have another interest if so required by the Council’s code of conduct. They may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which they had the interest.
- d **Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer** as soon as possible before the meeting.
- e A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by a meeting of the Council, or committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is



required, and that decision is final.

- f A dispensation request shall confirm:
 - i. the description and the nature of the disclosable pecuniary interest or other interest to which the request for the dispensation relates;
 - ii. whether the dispensation is required to participate at a meeting in a discussion only or a discussion and a vote;
 - iii. the date of the meeting or the period (not exceeding four years) for which the dispensation is sought; and
 - iv. an explanation as to why the dispensation is sought.
- g Subject to standing orders 13(d) and (f), a dispensation request shall be considered at the beginning of the meeting of the Council, or committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required.
- h A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 13(e) if having regard to all relevant circumstances any of the following apply:**
 - i. without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in the particular business would be so great a proportion of the meeting transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business or;**
 - ii. granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Council's area; or**
 - iii. it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.**

14. CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

- a Upon notification by Buckinghamshire Council that it is dealing with a complaint that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the Council's code of conduct, the Proper Officer shall, subject to standing order 11, report this to the Council.
- b Where the notification in standing order 14(a) relates to a complaint made by the Proper Officer, the Proper Officer shall notify the Chair of Council of this fact, and the Chair shall nominate another staff member to assume the duties of the Proper Officer in relation to the complaint until it has been determined and the Council has agreed what action, if any, to take in accordance with standing order 14(d).
- c The Council may:
 - i. provide information or evidence where such disclosure is necessary to investigate the complaint or is a legal requirement;



- ii. seek information relevant to the complaint from the person or body with statutory responsibility for investigation of the matter;
- d **Upon notification by the Buckinghamshire Council that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the Council's code of conduct, the Council shall consider what, if any, action to take against them. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.**

15. PROPER OFFICER

- a The Proper Officer shall be either (i) the clerk or (ii) other staff member(s) nominated by the Council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent.
- b The Proper Officer shall:
 - i. **at least three clear days before a meeting of the council, a committee, or a sub-committee,**
 - **serve on councillors by delivery or post at their residences or by email authenticated in such manner as the Proper Officer thinks fit, a signed summons confirming the time, place, and the agenda (provided the councillor has consented to service by email), and**
 - **Provide, in a conspicuous place, public notice of the time, place and agenda (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the Council convened by councillors is signed by them).**

See standing order 3(b) for the meaning of clear days for a meeting.

- ii. subject to standing order 9, include on the agenda all motions in the order received unless a councillor has given written notice at least 4 days before the meeting confirming their withdrawal of it;
- iii. **convene a meeting of the Council for the election of a new Mayor, occasioned by a casual vacancy in their office;**
- iv. **facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;**
- v. **receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities;**
- vi. hold acceptance of office forms from councillors;
- vii. hold a copy of every councillor's register of interests;
- viii. assist with responding to requests made under freedom of information legislation and rights exercisable under data protection legislation, in accordance with the Council's relevant policies and procedures;



- ix. liaise, as appropriate, with the Council's Data Protection Officer;
- x. receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;
- xi. assist in the organisation of, storage of, access to, security of and destruction of information held by the Council in paper and electronic form subject to the requirements of data protection and freedom of information legislation and other legitimate requirements (e.g., the Limitation Act 1980);
- xii. arrange for legal deeds to be executed;
(see also *standing order 23*);
- xiii. arrange or manage the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the Council in accordance with its financial regulations;
- xiv. record every planning application notified to the Council and the Council's response to the local planning authority in a book for such purpose;
- xv. refer a planning application received by the Mayor or in their absence the Deputy Mayor or the Chair or in their absence Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee depending on the Terms of Reference for the Planning Committee within two working days of receipt to facilitate an extraordinary meeting if the nature of a planning application requires consideration before the next ordinary meeting of the Council or the Planning Committee;
- xvi. manage access to information about the Council via the publication scheme; and
- xvii. retain custody of the seal of the Council (if there is one) which shall not be used without a resolution to that effect.
(see also *standing order 23*).

16. RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

- a The Council shall appoint appropriate staff member(s) to undertake the work of the Responsible Financial Officer when the Responsible Financial Officer is absent.

17. ACCOUNTS AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

- a "Proper practices" in standing orders refer to the most recent version of "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners' Guide".
- b All payments by the Council shall be authorised, approved, and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices, and the Council's financial



regulations.

- c The year-end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and apply the form of accounts determined by the Council (receipts and payments, or income and expenditure) for the year to 31 March. The annual governance and accountability return of the Council, which is subject to external audit, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to the Council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June.

18. FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND PROCUREMENT

- a. The Council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:
 - i. the keeping of accounting records and systems of internal controls;
 - ii. the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the Council;
 - iii. the work of the independent internal auditor in accordance with proper practices and the receipt of regular reports from the internal auditor, which shall be required at least annually;
 - iv. the inspection and copying by councillors and local electors of the Council's accounts and/or orders of payments; and
 - v. whether contracts with an estimated value below **£30,000** due to special circumstances are exempt from a tendering process or procurement exercise.
- b. Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose.
- c. **A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £30,000 but less than the relevant thresholds referred to in standing order 18(f) is subject to the "light touch" arrangements under Regulations 109-114 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 unless it proposes to use an existing list of approved suppliers (framework agreement).**
- d. Subject to additional requirements in the financial regulations of the Council, the tender process for contracts for the supply of goods, materials, services, or the execution of works shall include, as a minimum, the following steps:
 - i. a specification for the goods, materials, services, or the execution of works shall be drawn up;
 - ii. an invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) the Council's specification (ii) the time, date, and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the Council's written response to the tender and (iv) the



Appendix O
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- prohibition on prospective contractors contacting councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;
- iii. the invitation to tender shall be advertised in a manner that is appropriate;
 - iv. tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer; or electronically via email;
 - v. tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the Council or a committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.
 - vi. The tendering firm's name and bid amount is to be disclosed to the Councillors in confidential session.
 - vii. The tendering firm's name and bid amount is to be disclosed to the Councillors in confidential session.
- e. Neither the Council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender.
 - f. **Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed the threshold specified by the Office of Government Commerce from time to time, the Council must consider whether the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016 apply to the contract and, if either of those Regulations apply, the Council must comply with procurement rules. NALC's procurement guidance contains further details.**

19. RESPONSIBILITIES TO PROVIDE INFORMATION

See also standing order 20.

- a **In accordance with freedom of information legislation, the Council shall publish information in accordance with its publication scheme and respond to requests for information held by the Council.**
- b **The Council shall publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015.**

20. RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION

(Below is not an exclusive list.)

See also standing order 11.



- a The Council shall appoint a Data Protection Officer.
- b **The Council shall have policies and procedures in place to respond to an individual exercising statutory rights concerning his/her/their personal data.**
- c **The Council shall have a written policy in place for responding to and managing a personal data breach.**
- d **The Council shall keep a record of all personal data breaches comprising the facts relating to the personal data breach, its effects and the remedial action taken.**
- e **The Council shall ensure that information communicated in its privacy notice(s) is in an easily accessible and available form and kept up to date.**
- f **The Council shall maintain a written record of its processing activities.**

21. RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS/MEDIA

- a Requests from the press or other media for an oral or written comment or statement from the Council, its councillors or staff shall be handled in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of dealing with the press and/or other media.

22. EXECUTION AND SEALING OF LEGAL DEEDS

See also standing orders 15(b)(xii) and (xvii).

- a A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the Council unless authorised by a resolution.
- b **Subject to standing order 22(a), the Council's common seal shall alone be used for sealing a deed required by law. It shall be applied by the Proper Officer in the presence of two councillors who shall sign the deed as witnesses.**

23. COMMUNICATING WITH BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCILLORS

- a An invitation to attend a meeting of the Full Council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the ward councillors of Buckinghamshire Council representing the area of the Council.

24. RESTRICTIONS ON COUNCILLOR ACTIVITIES

- a Unless duly authorised no councillor shall:



Appendix O
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To be reviewed: Annually

- i. inspect any land and/or premises which the Council has a right or duty to inspect; or
- ii. issue orders, instructions, or directions.

25. STANDING ORDERS GENERALLY

- a All or part of a standing order, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, may be suspended by resolution in relation to the consideration of an item on the agenda for a meeting.
- b A motion to add to or vary or revoke one or more of the Council's standing orders, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice by at least 6 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9.
- c The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's standing orders to a councillor as soon as possible of the chair of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.

END

Review of Arrangements with Other Local Authorities

May 2024

Buckingham Town Council currently has the following arrangements with other local authorities

1. To pay Buckinghamshire Council to empty dog bins in the Town Council's parks and green spaces. Cost £4,502 pa.
2. The Council operates the charter markets and charter fairs under an ongoing licence with Buckinghamshire Council.

Buckingham Town Council Representatives on Outside Bodies

Approved 22nd May 2023 Minute 18/23.7
 Updated 27th November 2023 Minute 463/23

ORGANISATION	DESCRIPTION	TERM	DUE FOR RENEWAL	2023 REPRESENTATIVE
A.V. Association of Local Councils	AVALC also acts as an important catalyst for local councils in Aylesbury Vale feeding in your views on the many issues you may face and stressing the need for primary authorities to continuously engage with Parishes. We also participate in meetings of the County Association of Local Councils, [BMKALC]. https://avalctestsite2.wordpress.com/	1 year	May 2024	Cllr. J. Harvey
Aylesbury Vale Transport Users Group	The group aims to promote improvements to local public transport provision by the council and local transport service providers and support the activities of all bodies which aim to improve public transport.	1 year	May 2024	Cllr. Stuchbury
		1 year	May 2024	Cllr. Harvey
Buckingham Bardic Council	The Bardic Council is an informal group that supports the role of the Bard and helps to coordinate the annual Bardic election and any other related events.	1 year	May 2024	Cllr. Davies
		1 year	May 2024	Cllr. R. Willett
Buckingham & Gawcott Charitable Trust	To utilise the trust's assets for the benefit of the organisations and inhabitants of the town of Buckingham and the parish of Gawcott.	Term of Office	Ex officio	The Mayor
		2 years	May 2025	Cllr. R. Stuchbury
		2 years	May 2025	Cllr. F. Davies
		2 years	May 2025	Cllr. J. Harvey
Buckingham Community Wildlife Project	Buckingham is well supported by activities to maintain and protect the greenspaces space by several volunteer Conservation Groups. This is a Steering group to help draw together the work of each body.	1 year	May 2024	Cllr Gateley
		1 year	May 2024	Cllr. Draper
Buckingham Almhouses and Welfare Charities (Buckingham General Charities)	The Charity is operated and administered by 12 Trustees and its Secretary. The Objects of the incorporated Charity are: 1. To relieve people resident for at least two years in Buckingham, Gawcott, Lenborough and Bourton ('the area') who are in need, by providing specially	Term of Office	Ex officio	The Mayor
		4 years	May 2025	Cllr. G. Collins
		4 years	January 2025	Cllr. A. Ralph
		4 years	11 th May 2024	Cllr. L. O'Donoghue

Buckingham Town Council Representatives on Outside Bodies

Approved 22nd May 2023 Minute 18/23.7
 Updated 27th November 2023 Minute 463/23

ORGANISATION	DESCRIPTION	TERM	DUE FOR RENEWAL	2023 REPRESENTATIVE
	<p>designed or adapted housing or almshouses, and items, services or facilities calculated to relieve the need of such persons.</p> <p>2. To relieve financial hardship, sickness and poor health among poor people in the area.</p> <p>3. To make grants or pay for facilities for people in need, hardship or distress resident in the area.</p> <p>https://www.buckinghamgeneralcharities.org.uk/Groups/241034/About_Us.aspx</p>			
Buckingham Youth Centre	<p>Buckingham Youth Centre provides Youth Club activities to the young people of Buckingham and the surrounding villages. There has been a Youth Club on the site for over 40 years.</p> <p>An award-winning Charity, founded in 2012 and in order to keep the Youth Clubs running, offering the premises for hire to local Youth Groups, Businesses and local people. https://buckinghamyc.org.uk/about-us/</p>	1 year	May 2024	Cllr. R. Willett
		1 year	May 2024	Cllr. Stuchbury
CA (Citizen's Advice)	<p><i>"We help people find a way forward.</i></p> <p><i>We can all face problems that seem complicated or intimidating. At Citizens Advice Bucks we believe no one should have to face these problems without good quality, independent advice."</i></p> <p>https://citizensadvicebucks.org.uk/about-us</p>	Term of Office	Ex officio	The Mayor/ Deputy Mayor
Christmas Parade Committee	<p>Buckingham Christmas Parade is organised by the Christmas Parade Committee and sponsored by Buckingham Town Council. A road closure is put in place for the parade route and paid for by the Town Council.</p>	1 year	May 2024	Cllr. H. Mordue
		1 year	May 2024	Cllr. M. Try
Dementia Action Alliance	<p>https://www.dementiaaction.org.uk/local_alliances/22583_buckingham_dementia_action_alliance</p>	1 year	May 2024	Cllr. Harvey
		1 year	May 2024	Cllr. Davies

Buckingham Town Council Representatives on Outside Bodies

Approved 22nd May 2023 Minute 18/23.7
 Updated 27th November 2023 Minute 463/23

ORGANISATION	DESCRIPTION	TERM	DUE FOR RENEWAL	2023 REPRESENTATIVE
Lace Hill Medical Centre Forum	<p>The aims of the group can be summarised as</p> <p>Advise the practice on matters of concern to patients such as: booking appointments, being able to see the same Doctor for continuity, surgery opening times, emergency out of hours care, parking, care after a hospital stay, etc. Developing and exhibiting health education displays to alert patients to key health issues – this has been a considerable early success with very effective displays in both surgeries, Buckingham Library and Tesco Buckingham on topics such as dementia, high blood pressure and the early detection of cancer. Act as a sounding board for the practice on policy issues Take soundings from the patient community and develop plans to remedy identified shortcomings. Represent the patient group in holding the practice constructively to account. https://www.theswanpractice.co.uk/ppg.aspx</p>	1 year	May 2024	Cllr. Try
		1 year	May 2024	Cllr. Mahi
Buckinghamshire and Villages Community Board	<p>Community Boards are a new way of bringing the council, groups, organisations, and local people together to look at local issues and find ways of improving them together.</p> <p>As a community-led partnership, Community Boards will:</p> <p>influence how decisions are made and how services are delivered represent the voice of local people capture thoughts, ideas and suggestions bring together key community partners and residents identify local needs and work to produce creative solutions https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/community-and-safety/improving-your-local-community/</p>	1 year	May 2024	Cllr. Harvey
		1 year	May 2024	Cllr. O'Donoghue (deputy)

Buckingham Town Council Representatives on Outside Bodies

Approved 22nd May 2023 Minute 18/23.7
 Updated 27th November 2023 Minute 463/23

ORGANISATION	DESCRIPTION	TERM	DUE FOR RENEWAL	2023 REPRESENTATIVE
North Bucks. Parishes Planning Consortium	NBPPC is the only group within Aylesbury Vale dealing solely with planning related matters. The membership level, and consistency of renewal, suggests that member parishes appreciate having a forum in which planning matters can be debated and acted upon. We believe that there is a real benefit in Buckinghamshire Council receiving well considered, detailed, responses to strategic planning issues from a group with such wide membership. https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/page_downloads/VALP16-09-09-01451-VALP%20response%20050916%20FINAL.pdf	1 year	May 2024	Cllr. Ralph
Pontio	<p>The Pontio Group is the Joint Action Group between Buckingham Town Council and the University of Buckingham. The aims are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To initiate, coordinate and support actions which harness and blend the various resources of both the town and the university for the benefit of all who live, study, work, play and visit in Buckingham To build excellent relationships between the civic, academic, commercial and leisure organisations in the town To work for a future of Buckingham in which all enjoy a life full of ambition, learning, prosperity and well being 	Term of Office	Ex officio	The Mayor/Deputy Mayor
		1 year	May 2024	Cllr. Harvey
		1 year	May 2024	Cllr. Osibogun (Deputy)
NEW Super Council's Network	NALC Network of Council's with a precept of over 1m	1 year	May 2024	Cllr. Harvey
Tree Wardens	Tree Wardens are volunteers, appointed by parish councils or other community organisations, who gather information about their local trees, get involved in local tree matters and encourage local practical projects related to the trees and woods https://www.buckingham-tc.gov.uk/our-services/parks-and-green-spaces/	1 year	May 2024	Cllr. Stuchbury
		1 year	May 2024	Cllr. Gateley
		1 year	May 2024	Cllr. Willett

Buckingham Town Council Representatives on Outside Bodies

Approved 22nd May 2023 Minute 18/23.7
 Updated 27th November 2023 Minute 463/23

ORGANISATION	DESCRIPTION	TERM	DUE FOR RENEWAL	2023 REPRESENTATIVE
Twinning Association	We are here to help all the residents of Buckingham and the surrounding area to find out if there is a link, and hopefully a friend, for you in our twin towns of Mouvaux, near Lille in France or Neukirchen-Vluyn near Düsseldorf in Germany. https://www.buckinghamtwinning.org.uk/	1 year	May 2024	Cllr. Mordue
		1 year	May 2024	Cllr. Gateley
Rural Market Towns Group	<p>The Rural Services Network is a Special Interest Group of the Local Government Association. We are a membership organisation and work on behalf of our members as the national champion for rural services.</p> <p>We support our member organisations through the sharing of best practice and rural expertise, and advocate on their behalf to ensure that the rural voice is raised up the agenda with parliamentarians and decision makers.</p>	1 year	May 2024	Cllr. Schaefer

BUCKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL**FULL COUNCIL****MONDAY 13th May 2024**

Contact Officer: Steve Beech, Compliance and Projects Manager.

Review of 'Asset Register' and 'Asset Register and Disposal Policy'**1. Recommendations**

- 1.1. It is recommended that Members review and approve the revised Asset Register as at 31 March 2024.
- 1.2. It is recommended that Members review and readopt the 'Asset Register and Disposal Policy' without amendment.

2. Background

- 2.1. This is being discussed because under Standing Order 5j(xiii) it is a requirement that Full Council undertake a review of inventory of land and other assets including buildings and office equipment annually.
- 2.2. The Asset Register was last reviewed and approved by Full Council on 18 March 2024 (minute 691/23) which anticipated no further changes before 31 March.
- 2.3. The 'Asset Register and Disposal Policy' is also due for review annually.

3. Additional Information

- 3.1. It is confirmed that there have been no further changes to the Asset Register between 18 March and 31 March 2024.
- 3.2. There are no recommended amendments to the 'Asset Register and Disposal Policy'.

ASSET LIST BY GROUP AND LOCATION

Asset Code	Description	Original Cost	Current Value	Insurance Value
- Brackley Road Cemetery				
INF36	Cemetery Lodge - Fixtures & Fittings	40,000.00	40,000.00	40,000.00
TOTAL FOR - Brackley Road Cemetery		40,000.00	40,000.00	40,000.00
- Chandos Park				
INF47	Tennis Pavilion Fixtures & Fittings	20,000.00	20,000.00	20,000.00
INF48	Bowls Pavilion - Fixtures & Fittings	50,000.00	50,000.00	50,000.00
TOTAL FOR - Chandos Park		70,000.00	70,000.00	70,000.00
- Cornwall's Meadow				
BLD07	Buckingham Community Centre	50,000.00	50,000.00	2,077,490.68
BLD15	Toilet/Changing Places & Shop Mobility Unit	163,669.00	163,669.00	278,529.66
TOTAL FOR - Cornwall's Meadow		213,669.00	213,669.00	2,356,020.34
Admin Storage - Verney Close (Town Council Office)				
FRN05	Filling Cabinet (4 Draw) X 3	1.00	1.00	500.00
TOTAL FOR Admin Storage - Verney Close (Town Council Office)		1.00	1.00	500.00
Burial - Brackley Road Cemetery				
INF54	paving for G.O.R.	1,775.40	1,775.40	1,775.40
MEQP12	Cemetery Bier X 1	1.00	1.00	1,500.00
TOTAL FOR Burial - Brackley Road Cemetery		1,776.40	1,776.40	3,275.40
Ceremonial - Chamber				
CER13	Mace Case X 1	2,336.00	2,336.00	2,336.00
CER14	Mace Bearers Robes X 1	1.00	1.00	500.00
CER16	Mayors Chain X 1	1.00	1.00	4,000.00
CER17	Mayors Robe X 1	1.00	1.00	695.00
CER24	Signet Ring X 1	1.00	1.00	500.00
CER28	Town Clerk's Robe X 1	1.00	1.00	795.00
CER30	Large Wood Town Crest (Shield) Buckingham Swan X 1	1.00	1.00	1,000.00
CER31	Town Crier's Robe X 1	1.00	1.00	749.00
CER35	Town Clerks Wig	491.45	491.45	491.45
TOTAL FOR Ceremonial - Chamber		2,834.45	2,834.45	11,066.45
Ceremonial - Old Gaol				
CER12	Mace X 1	1.00	1.00	50,000.00
CER18	Mayor's Robe, Original X 1	1.00	1.00	1,000.00
TOTAL FOR Ceremonial - Old Gaol		2.00	2.00	51,000.00
Changing room furniture - Lace Hill Sports and Community Centre (LHSCC)				
FRN43	Changing room furniture - benches and hooks X 1	3,999.00	3,999.00	3,999.00
TOTAL FOR Changing room furniture - Lace Hill Sports and Community Centre (LHSCC)		3,999.00	3,999.00	3,999.00
Centre (LHSCC)				
Council Events - Grenville Garage				
MEQP02	Buckingham Town Council Traffic Cones X 130	1,105.00	1,105.00	1,105.00
MEQP03	Yellow Road Information Signs X 8	1.00	1.00	640.00
MEQP04	Diverted Traffic Signs X 14	1.00	1.00	980.00
MEQP05	Road Closed Signs X 18	1.00	1.00	1,260.00
MEQP21	No waiting traffic cones X 100	676.00	676.00	676.00
TOTAL FOR Council Events - Grenville Garage		1,784.00	1,784.00	4,661.00
Council Events - Moreton Road				
MEQP06	Metal Barriers X 28	1.00	1.00	1,400.00
TOTAL FOR Council Events - Moreton Road		1.00	1.00	1,400.00
Council Events - Various				
MISC33	Swan Sculptures	6,872.00	6,872.00	6,872.00
TOTAL FOR Council Events - Various		6,872.00	6,872.00	6,872.00

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Buckingham Town Council

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User: JODIE

ASSET LIST BY GROUP AND LOCATION

Asset Code	Description	Original Cost	Current Value	Insurance Value
Council Meetings/Room Hire - Chamber				
FRN17	Large Boardroom Table X 1	1.00	1.00	10,000.00
FRN18	Chairman's Chair X 1	1.00	1.00	1,500.00
FRN19	Boardroom Chairs X 16	1.00	1.00	12,000.00
FRN20	Boardroom Chairs X 2	1.00	1.00	600.00
FRN22	Queen Ann Chairs X 8	1.00	1.00	3,000.00
FRN30	Small two drawer table X 1	1.00	1.00	550.00
TOTAL FOR Council Meetings/Room Hire - Chamber		6.00	6.00	27,650.00
Council meetings/roomhire - Chamber				
OEQP04	Projector - Epson EMP795 X 1	1,150.00	1,150.00	1,150.00
OEQP07	Interactive Wireless screens X 2	4,030.00	4,030.00	4,030.00
TOTAL FOR Council meetings/roomhire - Chamber		5,180.00	5,180.00	5,180.00
Decorative - Town Centre				
CER33	Cannon X 1	1.00	1.00	2,000.00
CER34	Swan Girl Statue X 1	1.00	1.00	20,000.00
TOTAL FOR Decorative - Town Centre		2.00	2.00	22,000.00
Deeds - 12&17 Hillcrest Way, Buckingham				
BLD14	Depot, 12&17 Hillcrest Way	190,000.00	190,000.00	254,928.29
TOTAL FOR Deeds - 12&17 Hillcrest Way, Buckingham		190,000.00	190,000.00	254,928.29
Deeds - Brackley Road Cemetery				
BLD02	East Chapel	213,000.00	213,000.00	312,599.00
BLD03	West Chapel	169,000.00	169,000.00	246,290.00
BLD16	Cemetery Lodge	256,000.00	256,000.00	388,381.41
TOTAL FOR Deeds - Brackley Road Cemetery		638,000.00	638,000.00	947,270.41
Deeds - Chandos Park				
BLD04	Tennis Pavilion	63,000.00	63,000.00	93,539.24
BLD05	Bowls Pavilion	307,000.00	307,000.00	455,818.21
BLD06	Chandos Park Toilets	189,000.00	189,000.00	280,617.71
TOTAL FOR Deeds - Chandos Park		559,000.00	559,000.00	829,975.16
Dog Bins - Various				
ENV09	Dog bins X 32	1.00	1.00	4,640.00
TOTAL FOR Dog Bins - Various		1.00	1.00	4,640.00
Eviromental - 12&17 Hillcrest Way, Buckingham				
MEQP41	Brushcutters x 2	815.00	815.00	815.00
TOTAL FOR Eviromental - 12&17 Hillcrest Way, Buckingham		815.00	815.00	815.00
Eviromental - Depot - Hillcrest Way				
MEQP42	Water Bowser THBW 70L	1,146.70	1,146.70	0.00
TOTAL FOR Eviromental - Depot - Hillcrest Way		1,146.70	1,146.70	0.00
Fire Safety Regulations - 12&17 Hillcrest Way, Buckingham				
INF52	Internal Fire doors	2,216.00	2,216.00	2,216.00
TOTAL FOR Fire Safety Regulations - 12&17 Hillcrest Way, Buckingham		2,216.00	2,216.00	2,216.00
Fire Safety Regulations - Chamber				
MISC10	Fire Extinguisher-red X 2	1.00	1.00	0.00
TOTAL FOR Fire Safety Regulations - Chamber		1.00	1.00	0.00
Functions - Lace Hill Sports and Community Centre (LHSCC)				
MISC20	Prima Plus folding chair - Charcoal X 100	1,571.00	1,571.00	1,571.00
MISC21	Mogo Chair Trolley X 4	745.00	745.00	745.00
MISC22	Table bundle 19 tables and one trolley X 1	872.00	872.00	872.00
MISC27	Flexitable deluxe (folding) 1600 x 800 beech table X 10	1,490.00	1,490.00	1,490.00

ASSET LIST BY GROUP AND LOCATION

Asset Code	Description	Original Cost	Current Value	Insurance Value
MISC28	Austin chair, chrome frame padded seat burgundy X 20	579.00	579.00	579.00
TOTAL FOR Functions - Lace Hill Sports and Community Centre (LHSCC) Furniture - Verney Close (Town Council Office)		5,257.00	5,257.00	5,257.00
FRN47	Meeting room table and chairs	915.83	915.83	915.83
FRN48	Partition and blinds	4,715.00	4,715.00	4,715.00
FRN49	Wooden Blinds	1,033.33	1,033.33	0.00
FRN50	Meeting Room Furniture	1,916.00	1,916.00	0.00
TOTAL FOR Furniture - Verney Close (Town Council Office)		8,580.16	8,580.16	5,630.83
Gift - Chamber				
CER06	Copeland statues X 1	1.00	1.00	750.00
TOTAL FOR Gift - Chamber Gift - Verney Close (Town Council Office)		1.00	1.00	750.00
CER32	Bugle -The Rifles 10/5/2009 X 1	1.00	1.00	34,472.00
TOTAL FOR Gift - Verney Close (Town Council Office)		1.00	1.00	34,472.00
Health & Safety - Bourton Park				
ENV04	Bins X 11	1.00	1.00	2,420.00
ENV05	Dog bins X 5	1.00	1.00	500.00
TOTAL FOR Health & Safety - Bourton Park		2.00	2.00	2,920.00
Health & Safety - Brackley Road Cemetery				
ENV08	Bins - mesh green waste bins X 3	1.00	1.00	600.00
TOTAL FOR Health & Safety - Brackley Road Cemetery		1.00	1.00	600.00
Health & Safety - Chandos Park				
ENV02	Waste Bins X 8	1.00	1.00	1,100.00
TOTAL FOR Health & Safety - Chandos Park		1.00	1.00	1,100.00
Information - Bourton Park				
INF14	Notice Boards X 3	1.00	1.00	6,000.00
TOTAL FOR Information - Bourton Park		1.00	1.00	6,000.00
Information - Bypass				
SGN12	Town Entrance Signs X 7	1.00	1.00	7,000.00
TOTAL FOR Information - Bypass		1.00	1.00	7,000.00
Information - Chandos Park				
INF03	Information Board X 1	1.00	1.00	2,000.00
INF04	Notice Board (For posters) X 1	1.00	1.00	2,000.00
TOTAL FOR Information - Chandos Park		2.00	2.00	4,000.00
Information - Railway Walk				
INF30	Noticeboard/Information Board X 1	1.00	1.00	2,000.00
TOTAL FOR Information - Railway Walk		1.00	1.00	2,000.00
Information - Town Centre				
SGN11	Finger Posts X 2	1.00	1.00	4,000.00
SGN18	Finger Post	1,320.00	1,320.00	1,320.00
TOTAL FOR Information - Town Centre		1,321.00	1,321.00	5,320.00
Infrastructure - Bourton Park				
INF20	Bridge X 6	1.00	1.00	180,000.00
INF51	Toddler park Secure Fencing	13,966.00	13,966.00	13,966.00
TOTAL FOR Infrastructure - Bourton Park		13,967.00	13,967.00	193,966.00
Infrastructure - Brackley Road Cemetery				
INF50	Recyled Plastic Bins x 7	1,391.00	1,391.00	1,391.00
TOTAL FOR Infrastructure - Brackley Road Cemetery		1,391.00	1,391.00	1,391.00

ASSET LIST BY GROUP AND LOCATION

Asset Code	Description	Original Cost	Current Value	Insurance Value
Infrastructure - Lace Hill Sports and Community Centre (LHSCC)				
INF22	Photovoltaic solar panel sytem	20,100.00	20,100.00	0.00
INF49	Gates at Lace Hill Playground	3,097.00	3,097.00	3,097.00
INF53	Lighting	1,112.00	1,112.00	1,112.00
TOTAL FOR Infrastructure - Lace Hill Sports and Community Centre				
		24,309.00	24,309.00	4,209.00
(LHSCC)				
Interior - Chamber				
FRN29	Carpets X 3	1.00	1.00	500.00
TOTAL FOR Interior - Chamber				
		1.00	1.00	500.00
Interior - Lace Hill Sports and Community Centre (LHSCC)				
FRN46	Blinds X 3	515.00	515.00	515.00
TOTAL FOR Interior - Lace Hill Sports and Community Centre (LHSCC)				
		515.00	515.00	515.00
LGA 1948 S133 - Castle Hill				
BLD11	War memorial	42,000.00	42,000.00	54,304.76
TOTAL FOR LGA 1948 S133 - Castle Hill				
		42,000.00	42,000.00	54,304.76
LHSCC Co-ordinator - Lace Hill Sports and Community Centre (LHSCC)				
EQP28	HP Probook X 1	539.00	539.00	539.00
TOTAL FOR LHSCC Co-ordinator - Lace Hill Sports and Community Centre				
		539.00	539.00	539.00
(LHSCC)				
Leisure - Bourton Park				
INF12	Benches X 30	1.00	1.00	30,000.00
INF13	Picnic Tables X 16	1.00	1.00	16,000.00
INF18	Interpretation Board X 3	1.00	1.00	2,000.00
INF19	Otters Wood Art X 3	1.00	1.00	1,800.00
PEQP04	Senior Play Equipment X 21	100,540.00	100,540.00	100,540.00
PEQP05	Toddler Play Equipment X 6	1.00	1.00	50,000.00
TOTAL FOR Leisure - Bourton Park				
		100,545.00	100,545.00	200,340.00
Leisure - Castle Hill				
INF29	Bench X 7	1.00	1.00	7,000.00
TOTAL FOR Leisure - Castle Hill				
		1.00	1.00	7,000.00
Leisure - Chandos Park				
INF05	Bench - Wood and metal X 8	1.00	1.00	8,000.00
INF06	Picnic Bench X 4	1.00	1.00	4,000.00
INF11	Public Toilet Fixtures/Fittings X 1	1.00	1.00	2,000.00
PEQP01	Tennis Courts X 1	1.00	1.00	25,000.00
PEQP02	Ken Liverseidge multi use games area X 1	50,000.00	50,000.00	50,000.00
PEQP03	Play Equipment X 8	75,000.00	75,000.00	75,000.00
TOTAL FOR Leisure - Chandos Park				
		125,004.00	125,004.00	164,000.00
Leisure - Depot - Hillcrest Way				
INF46	Icicle Lights X Various	9,645.00	9,645.00	9,645.00
TOTAL FOR Leisure - Depot - Hillcrest Way				
		9,645.00	9,645.00	9,645.00
Leisure - Ken Tagg Play Area				
INF31	Brompton Picnic Unit X 1	848.00	848.00	848.00
PEQP07	Play Equipment X Various	30,585.00	30,585.00	30,585.00
PEQP11	Play Equipment X 6	1.00	1.00	500.00
TOTAL FOR Leisure - Ken Tagg Play Area				
		31,434.00	31,434.00	31,933.00
Leisure - Lace Hill Sports and Community Centre (LHSCC)				
INF37	Bins X 2	1.00	1.00	1,900.00
INF38	Benches X 6	1.00	1.00	5,000.00
PEQP10	Play Equipment X 8	1.00	1.00	55,000.00

ASSET LIST BY GROUP AND LOCATION

Asset Code	Description	Original Cost	Current Value	Insurance Value
TOTAL FOR Leisure - Lace Hill Sports and Community Centre (LHSCC)		3.00	3.00	61,900.00
Leisure - Otters Brook				
INF40	Benches X 2	1.00	1.00	1,800.00
PEQP06	Play Equipment x 8	1.00	1.00	75,000.00
TOTAL FOR Leisure - Otters Brook		2.00	2.00	76,800.00
Leisure - Skate Park				
BLD01	Youth Shelter X 1	3,000.00	3,000.00	3,000.00
TOTAL FOR Leisure - Skate Park		3,000.00	3,000.00	3,000.00
Leisure - Town Centre				
INF24	Bench (North End Court) X 1	1.00	1.00	1,000.00
INF25	Concrete Flower Beds X 6	1.00	1.00	30,000.00
INF26	Flower Beds (by post office) X	1.00	1.00	3,000.00
INF27	Feeder pillars X 11	1,763.00	1,763.00	16,000.00
TOTAL FOR Leisure - Town Centre		1,766.00	1,766.00	50,000.00
Leisure - wgs				
MISC13	Christmas Lights X Various	1.00	1.00	27,152.38
MISC14	New Christmas Lights X 45	675.00	675.00	675.00
TOTAL FOR Leisure - wgs		676.00	676.00	27,827.38
Main Printer/Scanner/Copier - Verney Close (Town Council Office)				
EQP03	Sharp Copier/Printer - MX3060 X 1	1.00	1.00	0.00
TOTAL FOR Main Printer/Scanner/Copier - Verney Close (Town Council Office)		1.00	1.00	0.00
Maintenance Equipment - Depot - Hillcrest Way				
MEQP24	Wessex Trailed Spreader 500mm Hitch - fertilizer spreader X 1	797.00	797.00	797.00
MEQP25	Dennis Guildford Gang set - mower X 1	2,750.00	2,750.00	2,750.00
MEQP30	Logic LTA 160 Terr-ator Airator X 1	2,075.00	2,075.00	2,075.00
TOTAL FOR Maintenance Equipment - Depot - Hillcrest Way		5,622.00	5,622.00	5,622.00
Maintenance Equipment - Lace Hill Sports and Community Centre (LHSCC)				
MEQP39	Numatic TGB 4045 Battery Powered Scrubber/Drier X 1	2,111.00	2,111.00	2,111.00
TOTAL FOR Maintenance Equipment - Lace Hill Sports and Community Centre (LHSCC)		2,111.00	2,111.00	2,111.00
Market - Depot - Hillcrest Way				
MEQP08	Plastic Barriers X 20	1.00	1.00	1,000.00
TOTAL FOR Market - Depot - Hillcrest Way		1.00	1.00	1,000.00
Noticeboard - Lace Hill Sports and Community Centre (LHSCC)				
INF33	A-max notice board 18xA4 X 1	567.00	567.00	567.00
TOTAL FOR Noticeboard - Lace Hill Sports and Community Centre (LHSCC)		567.00	567.00	567.00
Office Equipment - Chamber				
QEQP	Movable Screen Lift x 2	2,181.80	2,181.80	2,181.80
TOTAL FOR Office Equipment - Chamber		2,181.80	2,181.80	2,181.80
Office Equipment - Verney Close (Town Council Office)				
OEQP10	Inspiron 15 5000 Laptops x 4	2,186.68	2,186.68	2,168.68
OEQP11	dell inspiron 15 3000 x 2	1,012.00	1,012.00	0.00
QEQP12	Dell Inspiron 15 5000 laptop	529.00	529.00	529.00
TOTAL FOR Office Equipment - Verney Close (Town Council Office)		3,727.68	3,727.68	2,697.68
Outdoor Grounds Keeping - 12&17 Hillcrest Way, Buckingham				
MEQP40	Kohler Mulch Mower	520.00	520.00	520.00
TOTAL FOR Outdoor Grounds Keeping - 12&17 Hillcrest Way, Buckingham		520.00	520.00	520.00

ASSET LIST BY GROUP AND LOCATION

Asset Code	Description	Original Cost	Current Value	Insurance Value
Outdoor Grounds Keeping - Bowls Club				
MEQP13	Dennis Mower & dsiks RT Machinery 5400 X 1	5,400.00	5,400.00	6,600.00
TOTAL FOR Outdoor Grounds Keeping - Bowls Club		5,400.00	5,400.00	6,600.00
Outdoor Grounds Keeping - Cemetery				
MEQP15	Burial Equipment X 1	2,478.00	2,478.00	2,478.00
TOTAL FOR Outdoor Grounds Keeping - Cemetery		2,478.00	2,478.00	2,478.00
Outdoor Grounds Keeping - Depot - Hillcrest Way				
MEQP01	Pressure Washer X 1	587.00	587.00	600.00
MEQP14	Cordless Power Tools (set) X 3	1.00	1.00	700.00
MEQP34	Strimmers FS100 X 7	3,290.00	3,290.00	3,290.00
MEQP35	Strimmers FS360 X 2	1,140.00	1,140.00	1,140.00
MEQP36	Husquvana LB553s Push mowers X 2	1,270.00	1,270.00	1,270.00
MEQP37	Viking MB4RT push mowers X 7	2,730.00	2,730.00	2,730.00
MEQP38	Stihl MS 241 Chainsaw X 1	560.00	560.00	560.00
VEC01	Quad Bike & lfor Williams Trailer - Honda 4510 X 1	4,510.00	4,510.00	5,000.00
VEC03	Mitsubishi L200 X 1	15,145.00	15,145.00	15,145.00
VEC04	Kubota ride-on mower - B031 X 1	12,495.00	12,495.00	12,495.00
VEC05	Renault Kangoo X Various	13,995.00	13,995.00	13,995.00
TOTAL FOR Outdoor Grounds Keeping - Depot - Hillcrest Way		55,723.00	55,723.00	56,925.00
Personal and Cemetery Records - Verney Close (Town Council Office)				
FRN08	Fire Safe X 1	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
TOTAL FOR Personal and Cemetery Records - Verney Close (Town Council Office)		1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Play Equipment - Chandos Park				
MEQP43	Toddler Play Unit	9,886.80	9,886.80	9,886.80
TOTAL FOR Play Equipment - Chandos Park		9,886.80	9,886.80	9,886.80
Play Equipment - Lace Hill Sports and Community Centre (LHSCC)				
PEQP8	24'x8' Aluminium socketed goals X 1	542.00	542.00	542.00
TOTAL FOR Play Equipment - Lace Hill Sports and Community Centre (LHSCC)		542.00	542.00	542.00
Property of Cara - Verney Close (Town Council Office)				
EQP23	Tendra Wireless Router X 1	1.00	1.00	0.00
EQP24	Netgear - ReadyNAS Duo Hub X 1	1.00	1.00	0.00
TOTAL FOR Property of Cara - Verney Close (Town Council Office)		2.00	2.00	0.00
Security - Bourton Park				
INF21	Gates X 4	1.00	1.00	16,000.00
TOTAL FOR Security - Bourton Park		1.00	1.00	16,000.00
Security - Chandos Park				
INF07	Street Lights X 9	1.00	1.00	12,000.00
TOTAL FOR Security - Chandos Park		1.00	1.00	12,000.00
Security - Ken Tagg Play Area				
INF23	Metal Entrance Gate X 1	1.00	1.00	2,000.00
TOTAL FOR Security - Ken Tagg Play Area		1.00	1.00	2,000.00
Security - Town Centre				
INF28	CCTV movable camera X 1	4,530.00	4,530.00	4,530.00
TOTAL FOR Security - Town Centre		4,530.00	4,530.00	4,530.00
Signage - Lace Hill Sports and Community Centre (LHSCC)				
SGN14	Play Area sign X 1	724.00	724.00	724.00
SGN16	LHSCC sign building external X 1	3,050.00	3,050.00	3,050.00
TOTAL FOR Signage - Lace Hill Sports and Community Centre (LHSCC)		3,774.00	3,774.00	3,774.00

ASSET LIST BY GROUP AND LOCATION

Asset Code	Description	Original Cost	Current Value	Insurance Value
Standard Town Council Work Spaces - Verney Close (Town Council Office)				
FRN01	Curved work stations (with built in draws) X 8	1.00	1.00	2,500.00
TOTAL FOR Standard Town Council Work Spaces - Verney Close (Town Council Office)		1.00	1.00	2,500.00
Storage Area - Chamber				
INF01	Alarm System X 1	1.00	1.00	500.00
TOTAL FOR Storage Area - Chamber		1.00	1.00	500.00
Storage Area - Depot - Hillcrest Way				
FRN42	Bespoke Mesh Enclosure X 1	585.00	585.00	585.00
INF35	Storage Racking X 1	1,057.00	1,057.00	1,057.00
TOTAL FOR Storage Area - Depot - Hillcrest Way		1,642.00	1,642.00	1,642.00
Street Furniture - Cemetery				
INF32	Memorial bench X 6	2,700.00	2,700.00	2,700.00
TOTAL FOR Street Furniture - Cemetery		2,700.00	2,700.00	2,700.00
Street Furniture - Town Centre				
INF44	Cast Iron Bench - B027 X 1	665.00	665.00	665.00
INF45	3 x information panels X 5	4,775.00	4,775.00	4,775.00
INF55	Litterbin 50 ltr	534.30	534.30	0.00
INF56	Metal Bench	561.65	561.65	0.00
MISC34	Printed Banners x 13	1,852.50	1,852.50	0.00
SGN17	Finger Posts, finials, fingers X 1	3,529.00	3,529.00	3,529.00
TOTAL FOR Street Furniture - Town Centre		11,917.45	11,917.45	8,969.00
Town Council laptops - Verney Close (Town Council Office)				
OEQP08	4 x laptops; TC, DTC, Planning & EM X 4	2,666.00	2,666.00	2,666.00
OEQP09	2 x laptops (GSS, Admin) X 2	832.00	832.00	832.00
TOTAL FOR Town Council laptops - Verney Close (Town Council Office)		3,498.00	3,498.00	3,498.00
Vehicles - 12&17 Hillcrest Way, Buckingham				
VEC06	Isuzu Tipper (elec) RK72 HZG	30,883.00	30,883.00	30,883.00
TOTAL FOR Vehicles - 12&17 Hillcrest Way, Buckingham		30,883.00	30,883.00	30,883.00
I - Chamber				
BLD12	Main Fire Doors X 5	1.00	1.00	750.00
TOTAL FOR I - Chamber		1.00	1.00	750.00
st - Town Centre				
ENV11	Bin next to ENV10 X 1	514.00	514.00	514.00
TOTAL FOR st - Town Centre		514.00	514.00	514.00
TOTAL		2,256,501.44	2,256,501.44	5,788,780.30



Buckingham Town Council ASSET REGISTER and DISPOSAL POLICY

1 Background

1.1 Local councils must maintain a register of fixed assets, long term investments and other non-current assets (Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance Practitioner's Guide) that they hold to ensure the assets are appropriately safeguarded. This includes items of a capital nature where values tend to be high, and which have a useful life of more than one year and are used by the council to deliver its services. Fixed assets are also known as non-current assets. Fixed assets acquired in any year should be added to the asset register for management purposes. The Council's Financial Regulations, section 14 refers to the custody of Assets, Properties and Estates. This policy does not apply to assets with an initial value of less than £1000, unless specifically stated.

2 Scope of Asset Register

2.1 In order to ensure transparency and reasonableness, the following items are included in the Council's asset register, whether purchased, gifted, or otherwise acquired, together with their holding location:

- land and buildings held freehold or on long term lease in the name of the Council
- community assets owned by the Council
- vehicles, plant, and machinery
- assets considered to be portable, attractive or of community significance
- historic items, furniture, and regalia
- other assets estimated or known to have a minimum purchase or resale value of £1000.00
- long term investments, shares and loans made by the Council
- assets held on trust (excluding funds held on behalf of the mayor's charities)

2.2 The values indicated in the asset register will inform the 'total fixed assets' section of the Annual Return with the exception of assets held on trust.

2.3 The following items fall outside the definition for inclusion and are therefore excluded from the Council's asset register:

- land and buildings held on short term lease or rented
- land and buildings maintained or serviced, but not owned by the Council
- assets rented by or loaned to the Council
- stock items intended for resale
- stationery and other consumable items
- boundaries of land owned (e.g., fences, hedges, and gates)
- floor or land surfaces and drainage
- plants and trees
- assets with a purchase or resale value of less than £1000 (other than items listed as for inclusion in the asset register)
- repairs
- cash, short term investments and other current assets



- intangible assets (e.g., trademarks, internet domain names, contingent assets, broadcast rights)
- 'negative' assets (e.g., provisions, borrowings, creditors, and contingent liabilities)

2.4 A separate section of the asset register will contain a schedule of disposals. All asset disposals must comply with the Asset Disposal Procedure referenced within this policy.

2.5 No register is required for assets with an initial value below £1000. However, the Clerk may wish to keep additional records (e.g.; IT equipment) at their discretion.

3 Valuation of Assets

3.1 Once recorded on the asset register, the value of assets must not change from year to year until disposal. Concepts of depreciation and impairment adjustments are not appropriate for local councils (Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance Practitioner's Guide).

3.2 Assets must be valued by one of the following means based on available information:

- ideally, apply the purchase price (net of VAT if VAT has been reclaimed);
- otherwise, apply the purchase price (gross of VAT if VAT has not been reclaimed or where the VAT status of the purchase is unclear)

3.3 Where it is not possible to trace the purchase price of the asset the insurance valuation should be applied. As a last resort, a nominal value of £1 may be applied. This should also be used for assets gifted to the Council.

3.4 There is no guidance where land or buildings have been subject to substantial renovation and improvement to such an extent that the new market value bears no relation to the original purchase cost. In order to avoid renovation and improvement work being separately recorded on the asset register and in these exceptional circumstances only, a market value supplied by a qualified surveyor may be entered.

4 Procedure for Updating the Asset Register

4.1 The start point is the asset register that has been agreed for the end of the previous financial year. The financial ledger should be reviewed for all purchases made during the year. A discussion should be held with all Council officers to identify any assets that have been gifted to the Council. Any new assets which fall in the categories stated at 2.1 above should be added to the asset register, with their values recorded at the purchase price (net of VAT if VAT is being reclaimed or at £1 if gifted to the Council).

4.2 The financial ledger should also be reviewed for all asset sales made during the year. A discussion should be held with all Council officers to identify any assets that have been lost, disposed of, or gifted by the Council. Any assets which fall in the categories stated at 2.3 above should be removed from the asset register and recorded in the schedule of disposals. The asset register should record any assets loaned by the Council, including the person or organisation borrowing the asset, its location, and the date when the loan period ends.



4.3 It is the Council's responsibility to ensure that a 'stock take' of asset register items should occur to ensure that all asset register items can be physically verified. Any assets which cannot be located should be removed from the asset register and recorded in the schedule of disposals. The disposal procedure must be carried out in accordance with the procedure stipulated in section 6.

4.4 The asset register, schedule of disposals and this policy shall be reviewed annually and approved by the Council.

5 The Asset Register and Insurance

5.1 For insurance purposes, the asset register shall include a column to record the replacement value of each asset.

5.2 The Asset Register will be used to inform the insurers of Council assets. For the purposes of insurance, the value to be used is the replacement value of items and not the purchase price. The Council should ensure land and building are valued accurately for insurance purposes. Buildings should therefore be valued every five years to ensure the appropriate insurance is held.

6 Asset Disposal Procedure

6.1 Asset disposals must be referred to the Resources committee for consideration and recommendation to Full Council where the asset has a value in the asset register of £1000 or more, as per 6.4. Assets with an estimated value above £100 but below £1000 may be disposed of at the discretion of the Clerk. Assets with a value up to £100 may be disposed of at the discretion of the Clerk or Deputy Clerk, Estates Manager, or Town Centre Manager as detailed in 6.4.

6.2 All proceeds from such disposal are the property of the Town Council and must be accounted for and reported to Full Council. Asset disposal decisions of £1000 or more, and the reasons for taking them, should be documented. Not only does this assist in audit process and other examinations, but it also highlights successes and problems for future reference.

6.3 Value for Money

The best value outcome to the Council must be a major consideration when disposing of assets. Goods should only be disposed of after checks have been made to ensure that the item could not be utilised by other areas of the Council. Disposal should be based on a fair market value for each item. The price established should be based on:

- current market value
- condition of the item
- age of the item
- an assessment of the usefulness of the item. Using external evaluation services should be required in case of IT equipment. All data storage devices must be reformatted prior to disposal to delete any data they may contain.



6.4. Reasons for disposal

Items can be available for disposal because they are:

- required to be disposed of under a particular policy e.g., motor vehicles
- no longer required due to changed procedures, functions, or usage patterns
- occupying storage space and not being needed in the foreseeable future
- no longer complying with health and safety standards
- beyond repair but able to be sold for scrap
- donated or gifted
- lost, stolen, or destroyed

A list of suggested assets for disposal should be presented to the Resources committee:

- by the Clerk or Deputy Clerk for any item, particularly items in the Town Council offices
- by the Estates Manager for Estates items and town assets such as street furniture
- by the Town Centre Manager for Lace Hill, the Tourist Information Centre, and Shopmobility items.

There should be a written reason of disposal. Items suggested for disposal should be approved by the respective committees prior to being presented to the Resource committee and recommended to Full Council. Special consideration should be given to items of potentially hazardous or pollutant items which are likely to have an impact on the environment.

6.5 Options for the Disposal of Assets

Assets identified for disposal may be dispensed with using the procedures listed below:

- Sale by public tender
- Auction
- Resale to original supplier
- Part exchange to new supplier
- Donated to a community service or organisation
- Scrap/recycled

Choice of the most appropriate disposal option will normally be influenced by the nature of the goods for disposal and market value. In all cases of £1000 or more, assets disposed of should be reported on an asset disposal form to ensure they are removed from the Council's asset register and recorded in the disposals register.

6.6 Sale by tender

External tenders should be advertised using the appropriate channels and sealed bids sought. Assets should be sold as seen and no warranty should be given or implied. At least two officers should be appointed to witness the opening, scrutiny and acceptance of the offers made. In all cases, the payment should be received in full prior to the equipment being released.



6.7 Sale to Staff

For transparency, items purchased by staff must be approved by the Clerk, who should complete an asset disposal form, regardless of the value of the items sold. Sales to the Clerk must be approved by Full Council following a recommendation of the Resources committee. The chair of the Full Council meeting approving a sale to the Clerk should sign an asset disposal form.

6.8 Donations

Where the Council has determined that goods have no residual value, and where their disposal is therefore unlikely to produce sufficient revenue, it may authorise the donation of the goods to another organisation within the parish area such as schools, charities, and volunteer organisations. Donations must be recommended by the Resources committee and approved by Full Council.

6.9 Scrap

Where items have negligible value or where the cost and time involved in managing the sale process would exceed the financial benefit, the equipment may be scrapped.

6.10 Asset Disposal Forms and the Asset Register

It is important that any asset disposals are correctly handled to ensure transparency and accountability. The Asset Disposal Form (appendix A) should be used to record the authorisation of the disposal by the appropriate staff/committee within the Council and the value or values achieved by it. The RFO/Assistant RFO is responsible for updating of the Council's asset register following the appropriately authorised Asset Disposal request. All asset disposals will be recorded in the Asset Disposals Register for audit purposes.

END

Adopted/Amended/Reaffirmed	Committee	Date
Adopted	Full Council	May 2023



Last reviewed/amended: May 2023
 To be reviewed: Annually

Buckingham Town Council Appendix A: Asset Disposal Form

Form to be completed by Clerk or Appropriate Manager and presented to the relevant committee for recommendation to the Resources committee and Full Council in accordance with the Asset Register and Disposals Policy.

List of Assets to be Disposed of					
Asset reference and/or serial number	Location	Description	Purchase date	Original cost	Disposal value
Reasons for Disposal and method*					
*Method of Disposal: A= Scrapped; B= Sold; C= Gifted/Donated; D= Lost/Stolen					
Date of Disposal:		Auth/Minute Ref:			
Date Asset Register Updated:					
Requesting Officer (Name and Position Held): (Sign & Print)					
Authorising Officer/Chair of Full Council (Name and Position Held): (Sign & Print)					



Ms Claire Molyneux
 Buckingham Town Council
 Buckingham Centre
 Verney Close
 Buckingham
 Buckinghamshire
 MK18 1JP

Select for Local Councils Policy Schedule

This insurance policy, which meets your demands and needs, has been based on the latest information obtained from you. The Policy, the Policy Schedule, any Certificates of Insurance and Endorsements form one document and should be read together. This Schedule replaces any previous Schedule.

Policy Number	YLL-272003-3213
Insured	Buckingham Town Council
Business	Parish / Town Council
Period of Insurance	
From	01 st April 2024
To	31 st March 2025
and any other period for which cover has been agreed.	
Renewal Premium	£ 19,444.57

Premiums are inclusive of Insurance Premium Tax and/or VAT as appropriate.

Schedule Number	127339273
Long Term Agreement:	Not Applicable
Preparation Date	10 th March 2024
Prepared by	Mr Jonathan Meiseles
Policy Form Reference	MLAACG08

Policy Cover Declaration:

You, the Insured, are not aware of any known losses or events that could give rise to a claim, or circumstances that would be prejudicial to us, the Insurer, should the basis of cover on the below given insurance product (s) be changed.

This is important information, please read it carefully and check that the facts given about you are correct and that we have included all the covers that you require. We are unable to give you advice so it is your responsibility to check the cover is correct for your organisation.

Statement of Fact

If you provide services or activities to children, or adults who are in need of care and support and therefore may be unable to protect themselves against abuse or neglect:

- Your organisation has not had any third-party inspections with a grading of Inadequate, Requires Urgent Improvement, Weak or Unsatisfactory
- You have in place a written safeguarding policy and accompanying procedures that clearly set out the actions to take in response to child and vulnerable adult abuse
- You carry out safer recruitment and selection processes that include the seeking of appropriate criminal records checks, alongside a renewal and update process
- All employees and volunteers engaged in regulated activity and/or activity that brings them into contact with children or vulnerable adults receive safeguarding awareness training including refresher training
- You have one or more designated practitioners for safeguarding to support other practitioners in the organisation to recognise and respond to concerns about Abuse
- You retain employment records, safeguarding checks, safeguarding policies and procedures and safeguarding records for at least the prevailing regulatory best practice period.

If you provide services or activities to children, or adults who are in need of care and support and therefore may be unable to protect themselves against abuse or neglect, and you become non-compliant with any of the above statements, you must tell us, as it may affect your ability to claim under this policy.

Important information

Taking reasonable care

We require that you take reasonable care in managing your activities. Where appropriate this requires you to do the following:

- Keep written risk assessments for your key activities
- Keep written records of your staff and volunteer training. For example, manual handling training, or for use of tools and machinery
- Abide by any rules, guidelines or advice that is given to you by any relevant authority, such as a Local Authority, or the Health and Safety Executive

We want you to be confident about your insurance and understand what is required of you. Please contact us if you have any questions relating to the above.

Lines of Cover applying

Part A – Material Damage

Table Headings

Contents (a)	Furniture, fixtures, fittings and tenants improvements
Contents (b)	Other contents and consumable stock not specified below including printed books and unused stationery
Contents (c)	Computer equipment, other office equipment and sports equipment
Contents (d)	Televisions, audio-visual and photographic equipment (excluding videos), beer, wine, spirits, tools and gardening equipment
Contents (e)	Tobacco
Contents (f)	Camcorders, videos and gaming machines
Contents (g)	Civic Regalia

Sums Insured

Premises Address	Buildings Sum Insured	Loss of Rent	Contents (a)	Contents (b)	Contents (c)	Contents (d)	Contents (e)	Contents (f)	Contents (g)
1. The Cemetery Lodge and 2 x Chapel, Address, Brackley Road, Buckingham, Buckinghamshire, MK18 1JA	£1,174,320.00	£5,000.00	£3,421.23	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
2. Tennis Club House, Address, Chandos Park, Buckingham, Buckinghamshire, MK18 1AW	£369,180.00	£5,000.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
3. Public Toilets Chandos, Address, Chandos Park, Buckingham, Buckinghamshire, MK18 1AW	£349,020.00	N/A	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
4. The Pavilion, Address, Chandos Park, Chandos Road, Buckingham, Buckinghamshire, MK18 1AW	£924,840.00	£2,000.00	£5,497.39	£345.48	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
5. Lace Hill Community	£4,387,320.00	£35,000.00	£14,606.85	£10,224.80	£2,921.36	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00

Centre, Address, Catchpin Street, Buckingham, Bucks, MK18 7RR									
6. Buckingham Town Council Depot, Address, Unit 12 &17, Hillcrest Way, Buckingham, MK18 1HJ	£461,160.00	N/A	£0.00	£11,915.51	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£1,464.08	£0.00
7. The Toilet and Shopmobility Unit, Address, Buckingham Community Centre, Cornwalls Meadow, Buckingham, Buckinghamshire, MK18 1RP	£342,720.00	N/A	£0.00	£43,820.55	£2,921.36	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
8. Address, Buckingham Community Centre, Cornwalls Meadow, Buckingham, Buckinghamshire, MK18 1RP	£4,478,040.00	N/A	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00

For Premises: 6, 7

Insured Perils applicable to Material Damage : 1-13, 15 & 16

For Premises: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8

Insured Perils applicable to Material Damage: 1-16

Excesses Applicable to Premises 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8

The following Excesses apply to each and every loss arising in respect of each and every separate premises:

Accidental Damage	£100
Theft	£100
Riot civil commotion and Malicious Persons	£250
Storm or Flood	£250
Escape of Water	£250
Falling Trees or Branches	£250
Subsidence	£1,000

Operative Endorsements: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9 (please refer to the Endorsement section of the policy wording)

**Part B – Business Interruption**

Premises Address	Additional Expenditure	Indemnity Period (Months)	Loss of Data	Indemnity Period (Months)	Loss of Gross Revenue	Indemnity Period (Months)
Brackley Road, Buckingham, Buckinghamshire, MK18 1JA	N/A		£1,000	12	£180,000	24
Chandos Park, Buckingham, Buckinghamshire, MK18 1AW	N/A		N/A		N/A	
Chandos Park, Chandos Road, Buckingham, Buckinghamshire, MK18 1AW	N/A		N/A		N/A	
Catchpin Street, Buckingham, Bucks, MK18 7RR	N/A		N/A		N/A	

For Premises: 6, 7

Insured Perils applicable to Business Interruption : 1-13, 15 & 16

For Premises: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8

Insured Perils applicable to Business Interruption: 1-16

Operative Endorsements:

None

Part C – All Risks**Table Headings**

Contents (a)	Furniture, fixtures, fittings and tenants improvements
Contents (b)	Other Contents and consumable stock not specified below including printed books and unused stationery
Contents (c)	Computer Equipment, other office equipment and sports equipment
Contents (d)	Televisions, audio-visual and photographic equipment (excluding videos), beer, wine, spirits, tools and gardening equipment
Contents (e)	Tobacco
Contents (f)	Camcorders, videos and gaming machines
Contents (g)	Civic Regalia

Item Description	Premises Address (if applicable)	Sum Insured	Excess
Contents (a)	Grenville Road Garage, Grenville Road, Buckingham, Buckinghamshire, MK18 1LR	£3,421.23	£100
Contents (a)	Council Offices, Buckingham Centre, Verney Close, Buckingham, Buckinghamshire, MK18 1JP	£2,747.03	£100
Contents (a)	Council Chamber, Cornwalls Meadow, Buckingham, Buckinghamshire, MK18 1RP	£52,263.87	£100
Contents (b)	Council Offices, Buckingham Centre, Verney Close, Buckingham, Buckinghamshire, MK18 1JP	£1,953.44	£100
Contents (c)	Council Chamber, Cornwalls Meadow, Buckingham, Buckinghamshire, MK18 1RP	£5,697.07	£100

Additional Items:

Where no premises address is shown, the item is not based at one location and cover is provided anywhere within the **territorial limits**.

Item Description	Sum Insured	Excess
Water bowsers, street signs, plastic cones and items used for events	£10,365.89	£100
Play areas/play equipment	£167,705.88	£100
Christmas Lights	£34,212.00	£100
Office equipment incl computers & sports equip	£13,367.34	£100
War memorial at Church Hill	£68,424.00	£100
Charter fair signs	£11,001.48	£100
Regalia	£143,050.00	£100
Street Furniture	£16,770.60	£100
Mowers and Maintenance Equipment	£24,933.90	£100
Trailer for Williams	£1,032.71	£100
Boughton Park Bridges (2 Large and 3 Smaller)	£205,000.00	£1,000

The excess stated applies to each and every loss.

Operative Endorsements: 1, 2, 3 & 7 (please refer to the Endorsement section of the policy wording)



Part D – Money

	Limit any one loss
1. Loss of Non-Negotiable Money in the situations specified in items 2(a), 2(b), 2(c)(i) and 2(c)(ii):	£250,000
2. Loss of other Money:	
(a) in transit in the custody of any Member or Employee or in transit by registered post (limit £250), or in a Bank Night Safe	£5,000
(b) in the private residence of any Member or Employee	£250
(c) in the premises	
(i) in the custody of or under the actual supervision of any Member or Employee	£5,000
(ii) in locked safes or strongrooms	£5,000
(iii) in locked receptacles other than safes or strongrooms	£250

Excess: £50 each and every loss

Personal Accident Assault Limits: Stated in Section 3(c) of the policy wording

Operative Endorsements:

1. In respect of **Section 1 – Special Definitions**, the definition of Person Insured is extended to include any person between the ages of 16 and 90.



Part E – Public Liability

Limit of Indemnity: £15,000,000

Excess: £100 each and every claim in respect of Section 2(d)(ii)

Operative Endorsements:

1. Environmental Clean Up Costs. The following Special Definitions are added to Section 1:

Clean Up Costs

- a) Testing for or monitoring of Pollution or Contamination
- b) the costs of Remediation required by any Enforcing Authority to a standard reasonably achievable by the methods available at the time that such Remediation commences.

Remediation

Remedying the effects of Pollution or Contamination including primary, complementary and compensatory actions as specified in the Environmental Damage (Prevention and Remediation) Regulations 2009.

Enforcing Authority

Any government or statutory authority or body implementing or enforcing environmental protection legislation within the territorial limits.

Cover

With effect from 01 July 2009 or the inception of the policy if later, the **insurer** will indemnify the **insured** in respect of all sums including statutory debts that the **insured** is legally liable to pay in respect of Clean Up Costs arising from environmental damage caused by Pollution or Contamination where such liability arises under an environmental directive, statute or statutory instrument.

Provided always that:

- a) liability arises from Pollution or Contamination caused by a sudden, identifiable, unintended and unexpected incident which takes place in its entirety at a specific time and place during the Period of Insurance. All Pollution or Contamination which arises out of one incident shall be deemed to have occurred at the same time such incident takes place
- b) the **insurer's** liability under this Extension shall not exceed £1,000,000 for any one occurrence and in the aggregate in any one Period of Insurance and will be the maximum the insurer will pay inclusive all costs and expenses. This limit will form part of and not be in addition to the Limit of Indemnity stated in the Schedule
- c) immediate loss prevention or salvage action is taken and the appropriate authorities are notified

Exclusions

The **insurer** shall be under no liability:

1. in respect of Clean up Costs for **damage** to the **Insured's** land, premises, watercourse or body of water whether owned, leased, hired, tenanted or otherwise in the **insured's** care, custody or control
2. for **damage** connected with pre-existing contaminated property
3. for **damage** caused by a succession of several events where such individual event would not warrant immediate action
4. in respect of removal of any risk of an adverse effect on human health on the Insured's land, premises, watercourse or body of water whether owned, leased, hired, tenanted or otherwise in the **insured's** care, custody or control
5. in respect of costs in achieving an improvement or alteration in the condition of the land, atmosphere or any watercourse or body of water beyond that required under any relevant and applicable law or statutory enactment at the time Remediation commences
6. in respect of costs for prevention of imminent threat of environmental damage where such costs are incurred without there being Pollution or Contamination caused by a sudden, identifiable, unintended and unexpected incident
7. for **damage** resulting from an alteration to subterranean stores of groundwater or to flow patterns
8. in respect of costs for the reinstatement or reintroduction of flora or fauna
9. for **damage** caused deliberately or intentionally by the **insured** or where they have knowingly deviated from environmental protection rulings or where the **insured** has knowingly omitted to inspect, maintain or perform necessary repairs to plant or machinery for which they are responsible
10. in respect of fines or penalties of any kind
11. for **damage** caused by the ownership or operation on behalf of the **insured** of any mining operations or storage, treatment or disposal of waste or waste products other than caused by composting, purification or pre-treatment of waste water
12. for **damage** which is covered by a more specific insurance policy
13. for **damage** caused by persons aware of the defectiveness or harmfulness of products they have placed on the market or works or other services they have performed
14. for **damage** caused by disease in animals belonging to or kept or sold by the **insured**.



Part G – Employers Liability

Limit of Indemnity: £10,000,000

Operative Endorsements:

None



Part H – Libel and Slander

Sum Insured

£250,000

Excess: 10% each and every claim or £1,000 whichever is the lower

Operative Endorsements

None



Part I – Motor Vehicles

Insured Vehicle: All as described in Persons Entitled to Drive: the Certificate of Limitation as to Use: Motor Insurance	Cover: Section 22 A. Comprehensive
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Excess : Section 23

Amount	Description
£ 150	Accidental Damage , Fire , Windscreen , Theft total loss
£ 250	Theft
£ Nil	Third party

Additional to any other Excess which applies

Age and Inexperienced Driver Excess: Section 11

(a)	Under 25 years	£150
(b)	Over 25 years inexperienced	£150

Additional to any other Excess which applies

Repair Limit: £Nil

Section 12

Damage to Property Limit:

£5,000,000 Applicable to any Commercial Vehicle, Minibus, Agricultural Vehicle and Special Type

£50,000,000 Applicable to any Private Motor Car

Personal Effects Limit: £150

Section 13

Medical Expenses Limit: £250

Section 14

Additional Cover : Section 25

U. Occasional Business Use

Not Operative

V. Loss of No Claim Discount/Excess

Not Operative



Operative Endorsements:

None

Part J – Motor Legal Expenses and Uninsured Loss Recovery

Limit of Indemnity:

£100,000 per insured incident

Operative Endorsements:

None



Part N – Fidelity Guarantee

Persons Guaranteed: All members and employees	Sum Guaranteed £1,000,000
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Excess: £100 each and every loss

Operative Endorsements:

None

Part O – Personal Accident

Cover is limited to £500,000 any one person and £2,000,000 any one incident.

Persons Insured:

Employees

Capital Sum	£100,000.00
Weekly Sum	£250.00
Cover	Sections 2 and 3 - Accident and Assault Cover

Directors/Councillors

Capital Sum	£100,000.00
Weekly Sum	£250.00
Cover	Sections 2 and 3 - Accident and Assault Cover

Operative Endorsement:

1) Special Condition 4 of Section 5 is inoperative provided always that the **insurer** will not make any payment of any benefit or in respect of any expense or loss arising from any Person Insured who has attained the age of 90 years unless such expense or loss arises during the period of insurance during which the Person Insured attains the age of 90



Part P – Legal Expenses

Section:

3. Employment Disputes and Compensation Awards	Operative
4. Legal Defence	Operative
5. Property Protection and Bodily Injury	Operative
6. Tax Protection	Operative
7. Contract Disputes	Operative
8. Statutory Licence Protection	Operative
Limit of Indemnity:	£200,000

Operative Endorsements

The following is also operative: Debt Recovery

Insured Incident

The **insurer** will negotiate for the **insured's** legal rights including enforcement of judgment to recover money and interest due from the sale or provision of goods or of services, provided always that:

- a) the amount of the debt exceeds £250 (incl VAT)
- b) the claim under this Part is made within 90 days of the money becoming due and payable
- c) the **insurer** has the right to select the method of enforcement, or to forego enforcing judgment if the **insurer** is not satisfied that there are, or will be, sufficient assets available to satisfy judgment.

Exceptions

We will not provide indemnity in respect of or arising from or relating to:

- a) any debt arising from an agreement entered into prior to the inception date of the indemnity provided by this section if the debt is due within the first 90 days of the indemnity provided by this section
- b) the recovery of money and interest due from another party where the other party intimates that a defence exists
- c) any claim relating to:
 - i) any settlement payable under an insurance policy
 - ii) any lease, licence or tenancy of land or buildings
 - iii) any motor vehicle owned by, or hired or leased to you other than agreements relating to the sale of motor vehicles where you are engaged in the business of selling motor vehicles
- d) any dispute which arises out of the purchase, hire, sale or provision of computer hardware, software, systems or services.

General Notes

1. Fair presentation of the risk

You must make a fair presentation of the risk to us at inception, renewal and variation of your policy. This means that we must be told about all facts and circumstances which may be material to the risks covered by the policy and that you must not make a misrepresentation to us about any material facts. As part of your duty of fair presentation, you must ensure that the information detailed within the schedule is correct and complete. A material fact is one which would influence the acceptance or assessment of the risk. If you have any doubt about facts considered material, it is in your interests to disclose them to us.

Failure to make a fair presentation of the risk could result in the policy either being avoided, written on different terms or a higher premium being charged, depending on the circumstances surrounding the failure to present the risk fairly.

This policy is compliant with the principles of the Insurance Act 2015 law reforms. It also incorporates an 'opt out' which has the aim to promote good customer outcomes. We have opted-out of the 'proportionate reduction of claim remedy' available to insurers under the Insurance Act 2015. This means that in cases of non-disclosure or misrepresentation which are neither deliberate nor reckless, if we would have charged an additional premium had we known the relevant facts, we will charge that premium and pay any claims in full rather than reducing claims payments in proportion to the amount of premium that would have been charged.

We believe that our 'additional premium approach' should, in most situations, be more favourable to our customers when compared to the proportionate reduction of claim remedy. Our additional premium approach does not affect our right to apply the other remedies available under the Act for non-disclosure or misrepresentation.

2. Cancellation

All insurance policies run for a fixed period of time. The Insured can terminate an insurance contract verbally or in writing at any time by calling 0800 917 9531 or emailing Customers.team@uk.zurich.com. Zurich may cancel the policy by giving 30 days' notice in writing. In such an event the insured will be entitled to a return of premium in respect of the unexpired portion of the period of insurance.

If you cancel your policy before the start date, you will be entitled to a full refund of premium. If you cancel within 14 days of the start date, you will be entitled to a full refund of premium, providing no claim has been made. After 14 days, if no claim has been made, we may offer a full or partial refund, depending on the time the policy was on risk and the circumstances at the time of the cancellation request. Please note, a cancellation charge of £50 may be applied.

3. Bonus and fee structure

Employees and businesses who carry out work for ZIC UK are remunerated in various different ways for selling insurance contracts. Employees receive a basic salary and also receive a bonus based on a number of factors, including the achievement of sales and quality targets. Businesses which work for the insurer on an outsourced basis receive a fee and also additional payments based on a number of factors, including the achievement of sales and quality targets.

Claims contact information

Although we'd all like to control the future, sometimes accidents are unavoidable. That's why we've made it as easy as possible to make a claim. More information can be found [here](#). Ready to make a claim? Please use the contact details below to ensure you're connected to the right team:

Type of Claim	Claims team	Claims contact details
Buildings, contents including 'All Risks' items	Property Claims	Online: https://propertyclaims.zurich.co.uk/index.html Tel: 0800 028 0336 Email: farnboroughpropertyclaims@uk.zurich.com Address: Zurich Municipal Property Claims, PO Box 3303, Interface Business Park, Swindon, SN4 8WF
Business interruption		
Money		
Works in progress		
Public liability	Liability Claims	Online: https://liabilityclaims.zurich.co.uk/index.html Tel: 0800 783 0692 Email: fnlc@uk.zurich.com Address: Zurich Municipal Casualty Claims, Zurich House, 1 Gladiator Way, Farnborough, Hampshire, GU14 6GB
Employers liability		
Personal assault under Money		
Personal accident		
Financial and administrative liability		
Motor Claims	Motor Claims	Online: https://motorclaims.zurich.co.uk/index.html Tel: 0800 916 8872 Email: zmnewmotorclaims@uk.zurich.com Address: Zurich Municipal Motor Claims, PO Box 3322, Interface Business Park, Swindon, SN4 8XW
Legal Expenses	DAS Legal Claims	Tel: 0117 934 2116

How to make a claim:

1. You can make a claim using the online portal, by email or phone using the contact details above.
2. A claim form may be sent for you to complete, or you may be asked to send details in writing.
3. If you have any questions, please call the relevant office for guidance.
4. For out of hours help/emergency property losses - please contact 0800 028 0336

**DAS Head and Registered Office:**

DAS Legal Expenses Insurance Company Limited | DAS House | Quay Side | Temple Back | Bristol | BS1 6NH
Registered in England and Wales | Company Number 103274 Website: www.das.co.uk
DAS Legal Expenses Insurance Company Limited is authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority
and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FRN202106) and the Prudential Regulation Authority.

DAS Law Limited Head and Registered Office:

DAS Law Limited | North Quay | Temple Back | Bristol | BS1 6FL
Registered in England and Wales | Company Number 5417859 Website: www.daslaw.co.uk
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Annual Subscriptions and payments 2024/2025

Review of the council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies;

Transaction	Beneficiary	Amount
Cemetery Subscription (ICCM)	Greenspaces Team	95
BMKALC / NALC	Town Council	2213
North Buck Parishes Planning Committee	Council	27.5
SLCC Membership	Town Clerk	471
SLCC Membership	Deputy Town Clerk	337
SLCC Membership	Compliance Officer	296
Information Commissioner's Office	Council	29.17
Tree Software Annual Subscription	Green Spaces	385
Friends of Buckingham Library	Council	50
Council Protection of rural England	Green Spaces	36
Rural Market Town	Council	133
Canva	Council	122.03
Squarespace	Council	252
Adobe Acrobat x 2	Council	810
NABMA	Council	384
Worknest	Council	5295
Website	Council	1500
Hootsuite	Council	1200
Zoom x 1	Council	120
Domain names discover.co.uk and discover.uk	Council	126.9
Payroll Options	Council	2040
I Auditor	Green Spaces	450
Parks Management	Green Spaces	50
Open Spaces	Green Spaces	45
Spheretech air con maint buck comm	Council	815
Oakpark cctv maint Chandos	Green Spaces	469
Oakpark alarm maint depot	Green Spaces	517
Oakpark - alarm chamber	Green Spaces	100
Greenflow - Toilet Flush system - Chandos	Green Spaces	132
Healthmatic	Green Spaces	22927
Ambivent	Green Spaces	1180
Digital Barriers CCTV	Green Spaces	500
RBS (software)	Council	1450
RBS Making Tax Digital	Council	110
RBS Bookings	Council	616.06
RBS Assets	Council	280
RBS Cemetery	Council	802
Cloudy	Council	12255
Total		58620.66

BUCKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL
FULL COUNCIL
MONDAY 13th May 2024

Contact Officer: Steve Beech, Compliance and Projects Manager

Complaints Policy

1. Recommendations

1.1. It is recommended that Members approve and adopt the revised Complaints Policy.

2. Background

2.1. This is being discussed because Standing Order 5j (xvi) requires that the Council undertakes a review of its procedures for handling complaints annually. They were last reviewed in May 2023.

3. Amendments

3.1. Recommended additions to the text are highlighted in YELLOW.

3.2. Recommended deletions are crossed through and highlighted in BLUE.

3.3. Minor spelling, grammar, or formatting corrections have not been highlighted.


3.4. Remaining unhighlighted text is unaltered.

3.5. The amended document will be reformatted once approved.

4. Amendment reasoning

4.1. For each amendment the reasoning for such change is given below:

Flowchart, page 1. Clarifications to correspond with the correct process as per the three-stage process detailed on page 4 of the policy.

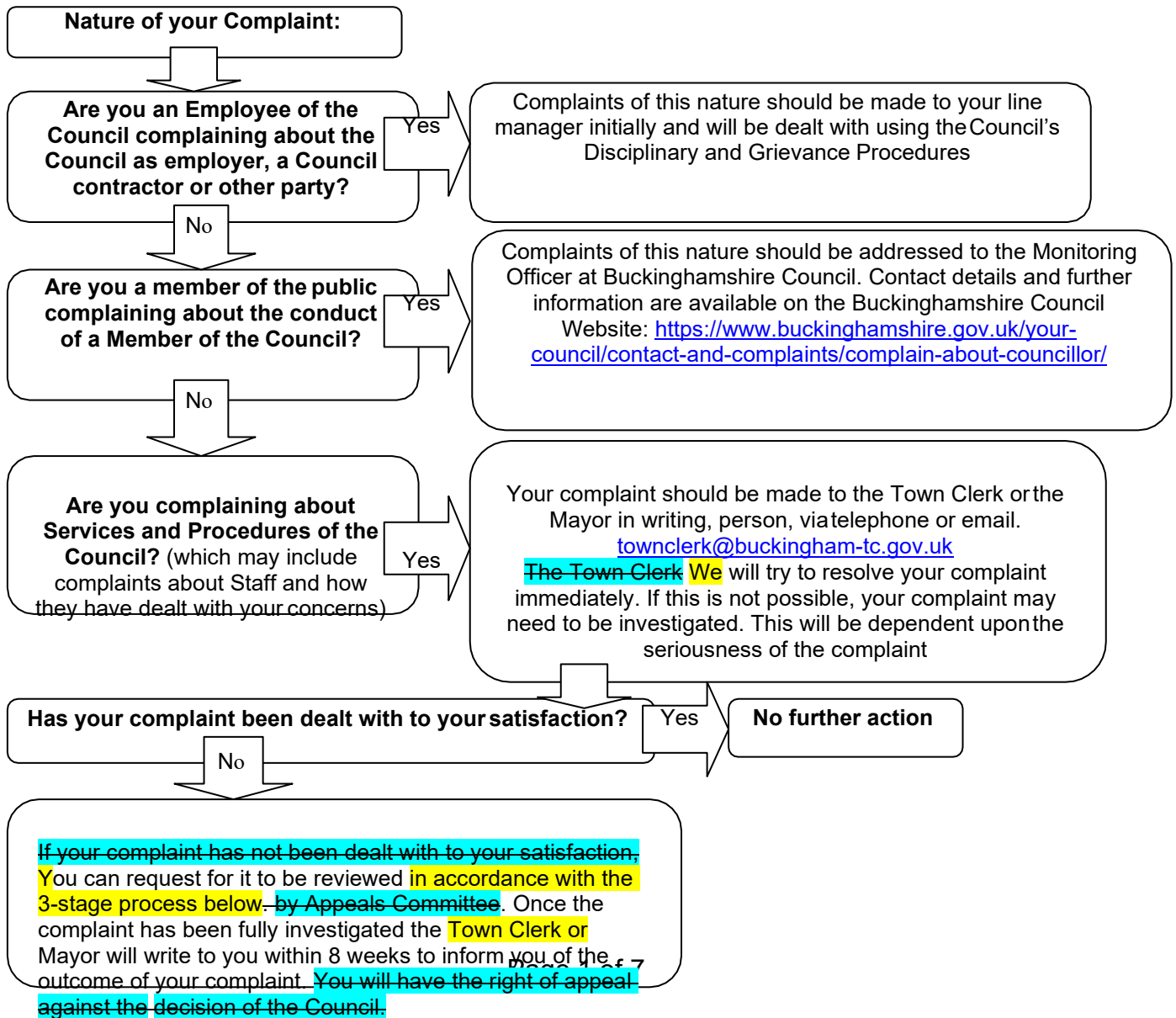
	<p>Buckingham Town Council Complaints Policy/Procedure</p>	<p>Date Agreed: May 2023 Minute Number: 18/23.11</p>
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This document is designed to work in conjunction with the Council’s Health and Safety at Work, Bullying and Harassment, Disciplinary and Grievance procedures.

The Procedure:

Buckingham Town Council is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live and work in its area or are visitors to the locality. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received from this council or are unhappy about an action or lack of action by this council, this Complaints Procedure sets out how you may complain to the council and how we will try to resolve your complaint.

The Flowchart below explains how your complaint will be received, handled, and resolved.



Definition:

A complaint is defined as: An expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about council administration, service, or procedure (whether provided directly by the council or by a contractor or partner) that requires a response. There is no difference between a 'formal' and an 'informal' complaint. Both are expressions of dissatisfaction that require a response.

Introduction

Buckingham Town Council is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live and work in its area or are visitors to the locality.

Pursuant to Local Government Act 1974, the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGO) has no jurisdiction over Parish and Town Councils in England. Consequently, there are no statutory mechanisms in place should complaints be made against local councils in England.

Buckingham Town Council therefore feels that to improve communications and services to its residents, a fair, clear, and concise guide on the handling of complaints will guarantee that a transparent system provides a platform to ensure that all complaints are treated with the same respect and importance that they deserve.

Whilst the Town Council will attempt to deal with all complaints itself, there are times when the Council will need to defer to another body to take the complaint forward to a satisfactory resolution. The Council will consider engaging other procedures/bodies in respect of the following types of complaint:

Type of Conduct	Refer to
Financial Irregularity	Complaints about financial irregularity should be referred to the Council's auditor, whose name and address can be obtained from the Town Clerk. Local elector's right to object to the Council's audit of accounts pursuant to s.16 of the Audit Commission Act 1998. On other matters, the council will refer to its auditor or the Audit Commission.
Criminal Activity	Any complaints which involve criminal activity will be referred to the Police.
Member Conduct	A complaint relating to a Member's failure to comply with the council's Code of Conduct must be referred to the Monitoring Officer for the Standards Committee of Buckinghamshire Council.
Employee Conduct	Any complaint which involves the conduct of a council employee will be handled by the council's internal disciplinary procedure.

Although the LGO has no jurisdiction over Parish Councils, it is useful for the Council to understand the jurisdiction of the LGO in order to assist members of the public to complain to the LGO where appropriate. The legislation is contained within the Local Government Act 1974 (the Act) ss26 and 27.

The key points are:

Parish and Town Councils are unable to lodge complaints as a public body (s 27(1) of the Act) about another local authority or public body defined in s25 of the Act, but this does not prevent individual Councillors from making complaints about another local authority or public body in their personal capacity. In their official capacity, a Parish Councillor, if so requested by Members of the public, could represent them in making complaints. Please note:

- Complaints must be made in writing;
- Complaints must be made within 12 months of the matters which are subject to the complaint;
- Complainants must first give the authority in question notice of the complaint and give them an adequate opportunity to investigate and reply to the complaint. This usually entails exhausting that authority's complaints procedure;
- The Ombudsman may not investigate matters which are or have been subject to a right of appeal; and
- The Ombudsman may not investigate matters where the complainant has or has had a remedy by way of court proceedings.

The most common application of the last two points (e.g., the Ombudsman's lack of jurisdiction where the subject matter of the complaint is subject to a right of appeal or court proceedings) is in respect of judicial review. Many councils claim that the Ombudsman does not have jurisdiction in certain cases due to the availability of judicial review. In certain circumstances the Ombudsman can rely on section 26 (6) of the Act which states that:

'A Local Commissioner may conduct an investigation notwithstanding the existence of such a right or remedy if satisfied that in the particular circumstances it is not reasonable to expect the person affected to resort or have resorted to it.'

Complaints Procedures for Local Councils

The LGO has provided guidance on the subject of complaints procedures. A copy of the full guidance can be viewed on the LGO website:

<https://www.lgo.org.uk/make-a-complaint/fact-sheets/other-topics/parish-councils> Whilst most of the guidance is aimed at higher level authorities the guidance is useful and forms a good basis at Parish level.

The Town Council's complaints system is:

- Well publicised and easy to use;
- Helpful and receptive;
- Not adversarial;
- Fair and objective;
- Based on clear procedures and defined responsibilities;
- Quick, thorough, rigorous, and consistent;
- Decisive and capable of putting things right where necessary;
- Sensitive to the special needs and circumstances of the complainant;
- Adequately resourced;
- Fully supported by Councillors and Officers; and
- Regularly analysed to spot patterns of complaint and lessons for service improvement.

The identity of a complainant will only be made known to those who need to consider the complaint and the Council will promise to maintain confidentiality where possible and if circumstances demand.

The Council operates a three stage complaints procedure whereby issues are resolved by:

- Front line staff; then
- Management; then
- Senior management/Members.

Good practice dictates that a deadline is set for the handling of any complaint and the Council will not leave this open ended. Some flexibility is required to deal with lengthier and more complex complaints, and this is reflected in the Council's complaints procedure.

Maladministration

Whilst Parish Councils are not under the jurisdiction of the LGO the Council is aware that section 92 of the Local Government Act 2000 gives councils the power to make payment 'in cases of maladministration'. The relevant text of section LGA 2000 s92 follows:

92 Payments in cases of maladministration etc.

(1) Where a relevant authority considers –

- a) That action taken by or on behalf of the authority in the exercise of their functions amounts to, or may amount to, maladministration, and
- b) That a person has been, or may have been, adversely affected by that action

Maladministration can be defined by the LGO as apparent 'maladministration' or service failure. This can include:

- delay;
- incorrect action or failure to take any action;
- failure to follow procedures or the law;
- failure to provide information;
- inadequate record-keeping;
- failure to investigate;
- failure to reply;
- misleading or inaccurate statements;
- inadequate liaison;
- inadequate consultation; and
- broken promises

This list is not exhaustive, and maladministration is a broad concept. It has been described as bias, neglect, inattention, delay, incompetence, ineptitude, perversity, turpitude etc.

For more information on maladministration and the LGO's advice on the matter please go to:
<https://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/about-us/our-legal-framework>

The Council's complaints procedure is a document which specifically refers to complaints about administration, services, and procedures, but may involve the conduct of a member of staff or officer of the Council. In this case the complaint will be dealt with under the Council's Disciplinary Procedure as detailed in the introduction section of this document.

At all times the rules of natural justice will apply. In other words, all parties should be treated fairly, and the process should be reasonable, accessible, and transparent.

Management of unreasonable complainant behaviour

In a minority of cases complainants will act in a way that is unreasonable. Because of the nature or frequency of their contact with the Council, a small number of complainants can hinder the consideration of their own and other complainants' cases. This may be because of unacceptable behaviour in their dealings with the Council, or because of unreasonably persistent contacts that distract staff from their work but add nothing to the Council's knowledge or understanding of the case under consideration.

The Council will differentiate between persistent complainants and unreasonably persistent complainers. People bringing complaints back to the Council are 'persistent' because they feel the Council have not dealt with their complaint properly and are not prepared to leave the matter there. Some complainants may have justified complaints however may pursue them in inappropriate ways. Others may pursue complaints which appear to have no substance.

Examples of unreasonable actions and behaviour

The LGO outlines experiences of actions and behaviours which have come to its attention. Single incidents may be unacceptable, but more often the difficulty is caused by unreasonable, persistent behaviour that interferes with the investigation, consideration, and timing of a suitable resolution of the complaint.

Examples include

- refusing to specify the grounds of a complaint, despite offers of help;
- refusing to co-operate with the complaints investigation process;
- refusing to accept that some issues may not fall within the scope of the procedure;
- insisting on the complaint being handled in ways that are not compatible with the agreed complaints procedure or with good practice;
- making unjustified comments about staff who are trying to deal with the issues and seeking to have them replaced;
- changing the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;
- denying or changing statements the complainant made at an earlier stage;
- introducing trivial or irrelevant information at a later stage;
- raising numerous but unimportant questions; insisting they are all answered;
- covertly recording meetings and conversations;
- submitting falsified documents from themselves or others;
- pursuing parallel complaints on the same issue with a variety of organisations;
- making excessive demands on the time and/or resources of staff with lengthy calls, emails to council staff, detailed letters every day and expecting immediate responses;
- refusing to accept the decision; repeatedly arguing point with no new evidence.

These examples will act as trigger points which will activate this section of the policy, which could result in the restriction of access to council staff.

The decision to designate a complainant's behaviour as unreasonable and restrict access to council staff will only be made if the Council is satisfied that:

- the complaint is/has been investigated fully and properly;
- the decision that has resulted is the correct one;
- communications with the complainant have been adequate; and
- the complainant cannot provide any significant new information that may affect the Council's decision on the complaint.

If it becomes necessary that the complainant's behaviour is unreasonable and results in the need to restrict contact, the following steps will be considered:

- offering the complainant a meeting with a senior staff member to explore the resolution of the complaint and explain why their current behaviour is seen as unreasonable;
- share the Council's agreed policy with the complainant and warn that restrictive actions may need to be applied should their behaviour continue;
- advise the complainant to find a suitable advocate to act on their behalf

Options for action

Any actions taken should be appropriate to the nature and frequency of the complainant's contacts. The objective is to manage the complainant's unreasonable behaviour in order to bring the complaint to the quickest resolution, without further distractions.

Options include:

- placing limits on the number and durations of contact with staff;
- offering a restricted time slot for any necessary calls;
- limit contact to one medium (telephone, email, letter etc.)
- appoint one member of staff with whom the complainant can communicate;
- ensure that any face-to-face contact takes place with a witness present;

If a decision is taken to restrict access, the complainant will be sent a letter which will explain:

- why the decision was taken;
- what impact this will have on the complainants contact with the Council;
- how long the restrictions will last; and
- what the complainant can do to have the decision reviewed.

The member of staff to whom the complaint has been allocated is required to keep adequate records of all correspondence, face to face meetings and check to ensure that no important significant facts or evidence is overlooked.

A review date will be specified when the decision to restrict is imposed. Restrictions should be lifted at this point unless there are valid grounds to extend the restrictions.

Unacceptable Behaviour

The Council will not tolerate abusive, deceitful, offensive, threatening, or other forms of unacceptable behaviour from complainants. When it occurs, the Council will take proportionate action to protect the wellbeing of our staff and the integrity of our complaints system.

In these cases, the Council will implement the Harassment Policy.

END

DRAFT

ISSUES OF LACK OF ENGAGEMENT BY BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL WITH BUCKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Buckingham Town Council believes that the Buckinghamshire Council Town & Parish Charter is no longer fit for purpose.

Far from communicating with and involving towns and parishes in planning and other matters, BC appears to be ignoring residents and elected members of those towns and parishes, and taking more and more decisions affecting them without adequate consultation.

Buckingham Town Council, which has 17 elected councillors, has professional planning staff, and also employs professional town planners who advise us, yet our requests for call-ins to committee of applications on what we believe to be material planning grounds have been continually overruled.

Although we represent the 15,000 residents of Buckingham, our ability to identify material planning reasons for call-ins has been questioned, the latest occasion by the Cabinet Member for Planning in November 2023, the subject of a letter of complaint from BTC to which we still awaiting reply (*attached*).

It is unacceptable that there has not been a single North Bucks Area Planning Committee at which a Buckingham application has been heard in the almost three years since the Unitary Council was created. The last occasion that BTC was represented at a Buckinghamshire planning committee was in December 2021, at Strategic Sites, to make objections to the 420-dwelling application for Osier Way, 19/00148/AOP.

It is the Osier Way development to which we again made material objections about the Phase I drainage, design and water disposal at the reserved matters stage in March 2024, accompanied by call-in requests from two Shire Ward members, but this too was overruled and within 24 hours of this council outlining these objections, delegated approval was given. Osier Way has now been flooded three times since the work started.

This delegation was in itself of concern to us; it was decided by the service director, chairman and vice-chairman of the relevant committee, not by the director and chairman alone, as mandated by the BC Constitution. This too is the subject of a complaint made to the LPA of procedural errors, to which we also await a response (*attached*).

We are also concerned that a call-in request for a 300-dwelling development off London Road, Buckingham (23/00178/AOP) was made by three Buckinghamshire Councillors, which under the Constitution should automatically trigger it being sent to the relevant committee, but this was also overruled.

There have been many other instances where planning approval has been given where either NPPF, VALP or BNP guidelines have not been followed with regard to building in flood zones, inadequate parking spaces or failure to respect design codes, and ignoring objections from neighbours and other residents.

One of the most egregious was in November 2023 when the LPA failed to follow its own VALP Policy BE3 (protection of amenity of residents) in permitting a septic tank to be built in a property in the residential estate of Heartlands, where the main sewer was less than 20 metres away. The delegated decision overrode a BC Ward councillor's call-in request and 28 letters of complaint, including neighbours whose lower-lying properties would be inundated should the tank overflow (23/02204/APP)


There is also an ongoing issue of amended plans not always being put back before BTC as a statutory consultee, and that of lack of notice through communication channels such as community boards or local newspapers. For example, the recent consultation on Street Licensing was posted in the *Buckingham Advertiser* on only 24th April, six days before it closed.

The Charter allows for increased communication since the merging of the several district councils, yet many meetings - among them the quarterly Town & Parish Planning Forum and the A421 Corridor Working Group – have been cancelled or postponed, leaving us feeling that we are not being listened to.

We ask that you order a review of both the Constitution and the Charter, as neither is currently meeting the needs of North Buckinghamshire.

Cllr Mark Cole, JP – Chairman BTC Planning

Cllr Anthony Ralph – Vice-Chairman, BTC Planning

 <p>Buckingham Town Council</p> <p>Code of Conduct</p>	<p>Date Agreed: 30/05/2022</p> <p>Minute Number: 26/22</p> <p>Prepared by: Mr. P. Hodson</p> <p>Version: 2</p>
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Buckingham Town Council Code of Conduct for Councillors

1. Joint statement

The role of councillor across all tiers of local government is a vital part of our country's system of democracy. It is important that as councillors we can be held accountable and all adopt the behaviours and responsibilities associated with the role. Our conduct as an individual councillor affects the reputation of all councillors. We want the role of councillor to be one that people aspire to. We also want individuals from a range of backgrounds and circumstances to be putting themselves forward to become councillors.

As councillors, we represent local residents, work to develop better services and deliver local change. The public have high expectations of us and entrust us to represent our local area; taking decisions fairly, openly, and transparently. We have both an individual and collective responsibility to meet these expectations by maintaining high standards and demonstrating good conduct, and by challenging behaviour which falls below expectations. Importantly, we should be able to undertake our role as a councillor without being intimidated, abused, bullied or threatened by anyone, including the general public.

This Code has been designed to protect our democratic role, encourage good conduct and safeguard the public's trust in local government.

2. Introduction

The Town Council will undertake an annual review of this Code to ensure it continues to be fit- for purpose, incorporating advances in technology, social media and changes in legislation.

3. Definitions

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, a "councillor" means a member of Buckinghamshire Town Council or co-opted member of a committee or working-group. A "co-opted member" is defined in the Localism Act 2011 Section 27(4) as "a person who is not a member of the authority but who

- a) is a member of any committee or sub-committee of the authority, or;
- b) is a member of, and represents the authority on, any joint committee or joint subcommittee of the authority;

and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee”.

4. Purpose of the Code of Conduct

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to assist you, as a councillor, in modelling the behaviour that is expected of you, to provide a personal check and balance, and to set out the type of conduct that could lead to action being taken against you. It is also to protect you, the public, fellow councillors, local authority officers and the reputation of local government. It sets out general principles of conduct expected of all councillors and your specific obligations in relation to standards of conduct. The Council encourages the use of support, training and mediation prior to action being taken using the Code. The fundamental aim of the Code is to create and maintain public confidence in the role of councillor and local government.

5. General principles of councillor conduct

Everyone in public office at all levels; all who serve the public or deliver public services, including ministers, civil servants, councillors and local authority officers; should uphold the [Seven Principles of Public Life](#), also known as the Nolan Principles. See Appendix A to this Code of Conduct.

Building on these principles, the following general principles have been developed specifically for the role of councillor:

In accordance with the public trust placed in me, on all occasions:

- **I act with integrity and honesty**
- **I act lawfully**
- **I treat all persons fairly and with respect; and**
- **I lead by example and act in a way that secures public confidence in the role of councillor.**

In undertaking my role:

- **I impartially exercise my responsibilities in the interests of the local community**
- **I do not improperly seek to confer an advantage, or disadvantage, on any person**
- **I avoid conflicts of interest**
- **I exercise reasonable care and diligence; and**

- **I ensure that public resources are used prudently in accordance with my local authority's requirements and in the public interest.**

6. Application of the Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct applies to you as soon as you sign your declaration of acceptance of the office of councillor or attend your first meeting as a co-opted member and continues to apply to you until you cease to be a councillor.

This Code of Conduct applies to you when you are acting in your capacity as a councillor which may include when:

- you misuse your position as a councillor
- Your actions would give the impression to a reasonable member of the public with knowledge of all the facts that you are acting as a councillor

The Code applies to all forms of communication and interaction, including:

- at face-to-face meetings
- at online or telephone meetings
- in written communication
- in verbal communication
- in non-verbal communication
- in electronic and social media communication, posts, statements and comments.

You are also expected to uphold high standards of conduct and show leadership at all times when acting as a councillor.

The Monitoring Officer has statutory responsibility for the implementation of the Code of Conduct, and you are encouraged to seek advice from the Monitoring Officer on any matters that may relate to the Code of Conduct.

7. Standards of councillor conduct

This section sets out your obligations, which are the minimum standards of conduct required of you as a councillor. Should your conduct fall short of these standards, a complaint may be made against you, which may result in action being taken.

Guidance is included to help explain the reasons for the obligations and how they should be followed.

8. General Conduct

8.1. Respect

As a councillor:

8.2. I treat other councillors and members of the public with respect.

8.3. I treat local authority employees, employees and representatives of partner organisations and those volunteering for the local authority with respect and respect the role they play.

Respect means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech, and in the written word. Debate and having different views are all part of a healthy democracy. As a councillor, you can express, challenge, criticise and disagree with views, ideas, opinions and policies in a robust but civil manner. You should not, however, subject individuals, groups of people or organisations to personal attack.

In your contact with the public, you should treat them politely and courteously. Rude and offensive behaviour lowers the public's expectations and confidence in councillors.

In return, you have a right to expect respectful behaviour from the public. If members of the public are being abusive, intimidatory or threatening you are entitled to stop any conversation or interaction in person or online and seek guidance from the Council, with a view to reporting the matter to the relevant social media provider or the police where appropriate.

This also applies to fellow councillors, where action could then be taken under the Councillor Code of Conduct, and local authority employees.

9. Bullying, harassment and discrimination

As a councillor:

9.1. I do not bully any person.

9.2. I do not harass any person.

9.3. I promote equalities and do not discriminate unlawfully against any person.

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) characterises bullying as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying might be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident, happen face-to-face, on social media, in emails or phone calls, happen

in the workplace or at work social events and may not always be obvious or noticed by others.

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 defines harassment as conduct that causes alarm or distress or puts people in fear of violence and must involve such conduct on at least two occasions. It can include repeated attempts to impose unwanted communications and contact upon a person in a manner that could be expected to cause distress or fear in any reasonable person.

Unlawful discrimination is where someone is treated unfairly because of a protected characteristic. Protected characteristics are specific aspects of a person's identity defined by the Equality Act 2010. They are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Equality Act 2010 places specific duties on local authorities. Councillors have a central role to play in ensuring that equality issues are integral to the local authority's performance and strategic aims, and that there is a strong vision and public commitment to equality across public services.

10. Impartiality of officers of the council

As a councillor:

10.1. I do not compromise, or attempt to compromise, the impartiality of anyone who works for, or on behalf of, the local authority.

Officers work for the local authority as a whole and must be impartial. They should not be coerced or persuaded to act in a way that would undermine their neutrality. You can question officers in order to understand, for example, their reasons for proposing to act in a particular way, or the content of a report that they have written. However, you must not try and force them to act differently, change their advice, or alter the content of that report, if doing so would prejudice their professional integrity.

11. Confidentiality and access to information

As a councillor:

11.1. I do not disclose information:

- a. given to me in confidence by anyone**
- b. acquired by me which I believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, unless**
 - i. I have received the consent of a person authorised to give it;**
 - ii. I am required by law to do so;**

- iii. **the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional legal advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or**
- iv. **the disclosure is:**
 - 1. **reasonable and in the public interest; and**
 - 2. **made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the local authority; and**
 - 3. **I have consulted the Monitoring Officer or Town Clerk prior to its release.**

11.2. I do not improperly use knowledge gained solely as a result of my role as a councillor for the advancement of myself, my friends, my family members, my employer or my business interests.

11.3. I do not prevent anyone from getting information that they are entitled to by law.

Local authorities must work openly and transparently, and their proceedings and printed materials are open to the public, except in certain legally defined circumstances. You should work on this basis, but there will be times when it is required by law that discussions, documents and other information relating to or held by the local authority must be treated in a confidential manner. Examples include personal data relating to individuals or information relating to ongoing negotiations.

12. Disrepute

As a councillor:

12.1. I do not bring my role or local authority into disrepute.

As a Councillor, you are trusted to make decisions on behalf of your community and your actions and behaviour are subject to greater scrutiny than that of ordinary members of the public. You should be aware that your actions might have an adverse impact on you, other councillors and/or your local authority and may lower the public's confidence in you or your local authority's ability to discharge your/its functions. For example, behaviour that is considered dishonest and/or deceitful can bring your local authority into disrepute. You are able to hold the local authority and fellow councillors to account and are able to constructively challenge and express concern about decisions and processes undertaken by the council whilst continuing to adhere to other aspects of this Code of Conduct.

13. Use of position

As a councillor:

- 13.1. I do not use, or attempt to use, my position improperly to the advantage or disadvantage of myself or anyone else.**

Your position as a member of the local authority provides you with certain opportunities, responsibilities, and privileges, and you make choices all the time that will impact others. However, you should not take advantage of these opportunities to further your own or others' private interests or to disadvantage anyone unfairly.

14. Use of local authority resources and facilities

As a councillor:

- 14.1. I do not misuse council resources.**

- 14.2. I will, when using the resources of the local authority or authorising their use by others:**

- a. act in accordance with the local authority's requirements; and**
- b. ensure that such resources are not used for political purposes.**

You may be provided with resources and facilities by the local authority to assist you in carrying out your duties as a councillor.

Examples include:

- office support
- stationery
- equipment such as phones, and computers
- transport
- access and use of local authority buildings and rooms.

These are given to you to help you carry out your role as a councillor more effectively and are not to be used for business or personal gain. They should be used in accordance with the purpose for which they have been provided and the local authority's own policies regarding their use.

15. Complying with the Code of Conduct

As a Councillor:

- 15.1. I undertake Code of Conduct training provided by my local authority.**
- 15.2. I cooperate with any Code of Conduct investigation and/or determination.**
- 15.3. I do not intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person who is likely to be involved with the administration of any investigation or proceedings.**
- 15.4. I comply with any sanction imposed on me following a finding that I have breached the Code of Conduct.**

It is extremely important for you as a councillor to demonstrate high standards, for you to have your actions open to scrutiny and for you not to undermine public trust in the local authority or its governance. If you do not understand or are concerned about the local authority's processes in handling a complaint you should raise this with the Monitoring Officer.

16. Protecting your reputation and the reputation of the local authority

16.1. Interests

As a councillor:

16.2. I register and disclose my interests.

Section 29 of the Localism Act 2011 requires the Monitoring Officer to establish and maintain a register of interests of members of the authority.

You need to register your interests so that the public, local authority employees and fellow councillors know which of your interests might give rise to a conflict of interest. The register is a public document that can be consulted when (or before) an issue arises. The register also protects you by allowing you to demonstrate openness and a willingness to be held accountable. You are personally responsible for deciding whether or not you should disclose an interest in a meeting, but it can be helpful for you to know early on if others think that a potential conflict might arise. It is also important that the public know about any interest that might have to be disclosed by you or other councillors when making or taking part in decisions, so that decision making is seen by the public as open and honest. This helps to ensure that public confidence in the integrity of local governance is maintained.

Appendix B sets out the detailed provisions on registering and disclosing interests. If in doubt, you should always seek advice from Town Clerk or if necessary, the Monitoring Officer.

*You should note that failure to register or disclose a disclosable pecuniary interest as set out in **Table 1 of Appendix B**, is a criminal offence under the Localism Act 2011.*

17. Gifts and hospitality

As a councillor:

17.1. I do not accept gifts or hospitality, irrespective of estimated value, which could give rise to real or substantive personal gain or a reasonable suspicion of influence on my part to show favour from persons seeking to acquire, develop or do business with the local authority or from persons who may apply to the local authority for any permission, licence or other significant advantage.

17.2. I register with the Town Clerk any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £50 within 28 days of its receipt.

17.3. I register with the Town Clerk any significant gift or hospitality that I have been offered but have refused to accept.

In order to protect your position and the reputation of the local authority, you should exercise caution in accepting any gifts or hospitality which are (or which you reasonably believe to be) offered to you because you are a councillor. The presumption should always be not to accept significant gifts or hospitality. However, there may be times when such a refusal may be difficult if it is seen as rudeness in which case you could accept it but must ensure it is publicly registered. However, you do not need to register gifts and hospitality which are not related to your role as a councillor, such as Christmas gifts from your friends and family. It is also important to note that it is appropriate to accept normal expenses and hospitality associated with your duties as a councillor. If you are unsure, do contact the Town Clerk for guidance.

Appendices

Appendix A – The Seven Principles of Public Life

The principles are:

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must disclose and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Appendix B - Registering interests

Within 28 days of becoming a member or your re-election or re-appointment to office you must register with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 1 (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests)** which are as described in "The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012". You should also register details of your other personal interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 2 (Personal Interests)**.

"Disclosable Pecuniary Interest" means an interest of yourself, or of your partner if you are aware of your partner's interest, within the descriptions set out in Table 1 below.

"Partner" means a spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners.

1. You must ensure that your register of interests is kept up-to-date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest, or of any change to a registered interest, notify the Monitoring Officer.
2. A 'sensitive interest' is as an interest which, if disclosed, could lead to the councillor, or a person connected with the councillor, being subject to violence or intimidation.
3. Where you have a 'sensitive interest' you must notify the Monitoring Officer with the reasons why you believe it is a sensitive interest. If the Monitoring Officer agrees they will withhold the interest from the public register.

Non participation in case of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

4. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in **Table 1**, you must disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest. Dispensation may be granted in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest.
5. Where you have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring

Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it

Disclosure of Personal Interests

6. Where a matter arises at a meeting which is a Personal Interest as set out in Table 2, you must disclose the interest.
7. Unless your Personal Interest is also a Prejudicial Interest within Table 3, you may still speak on the matter and take part in any discussion or vote on the matter. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.
8. Where a matter is a Personal Interest within **Table 2 and also** a Prejudicial Interest under **Table 3** You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.
9. Where you have a personal interest in any business of your authority and you have made an executive decision in relation to that business, you must make sure that any written statement of that decision records the existence and nature of your interest.

Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

This table sets out the explanation of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in the [Relevant Authorities \(Disclosable Pecuniary Interests\) Regulations 2012](#).

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain. [Any unpaid directorship.]
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	<p>Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council</p> <p>—</p> <p>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and</p> <p>(b) which has not been fully discharged.</p>
Land and Property	<p>Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council.</p> <p>‘Land’ excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.</p>
Licenses	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer

Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the council; and (b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where— (a) that body (to the councillor's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and (b) either— (i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/ her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

- * 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.
- * 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

Table 2: Personal Interests

You have a **personal interest** in any business of your authority where:

1. it relates to or is likely to affect any body of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management and:
 - a) to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
or
 - b) the body
 - (i) exercises functions of a public nature
 - (ii) is directed to charitable purposes or
 - (iii) one of its principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)
2. A decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting your well-being or financial position or the well-being or financial position of a relevant person to a greater extent than the majority of other council tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision.
3. A relevant person is –
 - i A member of your family or any person with whom you have a close personal association; or
 - ii Any person or body who employs or has appointed such persons, any firm in which they are a partner, or any company of which they are directors; or
 - iii Any person or body in whom such persons have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000; or **iv** Any person or body of a type described in paragraph 1 above

Table 3: Prejudicial Interests**Prejudicial Interest Generally**

- 2.1. Subject to Paragraph 1.2, where you have a **personal interest** in any business of the Council you also have a **prejudicial interest** in that business where the interest is one which a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest
- 2.2. You do **not** have a **prejudicial interest** in any business of the Council where that business—
- a. does not affect your financial position or the financial position of a person or body described in Paragraph 3 of **Table 2** above;
 - b. does not relate to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to you or any person or body described in Paragraph 3 of **Table 2** above; or
 - c. relates to the functions of the Council in respect of—
 - i an allowance, payment or indemnity given to councillors;
 - ii any ceremonial honour given to councillors; and
 - iii setting council tax or a precept under the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

BUCKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL**FULL COUNCIL****MONDAY 13th May 2024**

Contact Officer: Louise Stubbs, Deputy Town Clerk

Town Centre report**1. Recommendations**

1.1. It is recommended that the Town Centre Study report is initially sent to the Buckingham Neighbourhood Development Plan working group to consider the recommendations of the report.

2. Background

2.1. In partnership with Buckinghamshire Council's Buckingham & Villages Community Board, Buckingham Town Council commissioned a Buckingham Town Centre Study from High Street Taskforce experts People & Places in 2023.

2.2. The study involved:

- Analysing a broad range of data about Buckingham
- Comparison in relation to other towns
- Analysing the ways in which Buckingham town centre has changed in recent years
- Officers working with the consultant to engage with the local community, ensuring as many individuals and businesses took part as possible, and providing additional local data.
- Business confidence survey
- Consumer views survey

2.3. The surveys had a very good response rate, The business consumer survey had *"76 surveys completed in total, of which 52 were based in the town centre. Based on 158 active town centre businesses shown in Town Council's 2023 business use survey, this equates to a return rate of 33% compared to 25% nationally."* The response rate to the consumer survey was equally good, 1,100 suggestions were made by consumer survey respondents when asked about their priorities for the future improvement of Buckingham town centre, giving a broad picture of views across the community.

2.4. This work has resulted in a draft report, attached as an appendix that contains a number of recommendations for delivering change in the future.

3. Future actions

- 3.1. The final part of the funding for the town centre study project will involve a joint stakeholder meeting between Buckingham Town Council, Buckingham & Villages Community Board and local stakeholders, dates for this meeting will be circulated once confirmed.
- 3.2. Buckingham & Villages Community Board has paid for the study, and has further funding available for Town Centre Regeneration that could be used to deliver any agreed funding priorities.



Buckingham Town Centre Study



Buckingham Town Centre Study

This town centre study has been commissioned by Buckingham Town Council with support from the Buckingham & Villages Community Board (Buckinghamshire Council).

The report is being prepared by Chris Wade of the People & Places Partnership, based on research and survey work undertaken in Buckingham during Summer 2023. The town centre customer profile has been prepared by Laura Harris of LH Analytics.



Background: Revitalising Town Centres

Background

Introduction

This proposal has been prepared by the People & Places Partnership as a basis for preparing an updated Town Centre Study for Buckingham town centre on behalf of Buckingham Town Council. This study will be developed from an evidence-based review of the Buckingham town centre and the two key beneficiary groups of town centre customers and businesses.

Buckingham Town Councils' requirements

A Buckingham Town Centre Retail Appraisal, Health Check and Opportunities Assessment was undertaken in 2016. Since this time the outlook for high streets has changed substantially, with major changes accelerated by Covid-19.

The last health check included: Consumer/customer insights; operator/business views; location review; commentary on outlook and growth; conclusions/summary of findings, including positive and negative indications of health and growth and improvement opportunities.

The Town Council has been asked to commission a Town Centre Study that updates this research, as well as providing options for the improvement or development of the town on behalf of Buckingham & Villages Community Board (Buckinghamshire Council).

The new Buckingham Town Centre Study report should include:

Baseline data, including consumer/customer and operator/business views and a location review. A comparison and judgement should be made about how well Buckingham's town centre is currently doing in comparison to the national picture. The Town Council will provide updated data on current business occupancy rates and the mix of retail types, for further analysis and comparison to national benchmarks.

Research for the report should minimally include a stakeholder workshop, to be held in Buckingham and involving a mixed group of public sector, private sector and third sector representatives. The Town Council will arrange the venue and invite attendees. The Town Council can also circulate surveys, or other consultation materials to relevant stakeholders, as required.

Ideas for growth and improvement. This could include: short, medium and long term options.

The study should also identify areas where the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan could provide strength and support to the high street through local planning policy.

It is possible that there would be further work in one or more of the areas identified during the ideas for growth and improvement stage, and the successful applicant would be able to deliver this work too.

People & Places' approach

The People & Places Partnership offers a proven track-record of [bringing facts and faces to centres](#) through an evidenced-based, collaborative working method for enabling the revitalisation of town and city centres. People & Places have extensive experience of

conducting research into town centre performance and perceptions; businesses confidence; stakeholder engagement; partnership development; town centre action planning and delivery; and performance monitoring.

In 2020, People & Places updated its earlier national [revitalising town centres toolkit](#), prepared for the Local Government Association (LGA). The toolkit provides local leaders with guidance on how to approach the revitalisation of town and city centres.

The methodology used by People & Places to develop the Buckingham Town Centre Study will adopt and adapt the approach created nationally as good practice in the LGA toolkit. In line with the requirements of Buckingham Town Council, this methodology focuses on updating the 2016 Health Check with a focus that looks at 'retail and beyond'.

Characteristics of the People & Places' approach, specifically adapted to the brief provided by Buckingham Town Council and to advance the approach of the previous study to fit current circumstances include:

- Structuring the proposal and associated costs as a menu of core and optional activities to enable the Town Council and partners to determine the appropriate approach and budget.
- Combining the use of secondary data and analytics to construct a customer profile that can to different degrees be comparable with the 2016 study.
- Capturing primary survey data about customer use, perceptions and priorities for the town centre rather than relying solely on the perspective of operators businesses. People & Places' extensive experience shows that business and customer perspectives about town centres are often very different.
- Using the LGA's Revitalising Town Centre Checklist (see page 4) as a focus for survey work, analysis and recommendations to ensure that the proposed study looks beyond retail-based solutions and towards factors that local leadership is able to address.
- Drawing on People & Places' previous experience of working with the Neighbourhood Planning process to ensure the study adds to the understanding of town centre issues and potential policy recommendations
- Helping the Town Council to work with Buckingham Copuncil and other partners local authorities to develop a 'Forward Framework' that focus on both the 'what' and the 'how' of town centre revitalisation.
- Working in a way that enable People & Places to work with trusted associates to help the Town Council deliver some initial projects in conjunction with local stakeholders.



The People and Places Partnership are creators of the Local Government Association's national revitalising town centres toolkit. This online toolkit provides practical guidance and resources to assist councils in taking a strategic and evidence-based approach to revitalising town centres. The updated version prepared by People & Places in summer 2020 includes newly available case studies and guidance to help local authorities and place partnerships to develop COVID-19 recovery planning as part of wider revitalisation.

The toolkit uses the town centre checklist developed by the People & Places Partnership for delivering the 'how' and the 'what' of town centre revitalisation. Councils can use the self-assessment 'town centre checklist' with partners, to regularly review progress in developing local policy and practice.

Key elements to consider in applying the town centre checklist are:

- **Foundations:** the process should be underpinned by an up-to-date review of existing strategies, collective objectives and evidence from recent surveys.
- **Function:** action planning begins with a clear statement of identified issues; recognition of council and partners' roles; creation of suitable responses; acknowledgment of gaps in delivery; identification of impact measures.
- **Form and Folk:** next comes the development of appropriate organisational 'form' to coordinate activity including defining the roles of key partners and wider stakeholder engagement through 'folk'.
- **Finances:** financial planning needs to include identifying opportunities for fund raising inward investment and partnership sustainability.
- **Forward planning:** finally, everything gets written down as a 'forward framework' and regularly reviewed.

The updated toolkit uses guidance on responding to the COVID-19 pandemic based on an adaptation of the Institute of Place Management's (IPM) national post-COVID 19 Recovery Framework. The IPM's Post-COVID 19 Recovery Framework has much in common with the toolkit's approach. Essentially both frameworks place a strong emphasis on evidence-based planning and delivery whilst focusing on shaping the 'how' (partnership development) and 'what' (action planning & delivery) of recovery/revitalisation. Both frameworks recognise the key roles of local coordination and communication in delivering successful town and city centre outcomes.

LGA Revitalising Town Centres Checklist	
FOUNDATION	
Evidence and objectives	Has a baseline survey of issues been completed including COVID-19 impacts, objectives defined and short/long-term outcome monitoring 'dashboard' agreed?
FUNCTION	
Travel, parking, and access	Is an integrated town centre travel, parking and access strategy in place with immediate social distancing measures and transition to increased sustainability?
Planning and property	Are town-centre-first policies, master-planning or asset management in place that take account of COVID-19 impacts and engage businesses and landlords?
Streetscape and public realm	Has a prioritised streetscape and public realm improvement plan been agreed that facilitates social distancing and increases long-term, cross-town foot-flow?
Business support	Is there tailored mentoring and support to enhance the quality, performance and distinctiveness of businesses based on recovery needs and future trends?
Place branding and marketing	Is there a clear understanding of the town brand with pooled resources and a creative, collective campaign offering reassurance to existing and new markets?
Digital tech and data	Is there an assessment of digital infrastructure and skills with an investment plan for the collective use of data in marketing and monitoring the town centre?
FORM	
Governance and influence	Is there an appropriate structure, membership and credibility to coordinate local stakeholder activity and influence cross-departmental or strategic partnerships?
FOLK	
Community engagement and coordination	Is there strong public, private and community engagement with active and coordinated involvement in planning and delivery that extends to community assets development and is backed by a clear communications plan?
Capacity mapping and team building	Are there an effective chair, suitably skilled board, employment of necessary staff, effective management of trained volunteers and established relationships for joint working with other stakeholder groups?
FUNDING	
Finances and investment	Is there an organisation with robust financial procedures and strategy agreed for diverse and sustainable fund raising and income to support a town centre? Is it 'run as a business' with inter-relationships understood and investment secured?
FORWARD PLANNING	
Strategy and plans	Is there a well-defined 'forward framework' comprising an overarching vision/strategy, a rolling organisational business plan and a parallel action plan coordinating and monitoring delivery on the ground?

Methodology

The methodology proposed here to prepare the Buckingham Town Centre Study has six key elements reflecting the requirements in the brief blended with People & Places' tried and tested approach used in the LGA toolkit.

1. *Analysis of Existing Evidence & Strategies*

It is proposed that the work commences with a desktop review and analysis of existing and emerging local strategies, reports and available data relating to Buckingham town centre. This will include liaison with the Town Council and Neighbourhood Planning group to understand previous and ongoing research and plan development.

As part of this initial analysis, People & Places will assess business mix and vacancy data provided by Buckingham Town Council's Town Centre Manager. This will use a detailed business use class classification system and record ownership types and vacant premises. This data can be compared against People & Places' national benchmarks to help understand the town's business mix and evolving function.

This business survey will help meet the Town Council's requirement to 'look beyond retail' and examine the changing categories and portfolio of retail, hospitality, office and professional services businesses in the town and how this may look for the next five years. It will include the split of independent and national businesses (franchises included) and any impact of rental costs and rates on the businesses that do or do not maintain a presence in the town.

The assessment of the business mix will also help provide evidence of any change to the function and performance of Buckingham town centre in light of increasing online sales versus in-store sales and the emergence of new hospitality delivery services. With a shift to working from home for some Buckingham residents, the impact on Buckingham for different businesses or services on the High Street will also be anticipated.

It is suggested that this desktop review and business mix analysis, will be supplemented by an initial interactive, briefing(s) to key stakeholders including representatives of Town Council, Neighbourhood Plan Group, Buckingham Council officers, business representatives, and civic groups organised by Town Council. From People & Places' experience, such an introductory briefing will be important in achieving 'buy-in' to the process at an early stage.

The initial online briefing(s) will present an objective overview of the methodology and purpose of the study, to assist in developing ongoing, local engagement with businesses and other key stakeholders. This will help gain support for the objectives of the study in a way that will help achieve wide buy-in to the final study findings and 'forward framework'. This short, initial briefing(s) is intended to be in addition to the later in-person stakeholder workshop required by the brief.

In these initial meetings, People & Places will brief stakeholders on the importance of addressing both the 'what' and the 'how' of recovery planning and revitalisation. Partners and stakeholder groups will be prompted to begin reflecting on the potential future roles of their organisations in supporting the delivery of a cohesive Buckingham Recovery Strategy.

In this initial stage and throughout this work to develop the Buckingham Town Centre Study, People & Places will operate in an iterative way that reflects phased findings back to the

Town Council, partners and wider stakeholders through an engaging process. A stage 1 report will be prepared and shared with the Town Council at the end of phase of the work.

2. Preparation of Town Centre Customer Profile with Secondary Data Analytics

People & Places have teamed-up with [LH Analytics](#) to develop this proposal and deliver the study in a way in which it will create a town centre customer profile based on available secondary data. LH Analytics is a small and friendly data and location analytics consultancy which assists town and their businesses to better understand customers.

Using customer journey and location analytics, LH Analytics can give clear insights about growth and diversification, by understanding a town's customers or footfall, catchment, population and market characteristics.

As part of the core proposal, it is recommended that LH Analytics prepare a drivetime analysis for Buckingham town centre. This will provide an overview of the town's catchment that can provide a context for more subsequent primary research of local customers and their perceptions and priorities for the town centre. This drive time analysis will include:

- 5,10,15,20,25-minute drivetimes around the town centres with map of catchments,
- Census information on size of population age and ethnicity profile
- average Income

3. Undertaking Town Centre Assets and Stakeholder Surveys

To help objectively understand Buckingham town centre, the People & Places Partnership propose to adapt its national town centre baseline survey process that forms part of the LGA toolkit.

This tried and tested, nationally-used survey process enables the monitoring and analysis of town centre performance and key stakeholder perceptions. The purpose of the monitoring process is to collect standardised key performance indicators (KPIs) to help local organisations and businesses to better understand the function, trends and issues facing the town centre and its potential relative to similar towns elsewhere. Key components of the Buckingham town centre baseline survey will be a town centre customer and business surveys.

Evidence from such detailed surveys will help support a reasoned, evidence-based discussion of key stakeholders' priorities and facilitate involvement in preparing and delivering a Buckingham Town Centre 'forward framework' of initial recommendations. The approach will help in strengthening the collective understanding of the role of the town centre as a retail destination and local community hub.

The Place

3a. The Mix of Businesses & Services

To help understand the scale and variety of businesses and services in a town centre, data made available by Buckingham Town Council about the mix of town centre businesses and services in 2019 and 2023 will be assessed. This offers the opportunity to gain insights during a period when already significant trends were heightened by the pandemic and greater flexibility in the way the mix could be curated through the planning system. It is key to understand these trends as a pointer to the incentives and controls that can and should be

employed to maintain the critical mass of Buckingham's town centre mix of businesses and services.

3b. Town Centre Access and Movement

As part of a town centre visit, an initial audit will be undertaken of town centre arrival points, access routes, sightlines and signage. This information will be helpful in determining the way customers access and move around the different parts of the town centre and the impact vitality of Buckingham.

The People

3c. Town Centre Business Confidence Survey

People & Places will adapt its tried and tested business survey in a way that enables benchmarking with other towns and comparison with the 2016 study. This business survey will also follow the customer surveys so that it might adapt and test some of the findings from the analysis of customers' perspectives.

The core proposal and costs presented here allow for the preparation and distribution of an online 'business confidence survey' that will be made available to every customer facing, town centre business and organisation using social media accounts and email contacts made available by Buckingham Town Council and partners. The short survey will be used to gauge businesses' perceptions of trading in the town centre and get a sense of their collective future priorities for helping to boost its economic performance.

This proposal allows for the option of the survey to be produced and distributed in a paper format if this is preferred. Using this approach, every business will be visited up to three times with the option of an online version also provided. This face-to-face approach could equally be used to capture the responses of those businesses and organisations that did not respond to an initial online version.

As an adjunct to the business confidence and town centre business survey, preliminary questions will be asked about Buckingham's digital infrastructure and the different perspectives on services such as social media channels; targeted marketing by businesses; web site development and online browsing/sales.

3d. Town Centre Customer Survey

People & Places will work with the Town Council and Neighbourhood Planning group, to agree a town centre customer survey that complements and adds to research already undertaken about residents' perceptions of the town centre.

People & Places' extensive experience shows that business and customer perspectives about town centres are often very different. Distinct from the previous study, this approach therefore does not rely on an understanding of customers' use of the town centre gathered indirectly from businesses. It will also survey their views on a wide-range of issues that looks beyond retail alone as an inspiration for customers to use the wider town centre.

This approach gives more specific information about local customers perceptions and use of the town centre than could be gleaned from depending solely on secondary data to prepare a customer profile.

A link to an online town centre users' survey will be distributed through Town Council and partners social media accounts to gauge the perceptions, profile and priorities of different types of town centre customers.

4. Stakeholder Engagement and Publication of Final Study Report

Based on the findings of the desktop review, initial stakeholder engagement and surveys, People & Places will take the lead in initial action planning with the Council, its partners and stakeholders.

The action planning process will use the structure of the town centre checklist contained within the LGA's revitalising town centres toolkit. This enables a comprehensive and integrated response in providing practical suggestions for ensuring Buckingham's daytime and nighttime economies evolve in concert to maximise the draw of the town centre and aid its post-pandemic recovery.

This process will be initiated through the preparation of a Buckingham Town Centre Forward Framework. The key to the approach advocated by the People and Places Partnership is to have a seamless thread running through evidence of issues, responses and measures of impact. This forward framework can be produced to suggest immediate (6 months), short-term (12-24 months) and medium-term (up to five years) actions. Reference will be inbuilt to the latest thinking and best practice on a comprehensive range of issues.

The findings from the study and the initial Buckingham Town Centre Forward Framework will be shared at an in-person meeting of key town centre stakeholders from a mixed group of public sector, private sector and third sector representatives.

After feedback from the meeting, the Forward Framework will be expanded as the final section of the evolving Buckingham Town Centre Study. The proposal includes the option for graphically-designed shorter to be produced for stakeholders.

Review: Existing Strategies

Initial stakeholder engagement was supplemented by a desktop review and analysis of existing local strategies and reports relating to Buckingham town centre. These key existing strategies are:

- Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (2015)
- Buckingham Neighbourhood Development Plan (2015)
- Buckingham Town Centre Retail Appraisal, Health Check and Opportunities Assessment (2016)

Review of policies relating to town centre role

Local Plan

It is important for the future development of town centres to be driven by a collective future vision and understanding of their evolving function.

The legacy Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) published in 2013 by the then Aylesbury Vale District Council offered the following description of how Buckingham town centre could be directed to evolve:

“Buckingham town centre also needs to build on its programme of regeneration to maximise the benefits continuing growth can bring, and to support the level of jobs and homes growth proposed for the northern part of Aylesbury Vale. Growth of the university campus is likely to play a role in this. Some of these issues are addressed in the made Buckingham Neighbourhood Plan. It sets out policies to revitalise and grow Buckingham town centre.”

A specific policy for town, village and local centres to support new and existing communities, stated that the then district council will promote the sustainable growth and regeneration of Aylesbury, Buckingham and three smaller town centres. Within defined town centres, development proposals for retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development would be supported where they:

- a. retain or enhance the town centre’s historic character and appearance, vitality and viability
- b. sustain or enhance diverse town centre uses and customer choice, incorporating residential accommodation above ground floor level where possible, and
- c. are readily accessible by public transport, walking and cycling.

The policy stated that proposals for town centre uses should be sited within the town or local centres. Proposals for development in and around town centres, including proposals for changes of use, should support the aspirations for regeneration of those centres including those subject to neighbourhood plans by improving the range and quality of retail, public realm, leisure, employment and training opportunities.

The VALP was officially adopted by the newly formed Buckinghamshire Council in 2021, in lieu of the existence then of a new county-wide Local Plan.

Buckinghamshire Council is committed to produce a new Local Plan within five years of coming into being, that is, by April 2025. It states that the new Local Plan will aim to deliver sustainable development by meeting social, economic, and environmental needs to bring benefits for people who live, work, or visit, through:

- making sure there are enough of the right homes and workplaces
- getting the infrastructure in the right place at the right time
- delivering better deals from developers on the obligations arising from their proposals

Neighbourhood Development Plan

Buckingham's Neighbourhood Development Plan (BNDP) became a legal document in 2015, after approval in a town-wide referendum. Its policies have been used in planning decisions for Buckingham since then.

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and Town Council have recognised that since 2015 there have been many changes including that the town's population has increased, from the 12,000 of the 2011 census to more than 14,000 in the 2021 census, and today is heading towards 16,000 as further housing developments are completed.

Due to this, Buckingham Town Council are working to refresh the Neighbourhood Plan to ensure that it works towards building a future Buckingham that suits also its residents, businesses and visitors. The new plan will set out fresh policy ideas to ensure the vibrancy of our historic market town.

The overarching vision of the 2015 Buckingham Neighbourhood Plan was to “make Buckingham a better place to live, work, study and play”. It was recognised that this must be achieved in the context of sustainable growth. The Plan identified six themes as important for delivering this vision:

- Housing and phasing
- Design, heritage and environment
- Culture, leisure, health
- Economy and education
- Infrastructure
- Developer contributions

These themes encapsulated 12 objectives which were identified to ensure that the Plan makes Buckingham a better place to live, work, study and play. It is possible to recognise objectives which have a primary and secondary relationship with guiding revitalisation of the town centre.

Primary: Foster the economic development of the town and its hinterland by providing employment-led growth, increasing the town's appeal to tourists and invigorating the town centre.

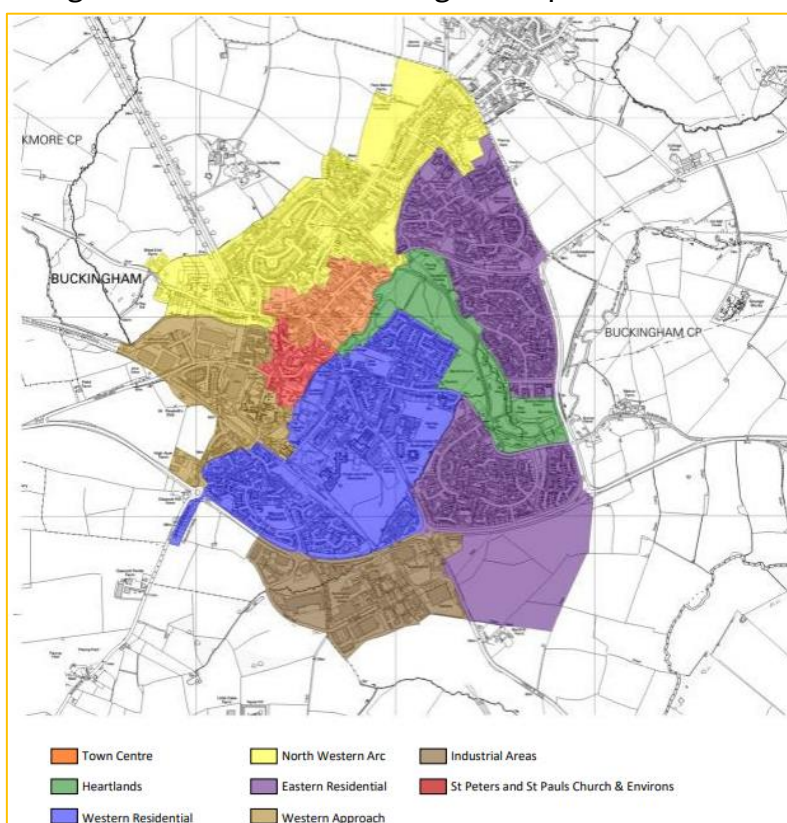
Secondary

- Conserve and enhance the town's historic environment and its setting.

- Encourage development that strengthens culture, leisure, sport and play facilities in the town.
- Maintain the quality of Buckingham's parkland and green space, in particular its 'green heart'.
- Improve movement into and around the town in a healthy and safe manner. Specifically promoting cycling, walking and ease of access for the disabled.

The Plan also identified eight distinct character areas including the town centre (see map opposite). This is described as forming the central focus of the town that contains many historic buildings and frontages including a number of listed buildings. This provides a wide variety of architectural styles and a mixture of residential and business use. The mix of residential housing includes retirement flats and flats and houses catering for a wide range of ages and lifestyles. It provides a focal point for the town with connected streets.

Projecting forward, the 2015 Neighbourhood Plan stated that through its policies *"the town will have grown. New people, employment and retail have come to the town. However, the traditions of Buckingham have been kept alive. The development which has taken place in the town centre has been complementary to the existing building scape. This has enabled the town to conserve and enhance the town's historic environment and its setting.*



The new residents and retail in the town centre will have contributed to the continuation of the town's markets and ensuring Buckingham continues as a market town well into the future."

In Buckingham in 2031 there will be:

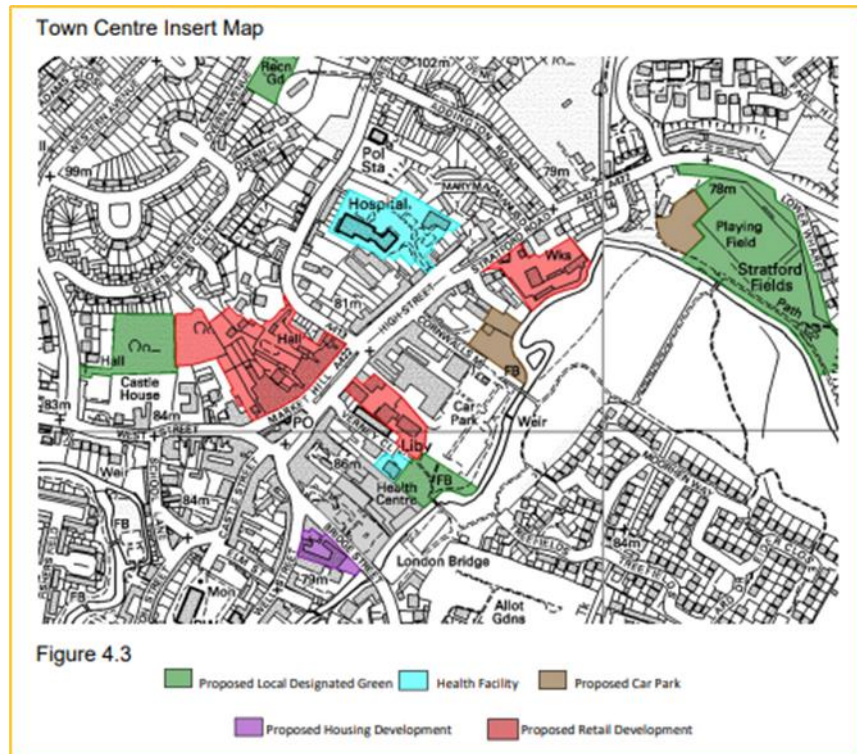
- An additional 617 dwellings excluding existing commitments
- An additional 400 rooms to accommodate the expansion of Buckingham University
- 10 hectares of new employment land

As the town centre insert plan shows, the 2015 Neighbourhood Plan envisaged that retail expansion would be a key part of town centre development.

Town centre economy

Specific town centre policies and proposals included as part of the economy and education section of the plan include:

- EE2: The allocation of land for retail, office and mixed development will be supported, with three potential sites identified.
- EE3: Applications will be supported for new town centre commercial uses.
- EE4: Retain and enhance both the primary and secondary retail frontages, including the restriction of professional services and hospitality to 35% of the primary retail frontages.
- EE5: Provision for additional town centre car parking as provided at Stratford Fields and on the site now occupied by Regents Gate.



Housing

The section on housing and phasing included:

- HP1: Allocate land for 617 new dwellings including 589 homes clustered along Tingewick Road that have been developed at sites G, H, I and J shown on development plan map overleaf.

Environment and heritage

The section on design, heritage and environment is very strong on safeguarding the natural environment and biodiversity though omits policies and proposals for conserving and enhancing Buckingham's built heritage, historic setting and public spaces.

Culture and leisure

In addition, the culture, leisure and health section included:

- CLH4: Provision of new or extended health care facilities on two existing sites at the Community Hospital and on Verney Close.
- CLH5: Identified green and open spaces will be protected and retained as designated Local Green Space.
- A 'Community Action' to produce a Community Building Strategy including proposals for a new cultural arts venue, sports facilities, a community building and a venue for religious services.

Investment in infrastructure

The section on infrastructure prides a clear objective to improve movement into and around the town in a healthy and safe manner, by promoting cycling, walking and ease of access for the disabled.

There is a community commitment that the Town Council strongly supports the provision of good connections, via pedestrian and cycle links. “Good connections” is defined as keep changes of levels and road crossings to a minimum and as part direct routes, with adequate widths to enable passing of cycles, wheel chairs and/or mobility scooters and made of a suitable material to allow easy access.

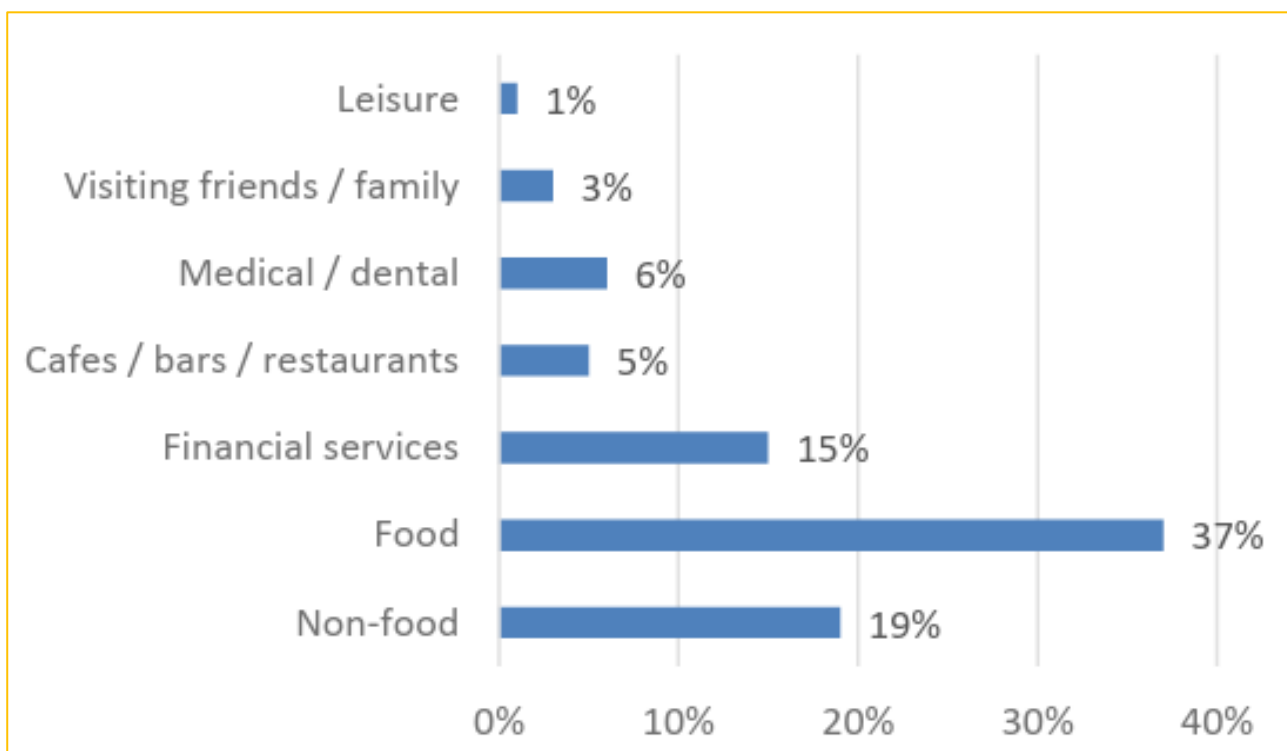
The section included a specific policy commitment that covers such good connections in-part:

I1: Pedestrian routes should be made suitable for disabled access, including the provision of seating as rest points.

Developer contributions

This section includes a recommended community action to seek contributions towards providing new pedestrian and cycle links within and beyond the town boundary that incorporate new and existing residential developments. It was also proposed that improved public transport could be provided along Tingewick Road that encompasses new developments.

Retail Appraisal, Health Check and Opportunities Assessment



This assessment drew on a 2015 retail study for its consumer profile. Key points were:

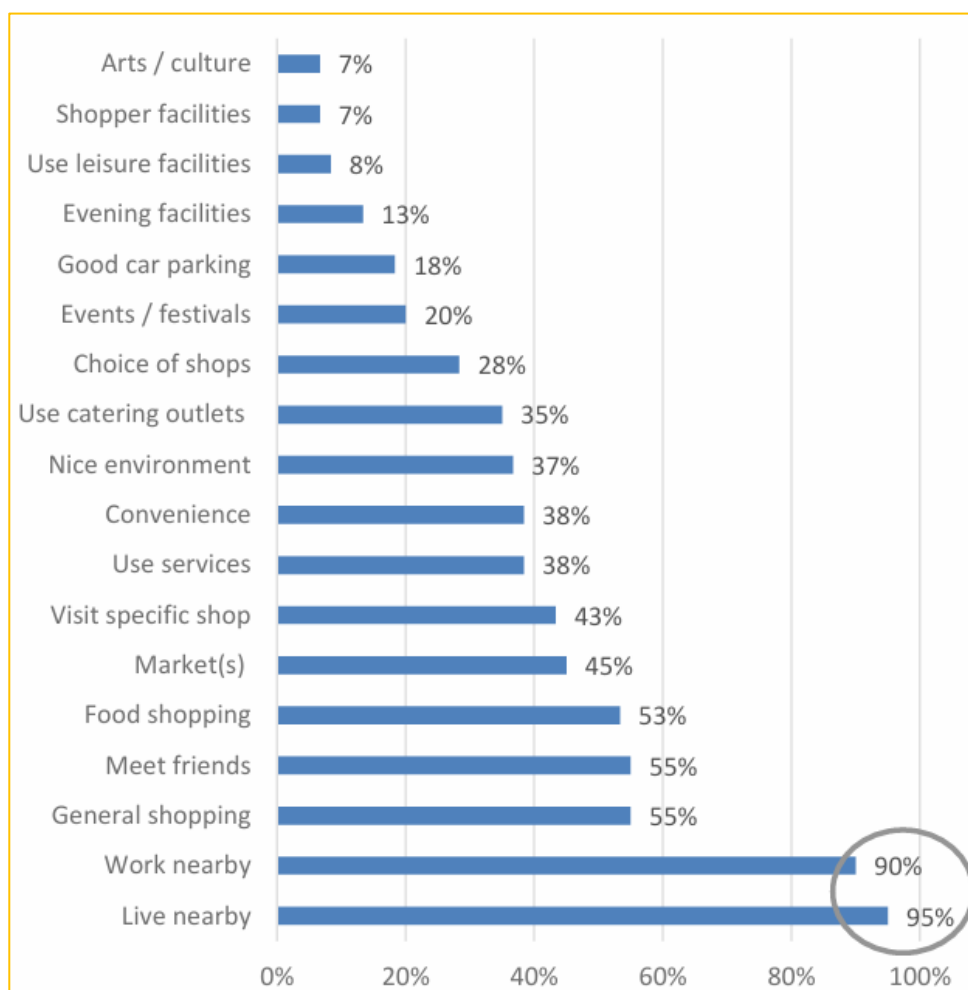
- residents from the town (88%) and surrounding area (72%) cited Buckingham as their most often visited destination.

- 75% visit once a week or more frequently and appear to be visiting primarily for food shopping.
- Buckingham is used by a high proportion of residents (56%) and to a lesser extent customers from surrounding areas (33%) for restaurants.

The Assessment used the Acorn is a lifestyle classification system developed by CACI to offer insights on the resident population. This identified that Buckingham's residents are dominated by the affluent and comfortably off lifestyle sectors. Both the Buckingham South and North wards were dominated by *Wealthy Achievers* (30% & 61%) and the *Comfortably Off* (27% & 25%), respectively. The former group are typically discerning consumers with mid to upmarket tastes and want good quality and good service over price. The latter group seemingly have good available disposable income, are aspirational and brand aware, whilst looking for good choice and customer service.

Primary research was undertaken into businesses' attitudes and their perceptions of customers' behaviour.

The survey captured businesses' perceptions about why customers visit the town centre. The primary reason was perceived as the convenience of its location, whilst over half of businesses cited secondary reasons including general shopping, meeting friends and food shopping.



Businesses also shared their perceptions of different town centre attributes (see table overleaf). Attributes weighted towards the 'poor' end of the scale were parking provision, destination stores, retail mix / offer and promotional activity. By comparison the more positive attributes were; quality of environment, catering mix / offer, and customer experience.

	1 Poor	2	3	4	5 Good	No Reply
Facilities	12%	25%	50%	7%	2%	5%
Retail mix / offer	12%	22%	47%	10%	5%	5%
Catering mix / offer	0%	8%	23%	43%	18%	7%
Parking provision	25%	20%	30%	12%	10%	3%
Destination stores	17%	23%	32%	7%	2%	18%
Customer experience	0%	10%	30%	38%	12%	10%
Ease of use	3%	12%	30%	35%	7%	13%
Promotional activity	8%	28%	40%	12%	2%	10%
Quality of environment	2%	7%	18%	52%	15%	7%

Through consultation on the Buckingham Town Centre Retail Appraisal, Health Check and Opportunities Assessment , it was determined that there would also be significant new retail areas and leisure facilities in the town centre.

At the time it was envisaged that the demand for more retail provision in the town centre would increase, factoring in the increase in population associated with the new housing developments were factored in. The increase in people was considered to mean a further demand for retail shops in the town centre and retention of existing retail uses.

This would be alongside:

- New community facilities:
- New sport facilities
- New and improved transport connections
- New green spaces
- New Cemetery and allotments

This Town Centre Retail Appraisal proposed that:

“The opportunity for Buckingham lies in further strengthening the local role it fulfils, both for shopping and socialising, while improving the offer and environment to increase its appeal to all its potential customer groups and encourage further usage (frequency, length of stay and wider town centre offer).”

The Retail Appraisal and Health Check wrote about development opportunities rather than recommended actions. The presented overview was that opportunity for Buckingham lies in further strengthening the local role it fulfils, both for shopping and socialising, while improving the offer and environment. It was envisaged that this would increase its appeal to all its potential customer groups and encourage further usage. Points that remain pertinent to review today are included:

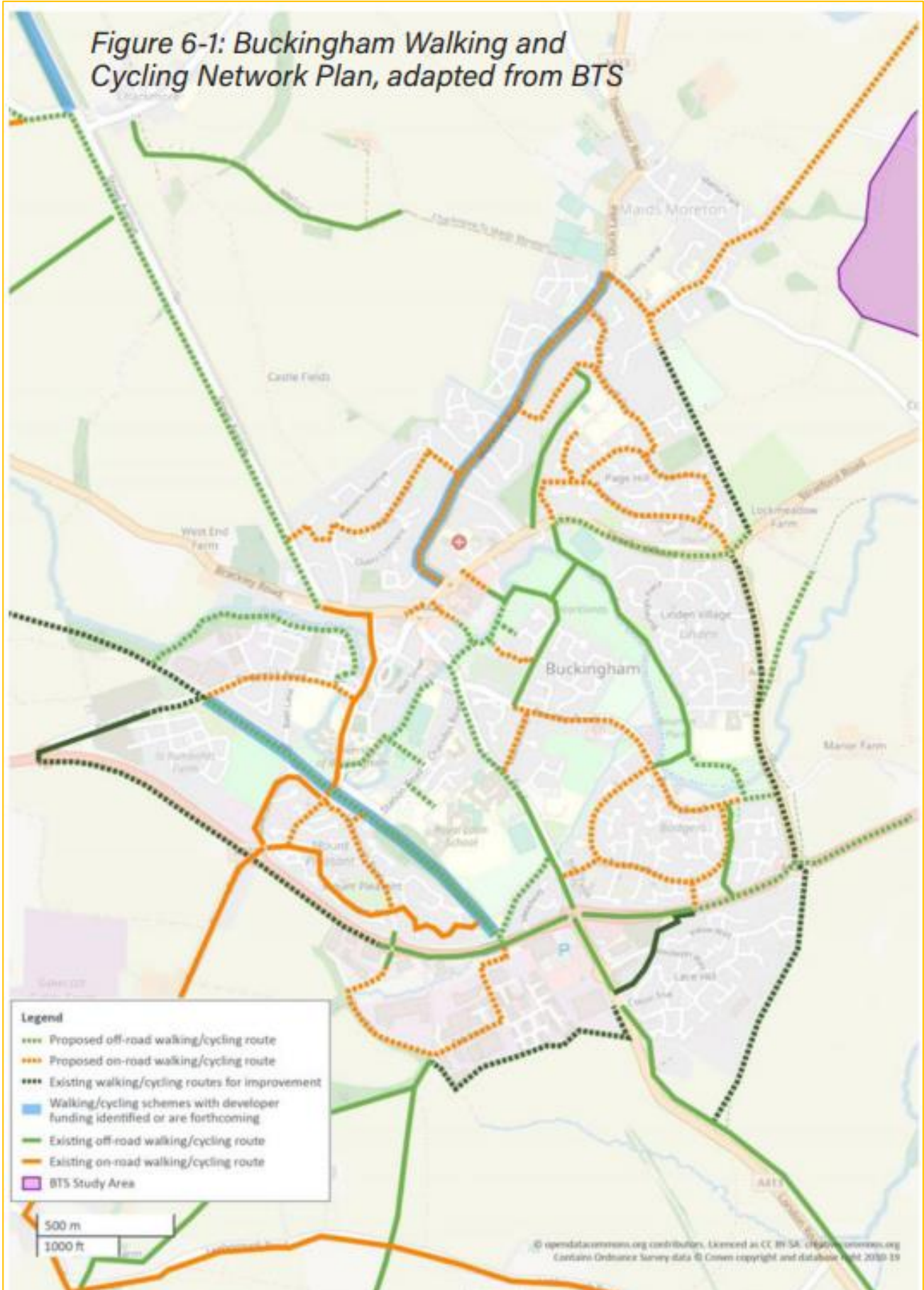
- better promotion is needed about the town's 'success' in response to a perception that it is not doing well.
- important to build on the positives such as the role as a meeting place with a good social and food offer, including markets.
- recognised weaknesses to overcome included parking provision and the mix of shops
- add 5-6 units in total to provide larger premises through planned / facilitated development or consolidation of units.
- increase shops with appeal to younger shoppers and expand food and beverage offer with 2-3 brands.
- improve quality and promotion of markets.
- carry-out a signage review 'to promote and remind' as well as integrate all areas.

Buckingham Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan -Lite

The Buckingham Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan -Lite (LCWIP-lite) extracts and updates the active travel routes identified in the Buckingham Transport Strategy from 2016, with the objective of increasing the mode share for walking and cycling in Buckingham. The proposed routes include a comprehensive network of walking and cycling routes in the town that connect residential areas the town centre. The routes identified should be considered as indicative routes to cater for existing and future active travel demand though have not yet been assessed in detail. Through further consultation with stakeholders, the routes will be refined at the next stage of LCWIP development, and high-level recommendations for improvement will be developed and prioritised for implementation.

Figure 6.1 (overleaf) is taken from the LCWIP-lite and identified what has been delivered since the Transport Strategy was published in 2016 and where there are commitments of developer funding, or where improvements are forthcoming. The proposed network improvements included existing facilities and a combination of off-road routes along busier corridors and on-road cycling in quieter streets and where available width for off-carriageway provision is constrained.

Figure 6-1: Buckingham Walking and Cycling Network Plan, adapted from BTS



Analytics: Town Centre Customer Profile

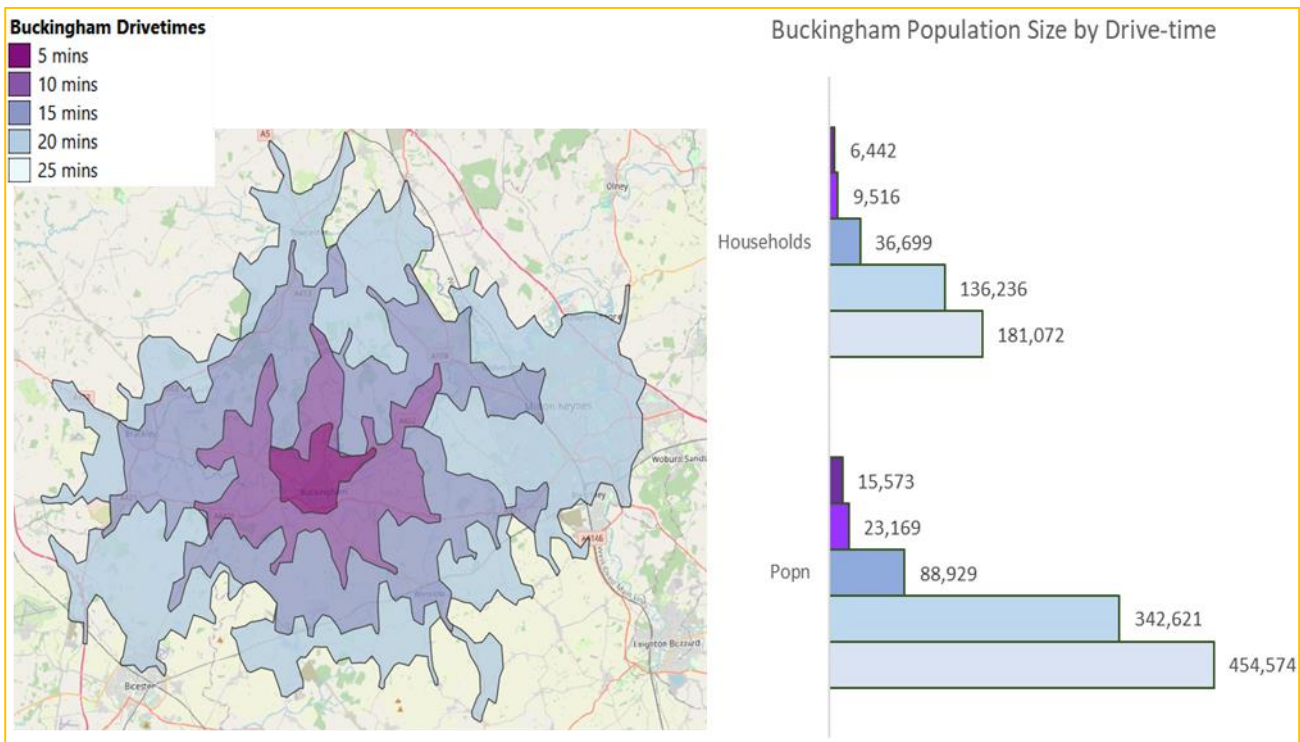
An updated town centre potential customer profile was prepared based on available secondary data. The aim is that using customer journey and location analytics, clear insights can be provided about growth and diversification opportunities, the potential for increases in footfall, the expansion of the Buckingham's catchment area and its market characteristics.

The summary analytics on the subsequent pages cover:

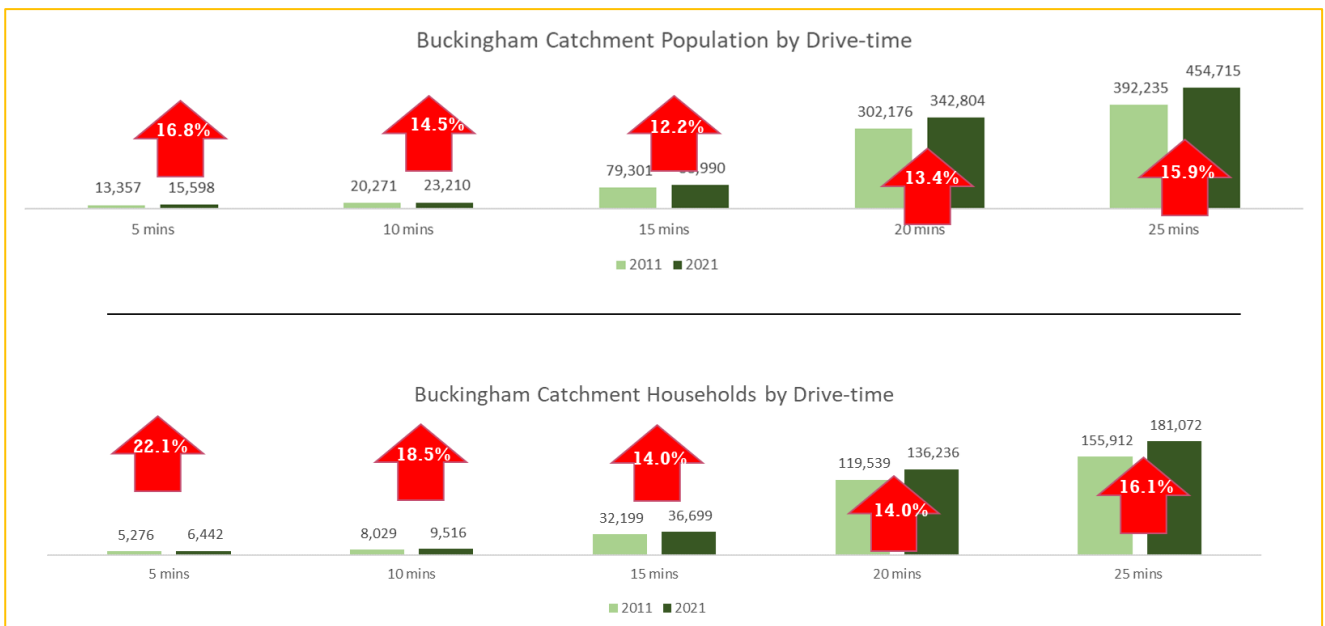
- Buckingham prospect population size by drive-time isochrone
- Buckingham census stats (2011 vs 2021) – by drive-time
- Buckingham census stats (2011 vs 2021) – residents living within a 5-minute drive-time
- The average income after household costs
- Buckingham sub regional towns by drive-time
- Buckingham competing towns by drive-time
- Buckingham competing towns and their drive-times

See analysis overleaf.

Buckingham Prospect Population Size by Drive-time Isochrone

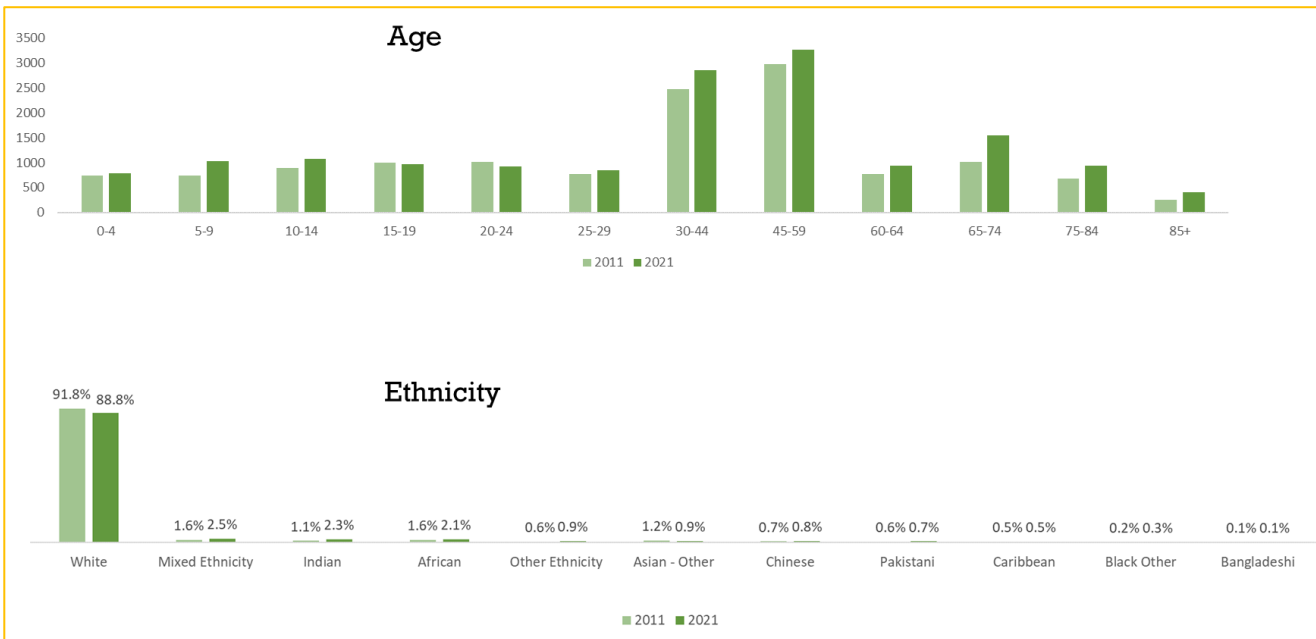


Buckingham Census Stats (2011 Vs 2021) – by Drive-time



The analysis of the Buckingham prospect population size by drive-time shows that there is a population of nearly half a million (454,574) potential customers within a 25-minute drive. Comparison between the 2011 and 2021 Census data shows that this catchment population has grown by a significant 16% (62,480).

Buckingham Census Stats (2011 Vs 2021) – Local Residents living within a 5 Minute Drive-time



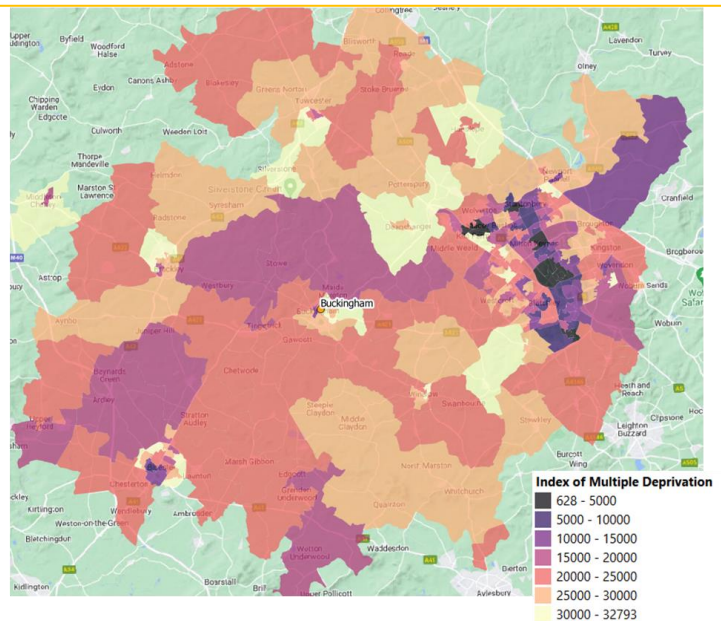
Buckingham – The Index of Multiple Deprivation

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) ranks every small area in England from 1 (most deprived area) to 32,844 (least deprived area).

The IMD combines information from the seven domains to produce an overall relative measure of deprivation. The domains are combined using the following weights:

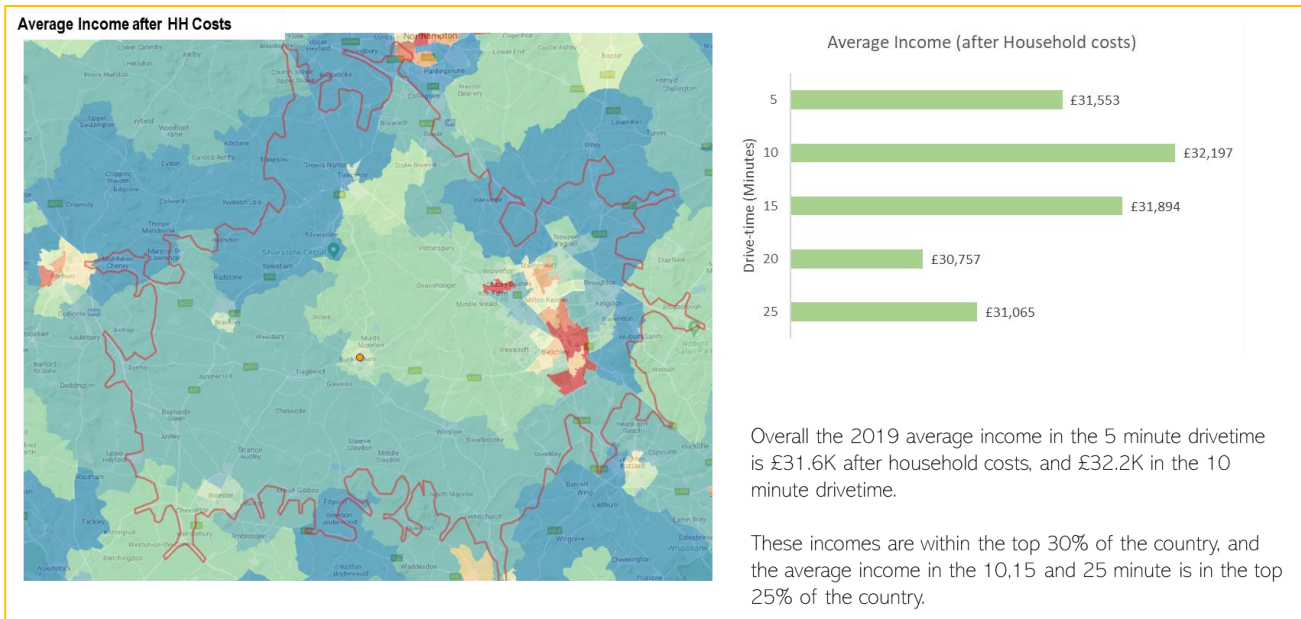
- Income Deprivation (22.5%)
- Employment Deprivation (22.5%)
- Education, Skills and Training Deprivation (13.5%)
- Health Deprivation and Disability (13.5%)
- Crime (9.3%)
- Barriers to Housing and Services (9.3%)
- Living Environment Deprivation (9.3%)

The Population in the Catchment around Buckingham is predominantly less deprived. In areas on the outskirts of Milton Keynes, on the edge of the Buckingham Catchment at around 20 Minute Drive, there are some small areas that fall into the more deprived areas.

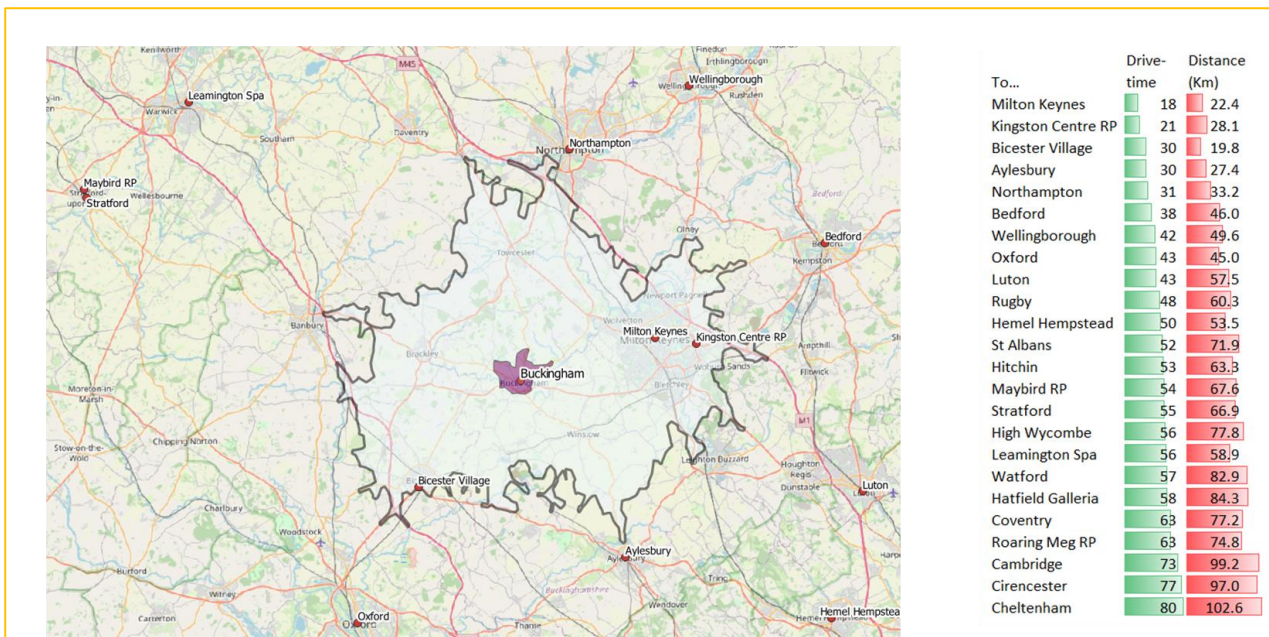


Analysis of Census statistics for residents living within a 5-minute drive-time shows that there has been an increase for all age categories except 15 to 24 year-olds. The ethnic mix of Buckingham’s catchment population has seen an increase in diversity with increases across arrange of different ethnic groups including Indian increasing the most from 1.1% to 2.3%. In terms of indices of multiple deprivation, Buckingham’s catchment area is predominantly less-deprived though there are some small areas of deprivation within a 20-minute drive.

Buckingham – The Average Income After Household Costs

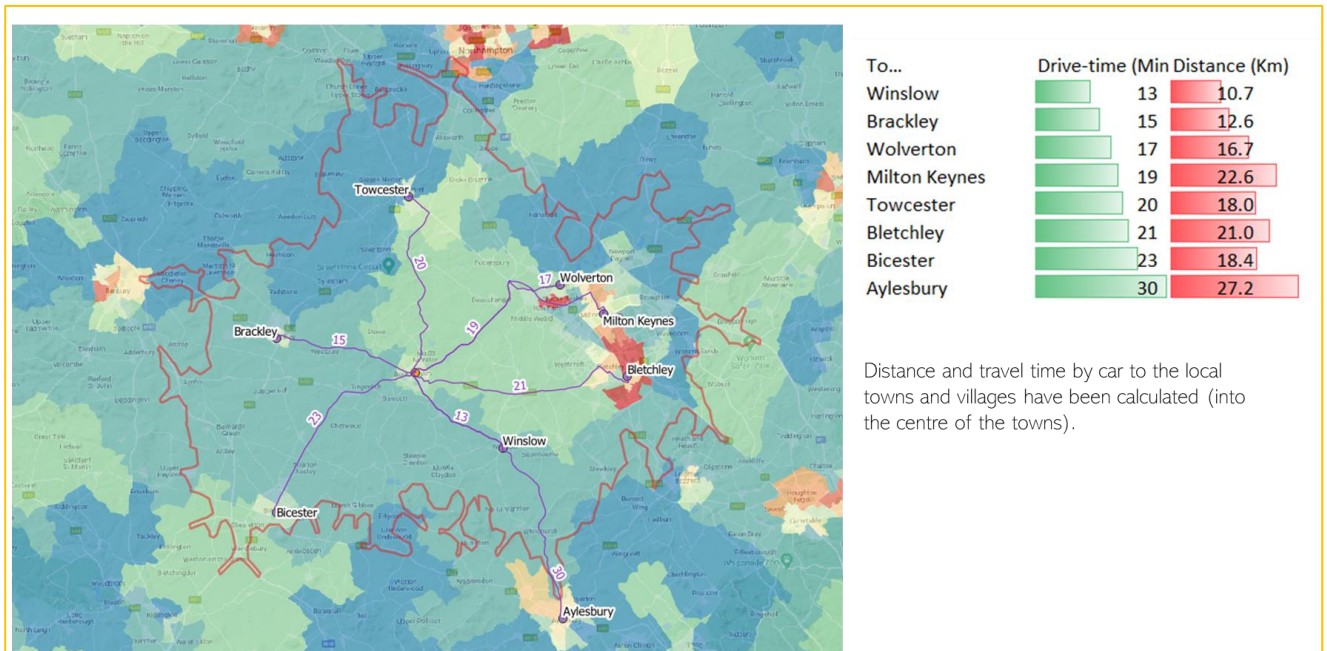


Buckingham Sub Regional Towns by Drive-Time



Analysis of average income after household costs show that in the 10, 15 and 25 minute drivetime catchments, they are in the top 25% in the country. Assessment of the Buckingham sub-regional retail destinations by drive-time indicates that Milton Keynes is the key centre within Buckingham’s catchment area, along with the Kingston shopping centre.

Buckingham Competing Towns by Drive-Time



Buckingham Competing Towns and their Drive-Times



Analysis of Buckingham's competing towns by drive-time, shows that besides Milton Keynes, there are 7 towns within a 30-minute drivetime. Isochrone representations of these competing towns and their drive-times shows overlaps within 10-minute drive-times for four of these towns as well as Milton Keynes.

Evidence: The Survey Process

Undertaking Town Centre Assets and Stakeholder Surveys

To help objectively understand Buckingham town centre, the People & Places Partnership has adapted its town centre assets and stakeholder survey process that forms part of the LGA toolkit.

This tried and tested, nationally-used survey process enables the monitoring and analysis of town centre performance and key stakeholder perceptions. The purpose of the monitoring process is to collect standardised key performance indicators (KPIs) to help local organisations and businesses to better understand the function, trends and issues facing the town centre and its potential relative to similar towns elsewhere. Key components of the Buckingham town centre baseline survey will be a town centre customer and business surveys.

Evidence from such detailed surveys will help support a reasoned, evidence-based discussion of key stakeholders' priorities and facilitate involvement in preparing and delivering a Buckingham Town Centre 'forward framework' of initial recommendations. The approach will help in strengthening the collective understanding of the role of the town centre as a retail destination and local community hub. This survey of town centre assets and stakeholder perceptions has four elements:

a. The Mix of Businesses & Services

To help understand the scale and variety of businesses and services in a town centre, data made available by Buckingham Town Council about the mix of town centre businesses and services in 2019 and 2023 has been assessed. This offers the opportunity to gain insights during a period when already significant trends to maintain the critical mass of Buckingham's town centre mix of businesses and services.

b. Town Centre Access and Visual Assessment

As part of a town centre visit, an initial audit was undertaken of town centre arrival points, access routes, along with an initial assessment of the visual quality of key locations. This information will be helpful in determining the vitality of Buckingham and the way customers access and move around the different parts of the town centre.

c. Town Centre Business Confidence Survey

A business survey was sent digitally to all town centre businesses with the Town Council and Buckinghamshire Council. The short survey helps to gauge businesses' perceptions of trading in the town centre and gives a sense of their collective future priorities for helping to boost its economic performance.

d. Town Centre Customer Survey

People & Places has worked with the Town Council and Neighbourhood Planning group, to agree a town centre customer survey that complements and adds to research already undertaken about residents' perceptions of the town centre. Distinct from the previous study, this approach does not rely on an understanding of customers' use of the town centre gathered indirectly from businesses.

The Place: The Mix of Businesses & Services

Business and Services Use Class

It is important to understand the scale and variety of businesses and services in a town centre. A variety of shops and a wide range of services in a town are important to its ability to remain competitive and continue to attract customers. Sustaining a balance between the different aspects of retail and services ensures that the local population and visitors can spend time and money there, keeping the generated wealth within the local economy. Importantly, it provides local employment and helps to retain local spend rather than lose it to nearby towns or retail parks.

Data made available by Buckingham Town Council about the mix of town centre businesses and services in 2019 and 2023 offers the opportunity to gain insights during a period when already significant trends were heightened by the pandemic and greater flexibility in the way the mix could be curated through the planning system. It is key to understand these trends as a pointer to the incentives and controls that can and should be employed to maintain the critical mass of Buckingham's town centre mix of businesses and services.

Simplified use classes from Summer 2021

The types of businesses and services are classified and controlled to a degree by the planning system through use class designations. The ways the business uses were classified and controlled was simplified in September 2020. New regulations created a streamlined new use class system that came into operation in July 2021.

The implications for a town like Buckingham are that the greater flexibility enables, for example, premises previously occupied a shop to be readily converted to a restaurant. This can help reduce the number of empty units and increase town centre vitality. It can in extremes lead to an imbalance in the mix of businesses and services. The change in use class definitions also makes comparison between current and former business mix data more complicated.

The new use classes are: a broad Class E (commercial, business and service), Class F1 (learning and non-residential institutions) and Class F2 (local community). Shops fall into Class E or Class F2 depending on their use, size and location. This change is important in shaping the potential mix of town centre businesses because it is no longer necessary to obtain planning permission for some changes between various non-residential uses required under the previous use classes.

Full details of the changes, including the full list of the new use classes and their previous equivalents, are provided in People & Places downloadable guide to [changing the town centre business mix](#).

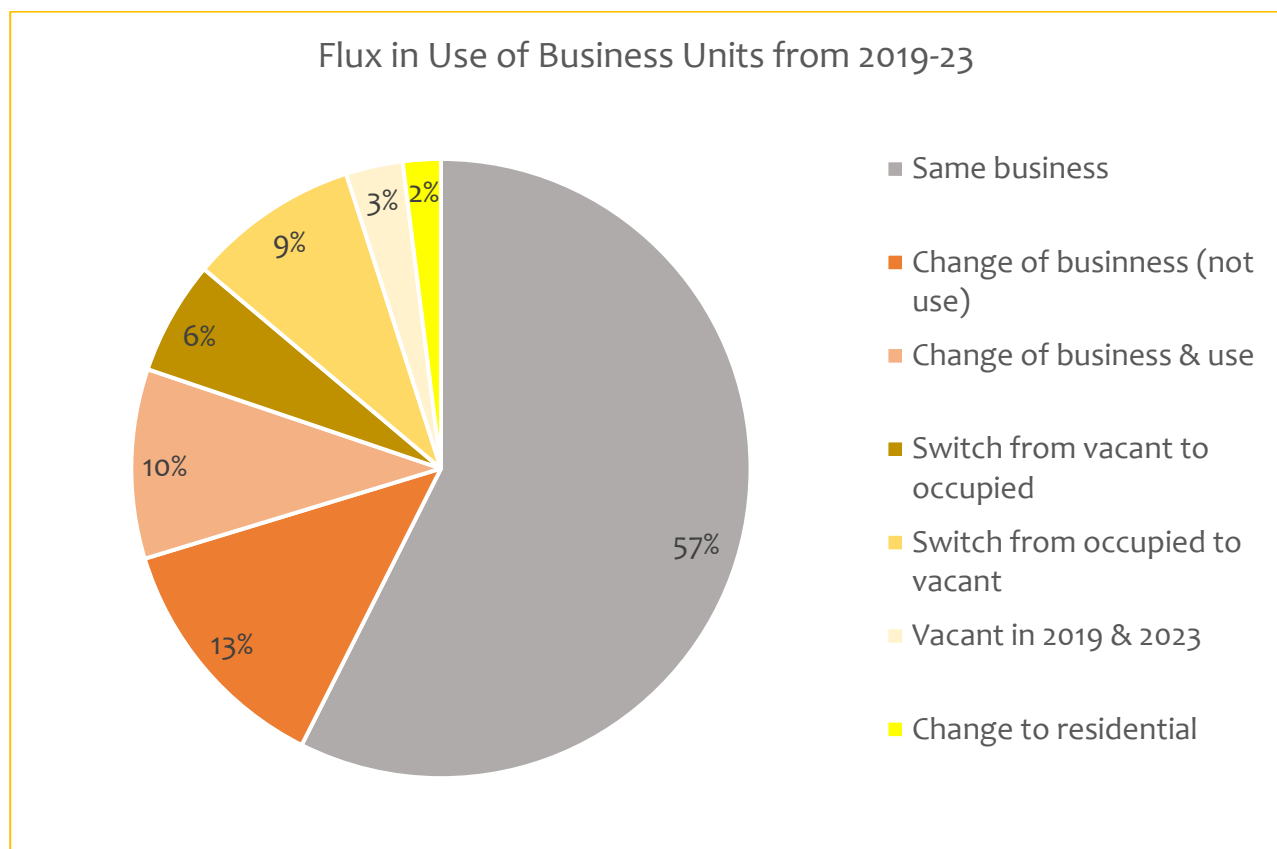
Permitted development

In addition to the changes allowed within the broader use class definitions, some changes between use classes are covered by 'permitted development' rights (meaning that planning permission is deemed to have been given). This includes new rules allowing commercial premises to be converted into homes that came into force in March 2021.

A change from business premises to new homes can be delivered through a simple 'prior approval' process instead of a full planning application, subject to consideration by the local planning authority of specific issues such as the impacts of noise from commercial premises and consideration of the impact of the loss of the ground floor commercial, business and service use (in conservation areas only).

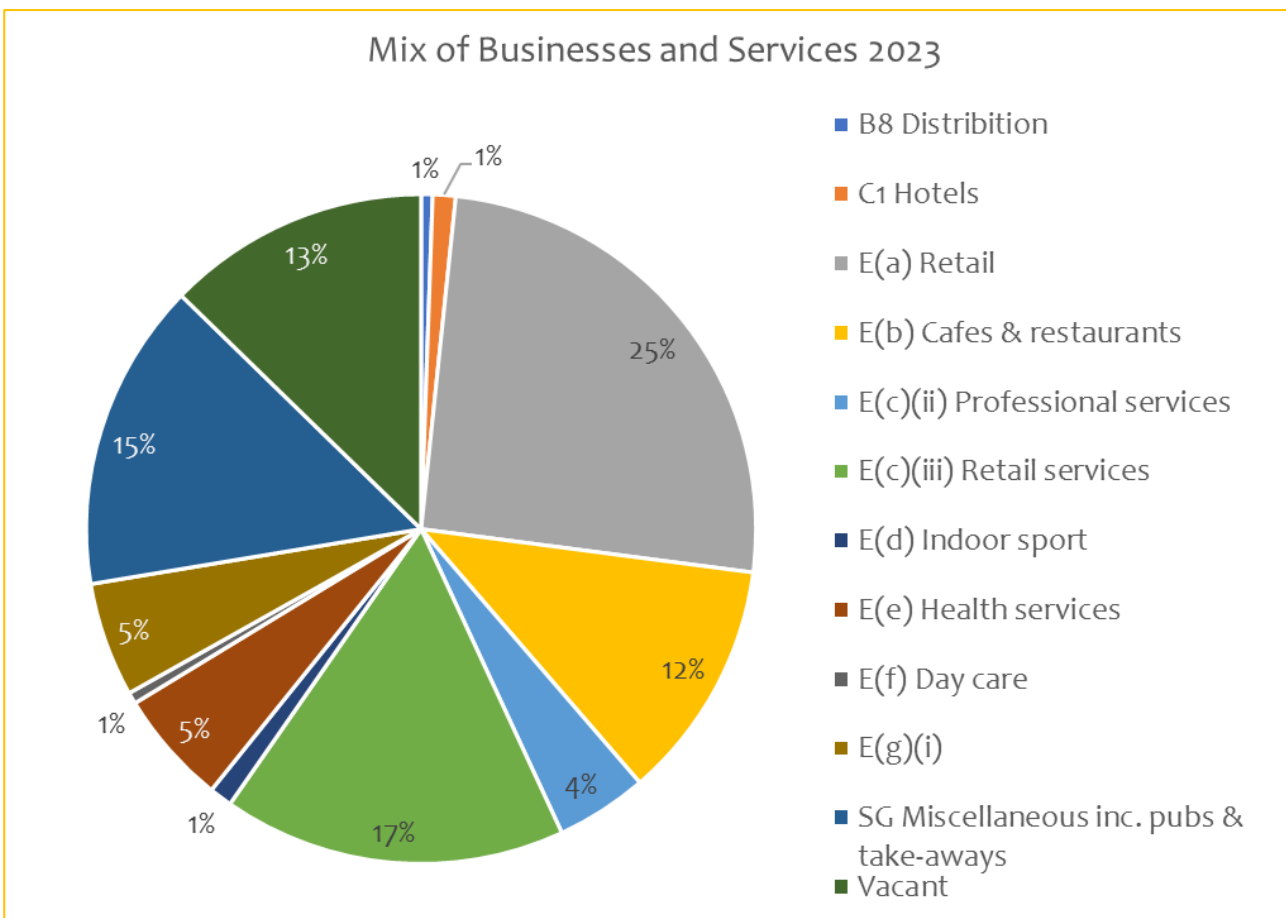
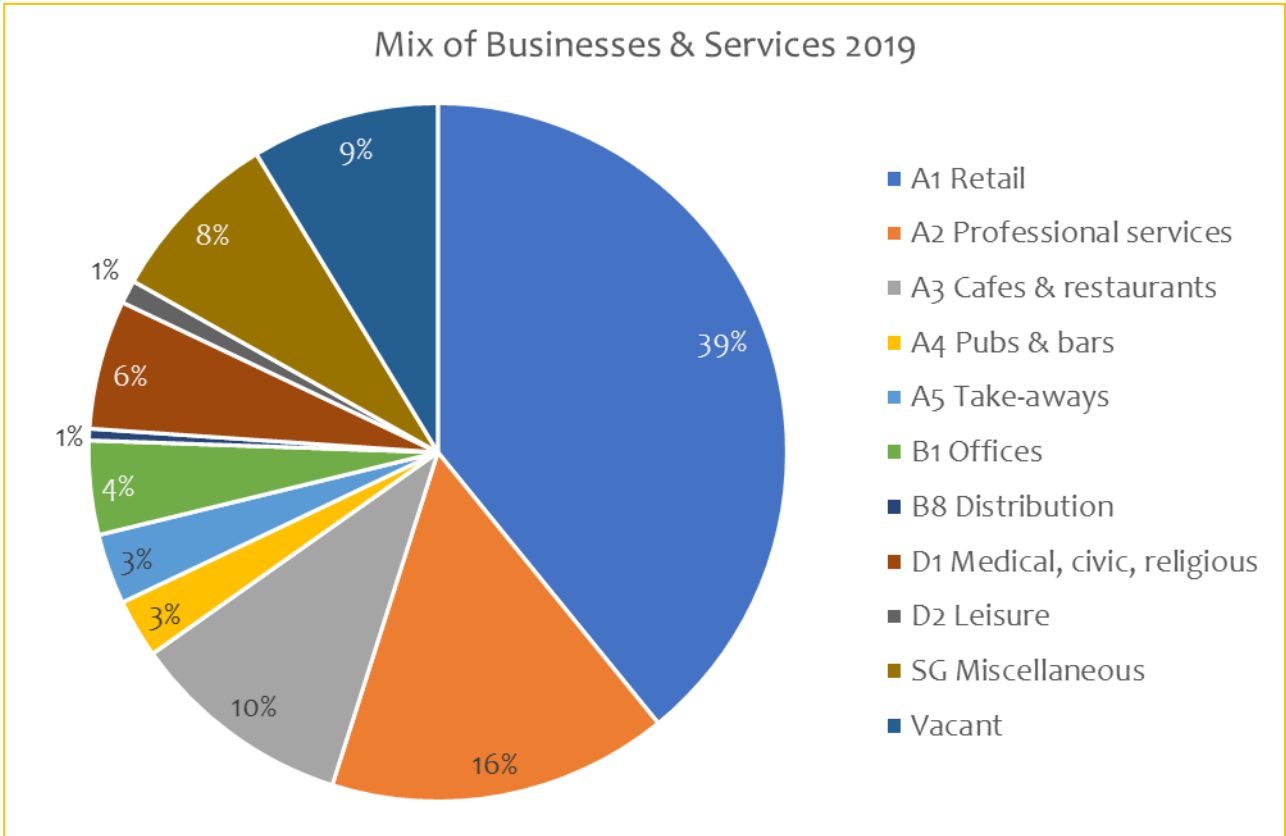
The permitted development right also currently includes a vacancy requirement designed to ensure the building changing use has been vacant for 3 months before the date of the application to protect successful businesses in these premises. A size limit is also included of 1,500 square metres of floorspace being able to change use under the right.

Analysis Changes in Business and Services Mix



The first headline trend to note is that the period between 2019 and 2023 has been a period of significant flux in the use of business premises in Buckingham town centre. As the chart below illustrates, over 40% of business premises in the town have had some form of change in use over this period. This is independent of changes in classification methodology though flags-up a potential instability to be wary of.

Over the period, just under a quarter (23%) of business premises changed in tenant and/or type of business use, including change of business whilst retaining the same use (13%). The changes including a significant (10%) switch in use as designated by the pre-2021 business use classification, including notably the former M&Co premises reopening as the Verdetto Lounge. There was also a flux in vacant units with some empty properties being brought back into use (6%), whilst slightly more other premises became vacant over the period. A small proportion (3%) were empty in both 2019 and 2023.



Although the change in the use class category definitions makes it difficult to make direct comparisons between the Buckingham data for 2019 and 2023, it is helpful to consider what is revealed separately about trends.

Use Class 2019	National Benchmark for Small Towns (%)	Buckingham (%)
A1 Retail	42%	39%
A2 Professional services	9%	16%
A3 Cafes & restaurants	9%	10%
A4 Pubs & bars	4%	3%
A5 Take-aways	4%	3%
B1 Offices	2%	4%
B8 Distribution	0%	1%
D1 Medical, civic, religious	8%	6%
D2 Leisure	1%	1%
SG Miscellaneous	9%	8%
Vacant	9%	9%

Comparing the 2019 main categories of use with national benchmarks compiled by People & Places reveals that the overall mix of businesses in Buckingham was broadly typical of similar small towns. There was a slightly smaller proportion of retail in Buckingham (39%) compared to national benchmarks (45%), though a slightly larger percentage of financial and professional services (16%) compared to that might be typically expected (9%).

Looking at the proportion of properties occupied by different use classes in 2023, the key point to note is that nearly three-quarters (71%) of town centre premises are now occupied by businesses within use class E. The significance of this is that the owners of these properties do not have to get planning permission to change the use of their building. That is as long as there are no planning conditions directly mentioning the use class and there are not any external structural changes that you would need consent.

The flexibility to change the use of premises classified with use class E can have a positive impact in making re-lettings easier to achieve. It can also enable the mix of different businesses to be skewed, for example, a town popular with visitors is more likely to become dominated by cafes and restaurants.

Another point to note is the change of use of three properties from business to domestic use. This may be due to the special circumstances of the buildings involved, though again is a trend to monitor.

The Place: Town Centre Access and Movement

Improving access to and around the town centre is an important part of maintaining viability and vibrancy. This involves considering different modes of transport, routes and ‘gateways’ into town centre as well as the ease of access around the town centre for both the familiar resident and unfamiliar visitor.

Active travel potential

The earlier review of the status of the Buckingham Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan -Lite (LCWIP-lite) indicates that now is an opportune time to consider boosting the active travel potential of access into the town centre. Ahead of reviewing the findings of the town centre customers’ survey, this section considers what might be the potential for increasing active travel in Buckingham by drawing partly on national research and benchmarks.

Active travel trends and potential for Buckingham can be benchmarked against the UK and Ireland Walking and Cycling Index recently published by Sustrans. The term ‘wheeling’ is used alongside walking to ensure that wheelchair and mobility scooter users are included.

Key benchmarks about the potential for walking and wheeling are:

- more people walk or wheel five or more days a week than any other mode of travel (49%).
- the most popular purpose for walking is to reach a particular destination, e.g. work, shopping (51%); followed by enjoyment or fitness (42%).
- the most popular change to encourage residents to walk more is to create nicer places along streets to rest (78%). This followed by better pavement accessibility such as level surfaces and dropped kerbs (74%).

Important benchmarks about the potential for cycling include:

- only 15% of people cycle regularly (at least once per week).
- the most popular purpose for cycling is work (34%), shopping, personal business and social trips (33%); and leisure (17%).
- 10% of residents perceive themselves as cycling regularly; 18% occasionally; 5% new or returning to cycling; with 28% saying they do not cycle but would like to.
- the most popular personal improvement to encourage cycling was jointly access to secure cycle storage at or near home and access to a bike (53%); followed by access or improvements to a city cycle sharing scheme (47%).
- the most popular infrastructure investment for encouraging more cycling was more traffic-free cycle routes away from roads, e.g. through parks or along waterways (67%); followed by better links with public transport, like secure cycle parking.

Accessibility within Buckingham town centre

A previous access and signage audit of Buckingham town centre undertaken by People & Places revealed that a key issue for the unfamiliar visitor is awareness and orientation to and around the west end of the town centre between West and Wells Streets. The customer survey helps provide additional information about accessibility issues particular to residents.

The People: Business Confidence Survey

The business confidence survey is an important part of engaging local businesses by understanding their perceptions and priorities. It is a first step in working with them and local businesses groups to help develop solutions.

Characteristics of businesses surveyed

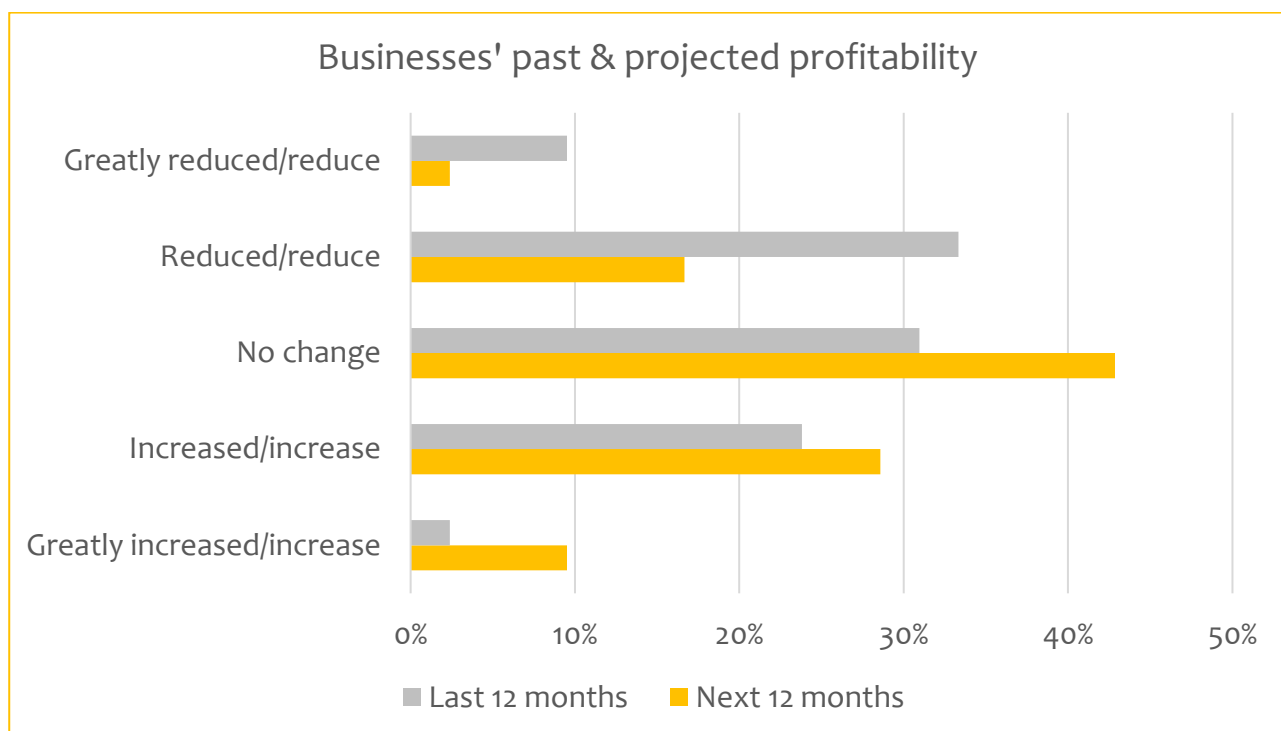
Survey forms were electronically distributed to all the town centre businesses in Buckingham. Town centre businesses were asked to complete the full survey whilst other Buckingham businesses were routed through a shorter version of the survey. There were 76 surveys completed in total, of which 52 were based in the town centre. Based on 158 active town centre businesses shown in Town Council's 2023 business use survey, this equates to a return rate of 33% compared to 25% nationally and suggests an elevated level of interest within the town's business community. It is also indicative of a high percentage of independent retailers that are often owner-managed and more engaged in partnership working.

Nature of business	Buckingham business types surveyed (%)
What type of business or organisation are you?	
Shop	27%
Retail service	23%
Professional/financial services	10%
Hospitality	17%
Leisure	4%
Office	4%
Medical (incl. eye treatment and dentists)	13%
Other	2%
What type of ownership does the business have?	
National multiple business	11%
Regional multiple business	4%
Independent business or organisation	85%
How long has your business been in the town?	
Less than a year	6%
One to five years	25%
Six to ten years	10%
More than ten years	58%

Of the businesses that responded to the survey, 50% were shops of some kind, or providers of retail services and 17% were hospitality businesses; this is broadly representative of the town centre's business mix. 85% of these respondents were independent businesses and this is also broadly representative. A total of 68% of these businesses are long-established in

Buckingham, having been based there for at least six years. This compares to 59% of businesses in benchmarked towns nationally.

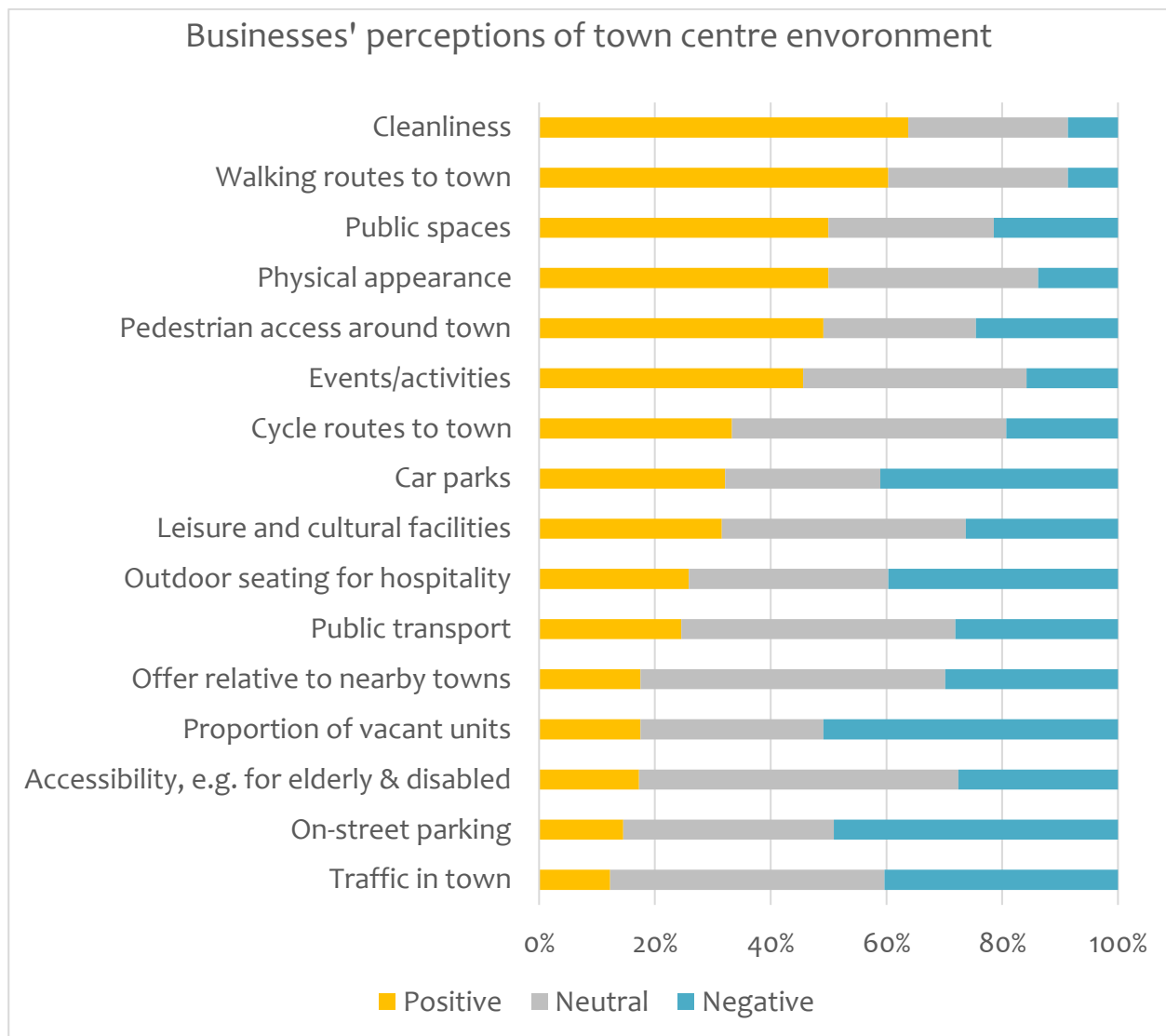
When town centre businesses were asked about their profitability over the last 12 months and their expected future profitability over the next 12 months, there was a variety of responses. A total of 43% of businesses reported that their profitability was reduced or greatly reduced over the 12 months to summer 2023. Optimism amongst businesses is nearly always greater looking forward, and the percentage projecting a decline in profitability is reduced to 19%. This does though indicate that nearly 1 in 5 town centre businesses are vulnerable to closure. In contrast, over a third of businesses (39%) are expecting profits to increase or greatly increase over the next 12 months, whilst 42% expect no change.



Businesses' perceptions of the town centre

When Buckingham businesses were asked about their perceptions of the town centre, the following factors were rated positively by at least half of businesses:

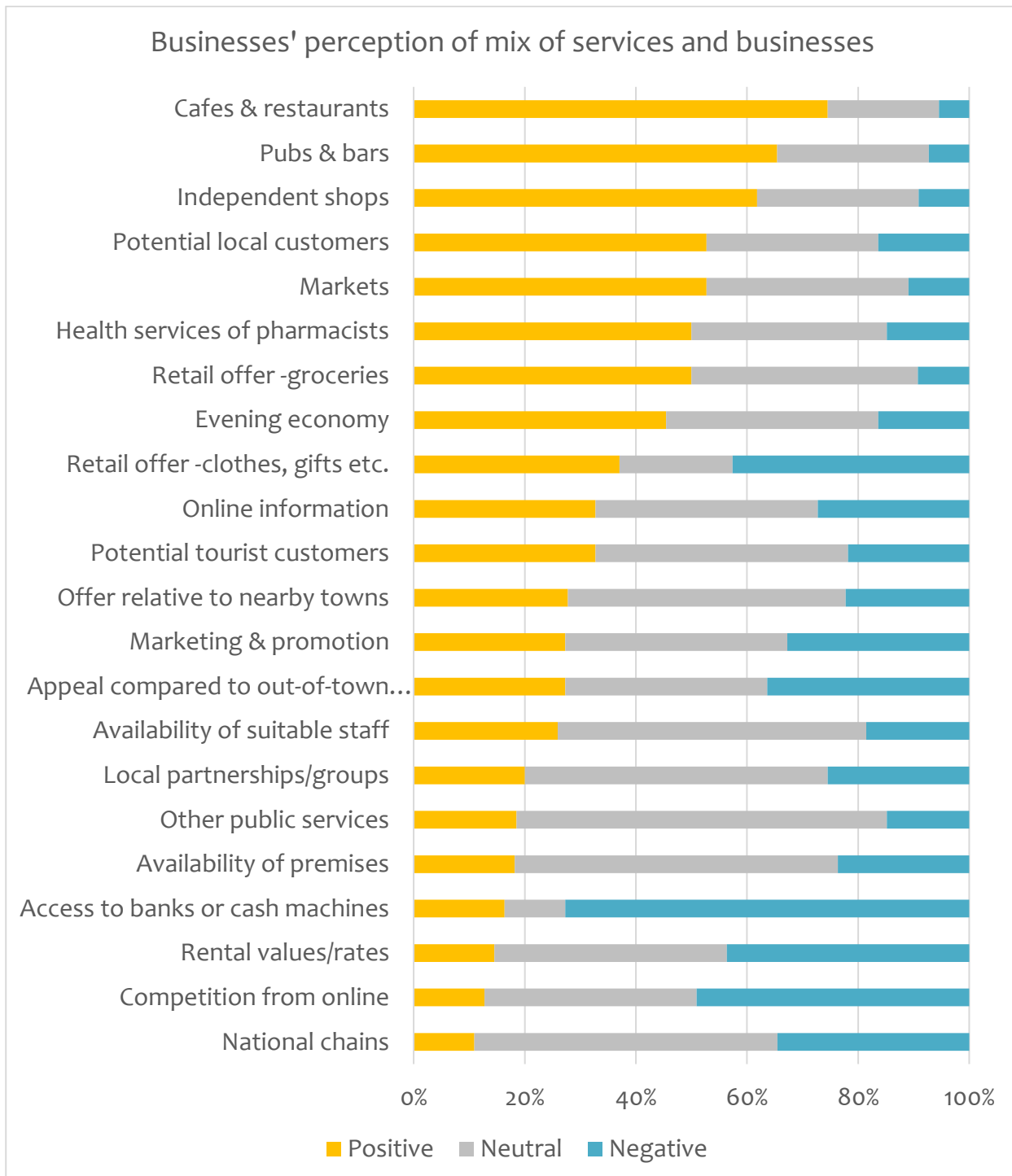
- Cafes & restaurants (75%)
- Pubs & bars (65%)
- Cleanliness (64%)
- Independent shops (62%)
- Walking routes to town (60%)
- Potential local customers (53%)
- Markets (53%)
- Retail offer -groceries (50%)
- Health services or pharmacists (50%)
- Physical appearance (50%)
- Public spaces (50%)



Fewer businesses held negative perceptions, though over a third of those surveyed had concerns about the following aspects of the town centre environment and its mix of businesses and services:

- Access to banking (73%)
- Proportion of vacant units (51%)
- On-street parking (49%)
- Retail offer -clothes, gifts etc. (43%)
- Car parks (41%)
- Outdoor seating for hospitality (40%)
- Traffic in town (40%)
- Appeal compared to out-of-town shopping (35%)
- National chains (35%)
- Town marketing & promotion (33%)

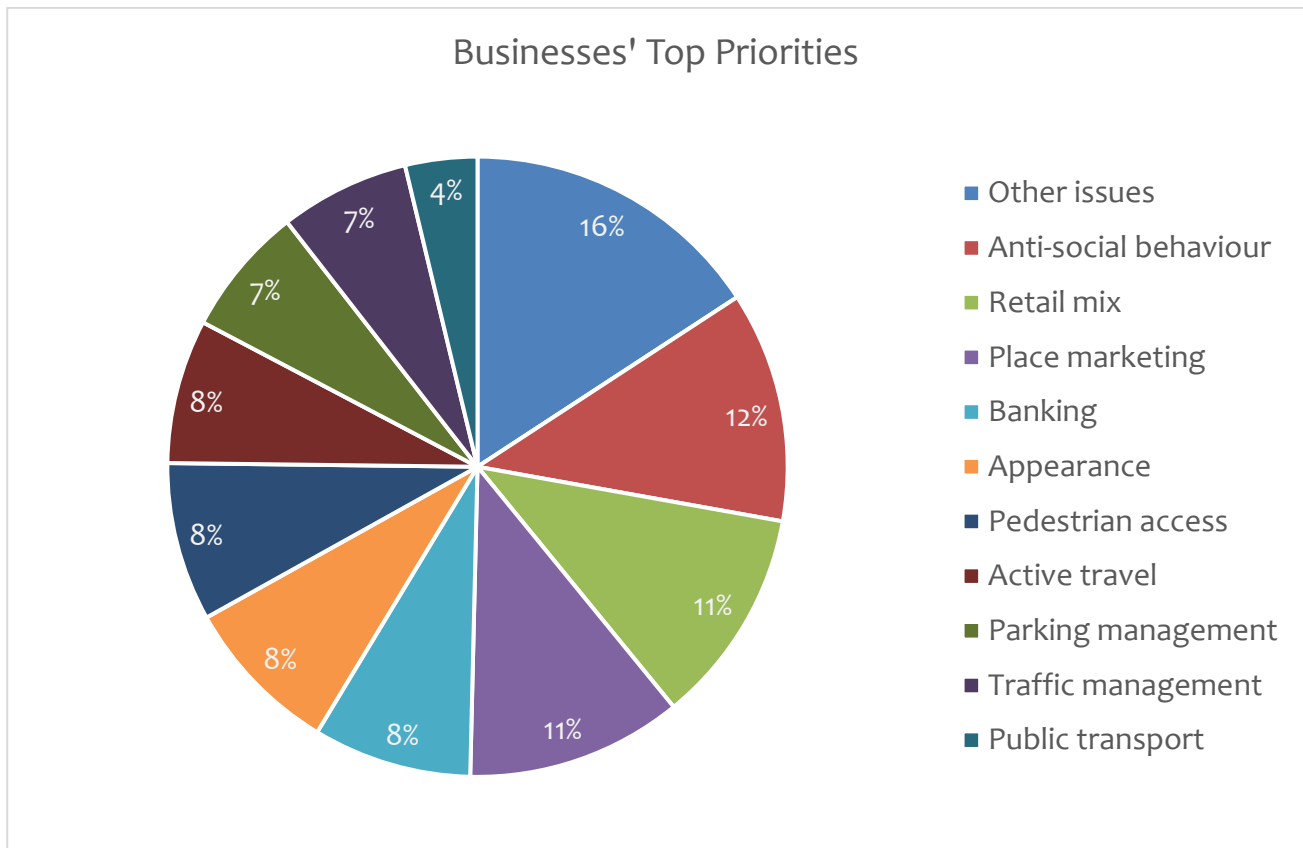
Going forward it is important to understand perceptions of businesses alongside those of town centre users in ways that accentuate the positive and address the negative. Stakeholders' views of future priorities will also inform such forward planning.



Business priorities for improving the town centre

Businesses were also prompted to share their top two priorities for improving Buckingham town centre around five themes relating to the guidance in the LGA Toolkit. The table overleaf summarises the categorisation of proposed priorities by theme.

Priorities	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Travel to town		
Active travel	10	8%
Parking management	9	7%
Traffic management	9	7%
Public transport	5	4%
Free parking	3	2%
	36	27%
Mix of Businesses and Services		
Retail mix	15	11%
Banking	11	8%
Hospitality	4	3%
Property costs	2	2%
Public services	1	1%
	33	25%
Streetscape and Appearance		
Appearance	11	8%
Pedestrian access	11	8%
Cleanliness	2	2%
Public spaces	1	1%
Amenities	1	1%
	26	20%
Marketing and Events		
Place marketing	15	11%
Specialist markets and events	3	2%
Leisure	2	2%
	20	15%
Social Issues and Leadership		
Anti-social behaviour	16	12%
Planning	1	1%
Cost of living	1	1%
	18	14%
TOTALS	133	100%



The broad themes of travel to town (27%), mix of businesses and services (25%) and streetscape and appearance (20%), accounted for three-quarters of priorities expressed by businesses.

As the pie chart above summarises, within the broad themes, certain issues were identified as important priorities by a significant number of businesses, including anti-social behaviour (12%), the imbalance of the town centre retail mix (11%), the need for enhanced marketing (11%), pedestrian access (8%), active travel (8%) and parking management (8%). It is important to recognise the priority given to such softer issues that might not normally be picked-up by the statutory or neighbourhood planning processes.

The People: Town Centre User's Survey

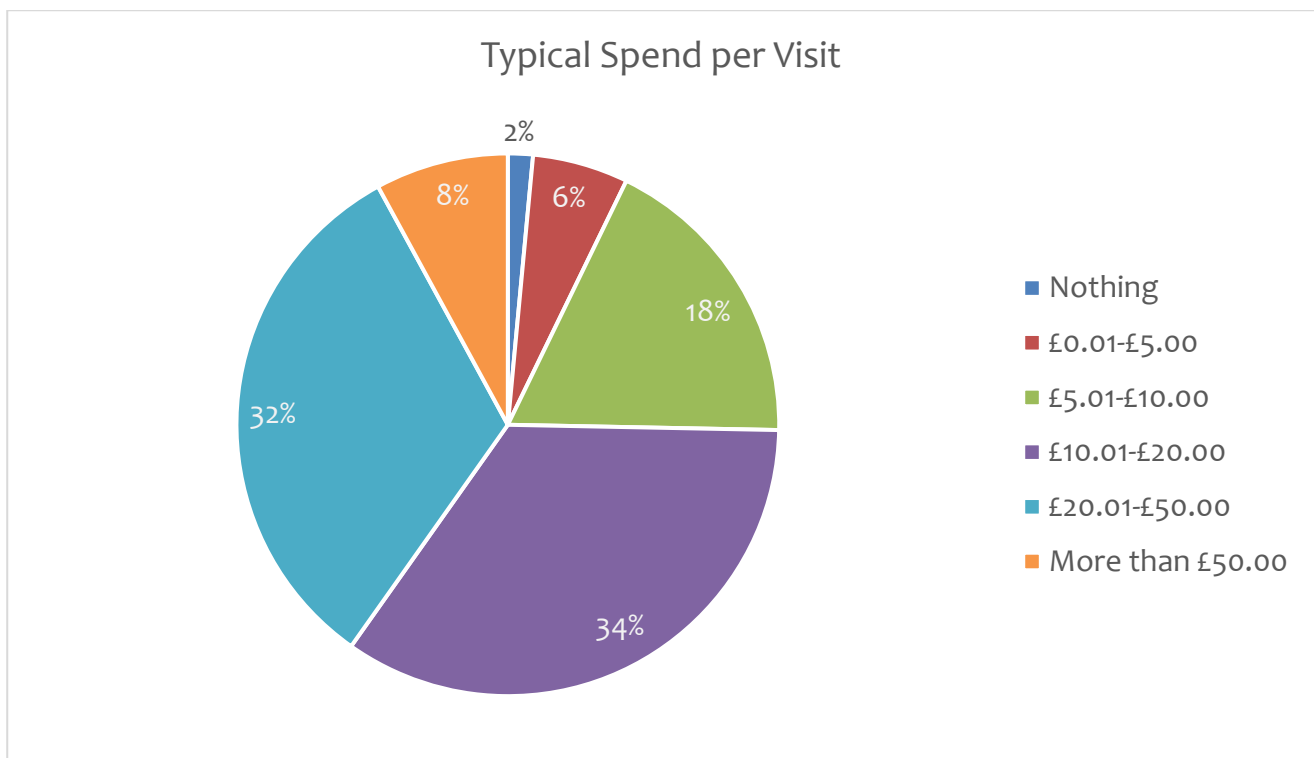
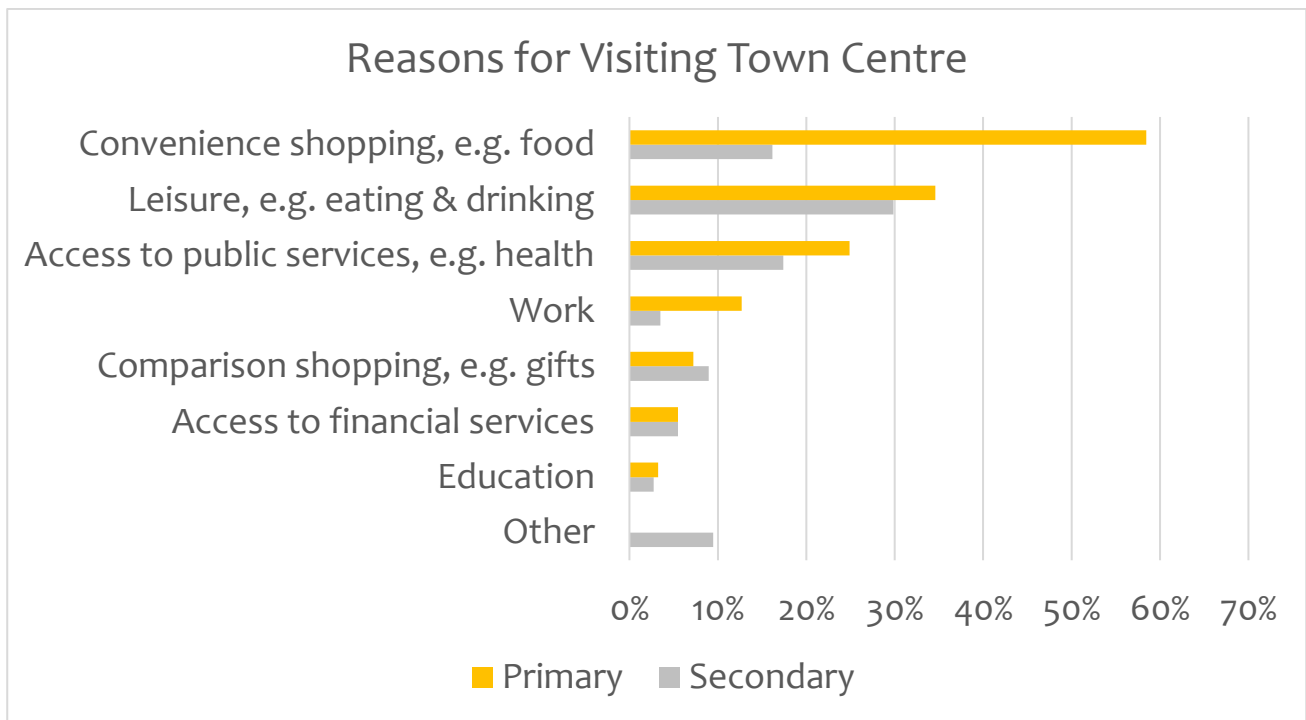
The aim of the town centre users' survey is to establish how the town centre is perceived and used by residents primarily. It provides a wealth of data from a range of different types of local -and some visiting- town centre users.

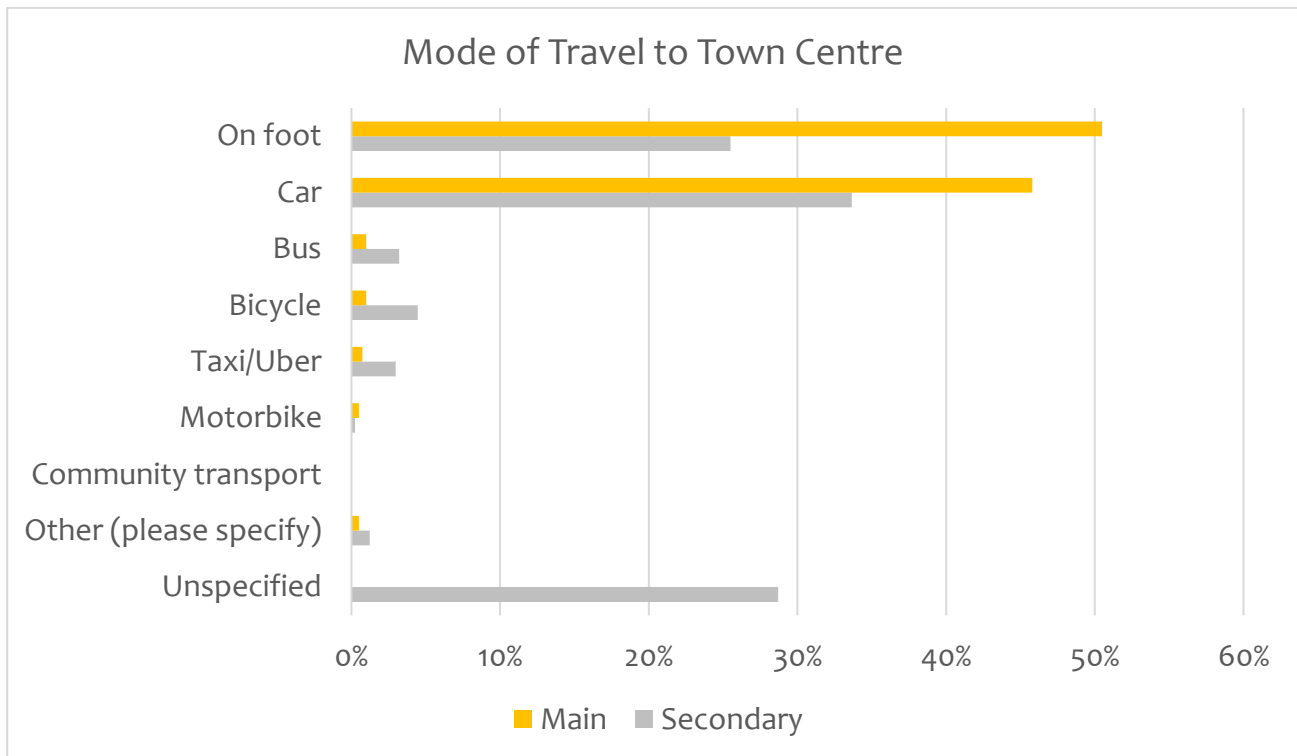
Characteristics of customers surveyed

A sample of 407 Buckingham town centre users were surveyed online through social media using the help of local community partners. Over two-thirds (68.5%) of respondents were female, a comparable proportion to surveys conducted in towns nationally.

	Buckingham (number)	Buckingham %
Is Buckingham the town centre that you visit most frequently?		
Yes	379	93%
No	28	7%
Where do you visit most frequently?		
Milton Keynes	75%	246
Bicester	30%	100
Aylesbury	11%	35
Towcester	3%	11
Other (please specify)	23%	76

Customer background and nature of visit to town centre	National Small Towns %	Buckingham (number)	Buckingham %
Gender			
Male	35%	109	31.5%
Female	65%	237	68.5%
Age			
16-25	6%	3%	11
26-35	13%	12%	41
36-45	21%	22%	75
46-55	21%	24%	82
56-65	18%	19%	66
66-75	20%	14%	49
Over 75	-	7%	24





As the charts on these pages show, the customer survey gathered a wealth of information about who completed the survey and their habits in using the town centre. It shows, for example, that grocery shopping is by far the most popular primary reason (58%) for coming to Buckingham town centre. Not surprisingly this illustrates the importance of the town centre Waitrose to wider footfall.

Leisure uses such as using hospitality businesses, account for more than a further third of people's reasons for visiting the town centre. Taken together with grocery shopping, these two reasons probably account for why 40% of customers spend up to and over £50 on each visit.

In contrast, comparison shopping for items such as fashion, gifts or electrical goods is only a primary reason for visiting the town centre for 7% of users, despite it accounting for three quarters of retail businesses.

The data shows us that over half of town centre users surveyed (55%), come into the town centre more than once a week though two thirds (66%) dwell for less than an hour. Compared to what we might expect for a town of its size, only a small per centage of users (12%) extend their dwell time in Buckingham to one to two hours.

The data indicates that typically the residents surveyed come to town on foot as their primary (50%) or secondary (25%) travel mode. Comparable numbers travel to town by car as their primary (46%) or secondary (34%) mode of transport . Only 1% of town centre users travel by bike or public travel as their primary mode of transport though this increases to 4% and 3% respectively as secondary options.

Frequency and duration of visits to town centre	National Small Towns %	Buckingham (number)	Buckingham %
How often do you currently visit Buckingham town centre? (Please choose one option only)			
Daily	21%	73	18%
More than once a week	39%	151	37%
Weekly	19%	104	26%
More than once a month	10%	55	14%
Once a month or less	8%	16	4%
Infrequently	21%	7	2%
How long do you currently stay during a visit to the town centre?			
<1 hour	44%	264	66%
1-2 hours	35%	47	12%
2-4 hours	13%	56	14%
4-6 hours	3%	4	1%
All day	5%	17	4%

Customers' perceptions of the town centre

When Buckingham town centre users were asked about their perceptions of the town centre, the following factors were rated positively by at least half of residents surveyed:

- Convenience (81%)
- Cafes/restaurants (74%)
- Walking routes to town (72%)
- Customer service (65%)
- Retail offer –groceries (62%)
- Physical appearance (62%)
- Cleanliness (61%)
- Markets (59%)
- Public spaces (55%)
- Independent shops (55%)
- Health services (54%)
- Pubs/ bars (53%)
- Pedestrian access (50%)

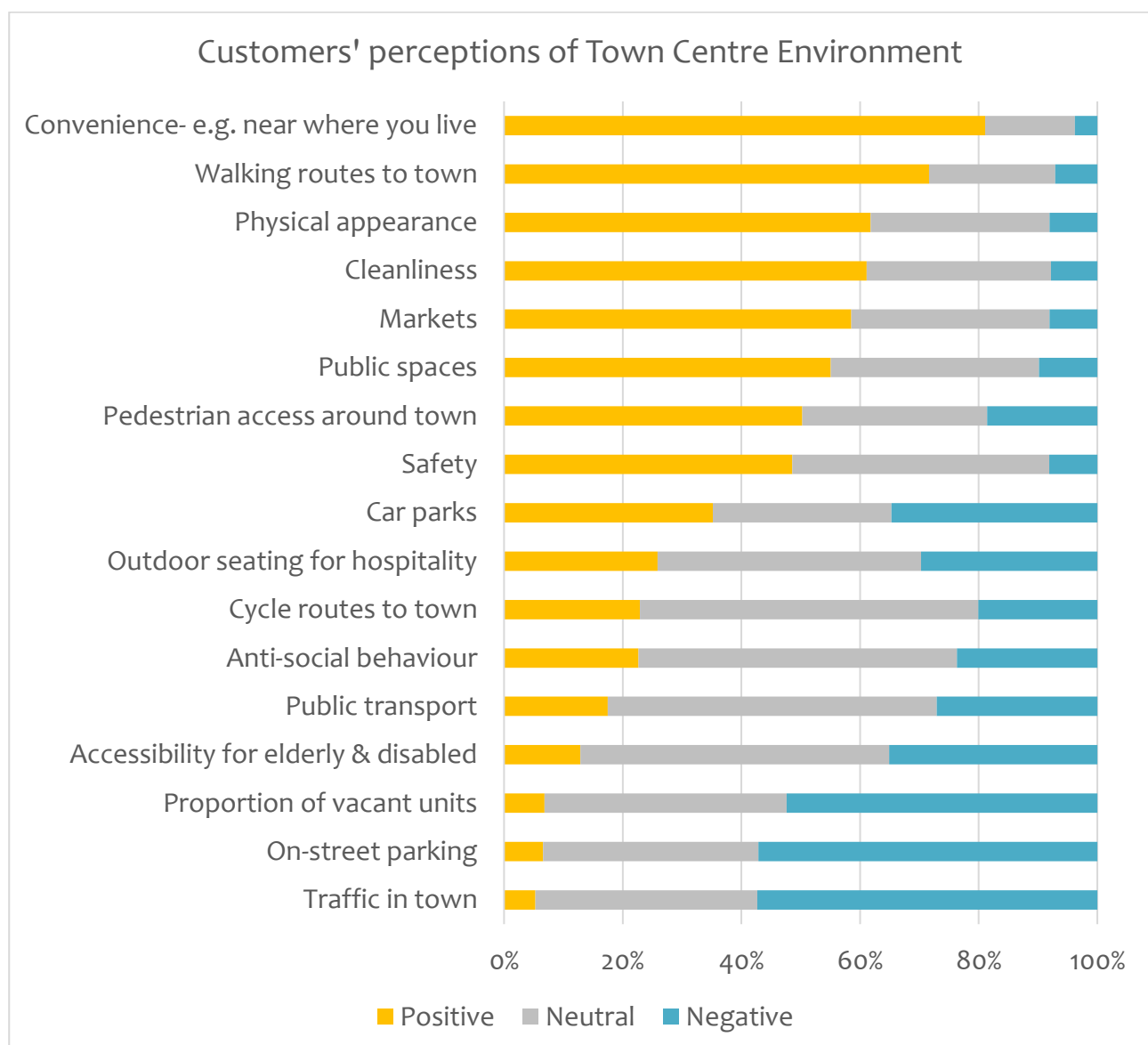
Fewer customers held negative perceptions, though 30% of those surveyed had concerns about the following aspects of the town centre environment and its mix of businesses and services:

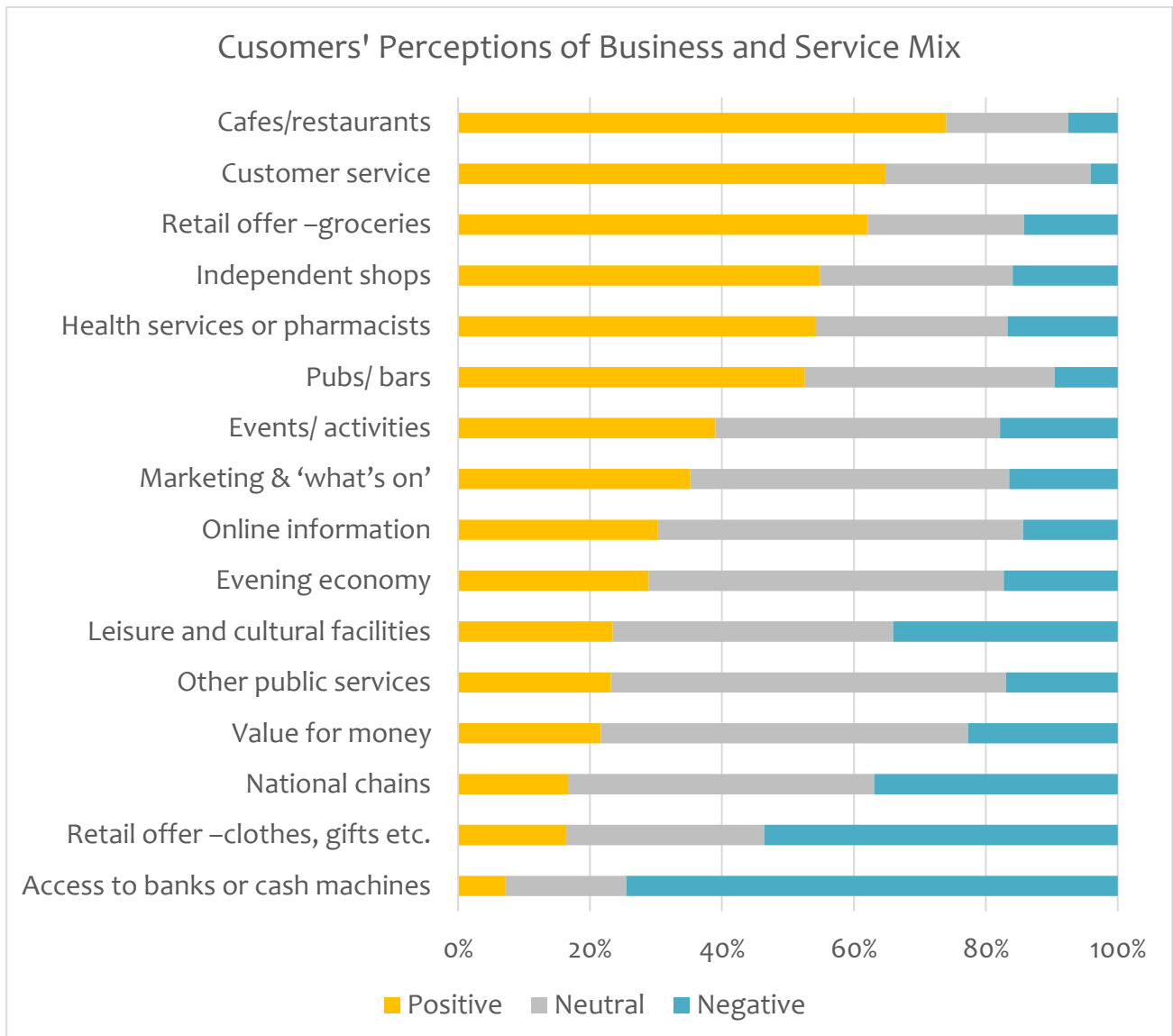
- Access to banking (74%)
- Traffic in town (57%)
- On-street parking (57%)

- Retail offer –fashion etc. (54%)
- Proportion of vacant units (52%)
- National chains (37%)
- Accessibility for elderly & disabled (35%)
- Car parks (35%)
- Leisure and cultural facilities (34%)
- Outdoor seating (30%)

As with businesses' perception, going forward it is important to understand perceptions of both sets of stakeholders alongside each other in ways that accentuate the positive and address the negative. Stakeholders' views of future priorities will also inform such forward planning.

Customers' perceptions of the town centre





Customers were also asked about their overall impressions of Buckingham town centre and how this had changed over time.

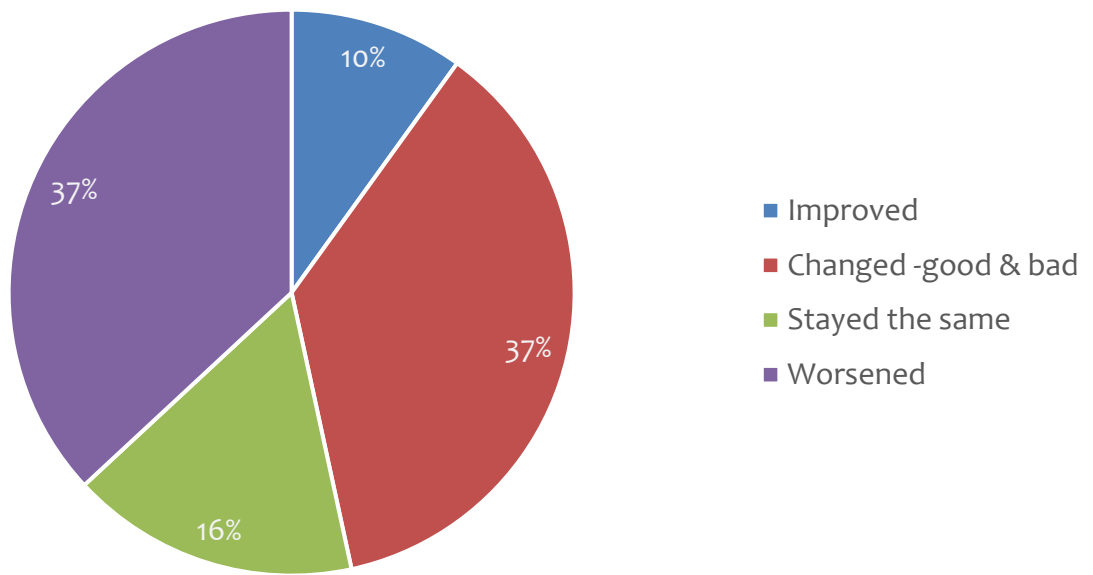
How has your experience of the town centre changed?

When asked how their experience of Buckingham town centre had changed in recent years, over a third (37%) reported that it had worsened. Only 10% of town users said it had improved, with a further 37% reporting that it had changed in a mixture of good and bad ways, and 18% said it had stayed the same.

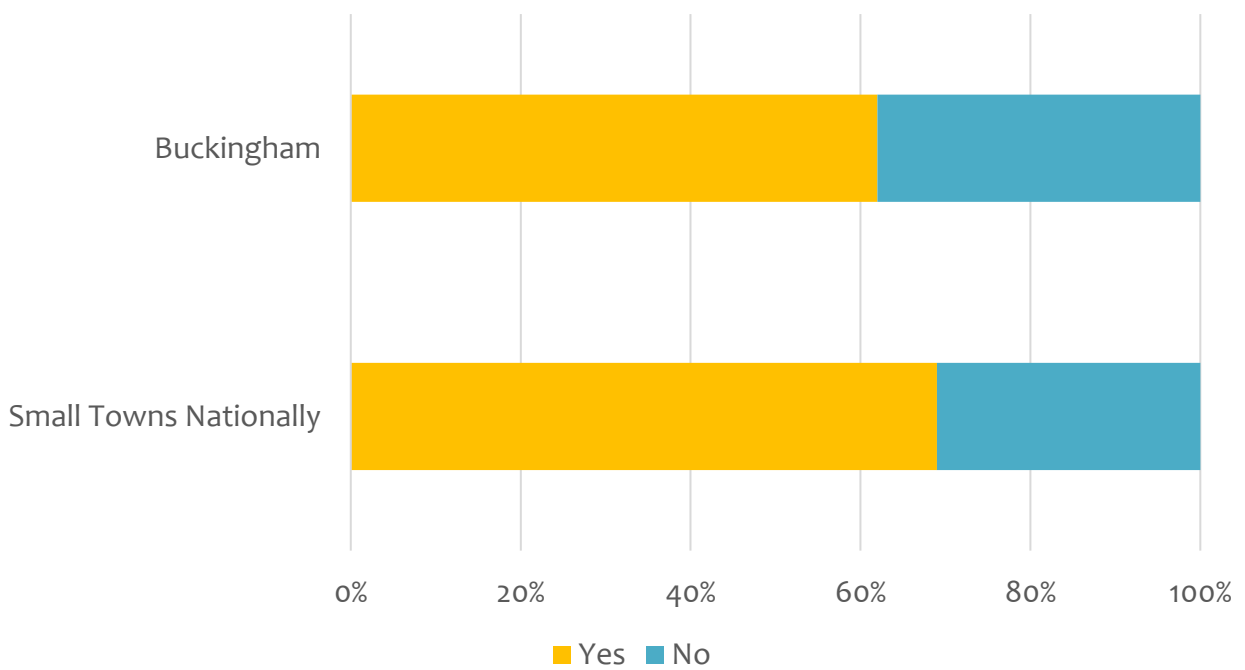
Would you recommend a visit to the town centre?

When asked if they would recommend a visit to the town centre, nearly two-thirds said ‘yes’. This is slightly less than typical of similar towns nationally.

How has Town Centre Experience Changed?



Would you Recommend a Visit to Buckingham Town Centre?



What one word would you use to sum-up the town centre?

The word cloud shown here gives an indication of the most popular words used by town centre users to sum-up Buckingham town centre.

Such a word cloud, whilst only indicative, is useful in understanding how the town centre is perceived by current users who are familiar with it. It gives a visual representation of sentiments and can be helpful in determining how the town can be honestly promoted to potential new users in a way that creates achievable expectations.

Prominent words used to describe Buckingham town centre include a mix of sentiments including positive words such as 'friendly', 'pleasant',

'convenient' and 'quaint' to more negative descriptions to 'tired', 'decline', 'dull' and 'traffic'.



In similar fashion to the indication given by the other questions about the overall impressions, the word cloud could be re-visited to give a good sense of continued progress. The aspiration would be that users' perceptions are more positive if, when posed again in one to two-years' time, a higher percentage of respondents report that their experience of the centre had improved in recent years.

Customers' future priorities

The charts and tables overleaf summarise analysis of over 1,100 comments received when customers were asked to give their top two priorities for the future improvement of Buckingham town centre. The total is more than double the number of respondents because some responses included more than one priority.

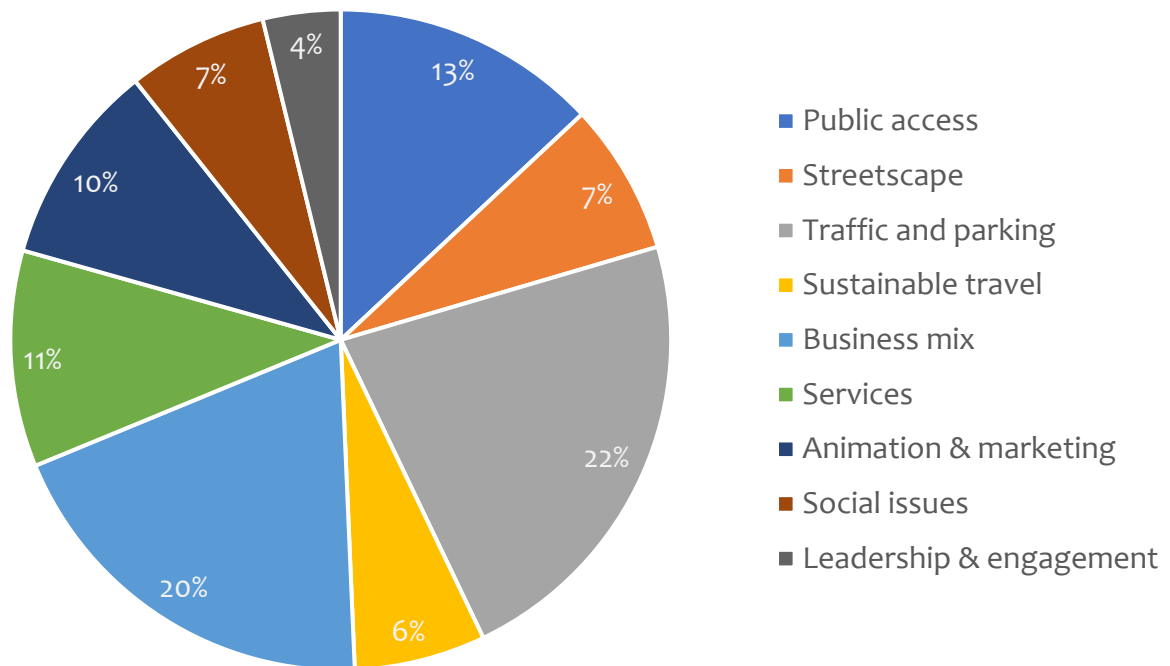
Analysis of the responses by the five broad categories illustrates the breadth of the customers' priorities and relatively even distribution of responses across these. Drilling-down into the detail of sub-categories, it is possible to make the following distinctions:

Businesses & services

Calls to improve the retail mix in Buckingham town centre is the largest, single sub-category (10%) and frequently included calls for fashion retailers, independent retailers and sometimes for more national multiples. General calls to change the wider business mix (7%) was identified as a separate though related sub-category that frequently included comments about a perceived imbalance in presence of barbers, charity shops and cafes.

In terms of services there was a significant number of calls for improved banking facilities (5%), though this precedes the opening of the Banking Hub in the Market Square. There were also a significant number of responses (2%) relating to health service provision because of both its perceived importance and high demand, as well as calls to improve the market (2%).

Customers' Future Priorities by Category



Category of Customers' Future Priorities	Number	Percentage
1. Businesses & services		
Business mix	215	19%
Services	117	11%
2. Travel to town		
Traffic and parking	248	22%
Sustainable travel	71	6%
3. Appearance & accessibility		
Public access	144	13%
Streetscape	82	7%
4. Managing change & social issues		
Social issues	76	7%
Leadership & engagement	42	4%
5. Leisure and tourism		
Animation & marketing	110	10%
TOTAL	1105	100%

Travel to town

Within a variety of issues relating to customers' experiences of travel to town, calls for free parking were the sub-category that received the highest level of responses (9%), as is often typical of responses to such surveys. This was followed by comments covering perceived high levels of traffic in the town centre (7%) that create difficulties for pedestrians and also are a cause of congestion for motorists. With the range of comments about wider parking management (5%), many responses related to the Cornwall's Meadow Car Park and especially to the unreliability of payment machines in what was often referred to as the "Waitrose" section of the car park.

Calls for improvements to more sustainable modes of transport made-up a significant proportion of the overall responses (6%) including the prioritisation of improvements to public transport provision (3%), cycling infrastructure (2%) and walking routes into town (1%).

Appearance & accessibility

Priority given to improving public access across the town centre (14%) included the prioritisation of better accessibility (5%) through improved conditions for walking, wheeling and road crossings alongside specific calls for pedestrianisation schemes (4%) mostly covering the Market Place and mentions of the need to improve footpath paving (3%).

Calls for a range of streetscape improvements (3%) included cleanliness (2%), built heritage (2%) and the physical appearance of the town centre (1%).

Managing change & social issues

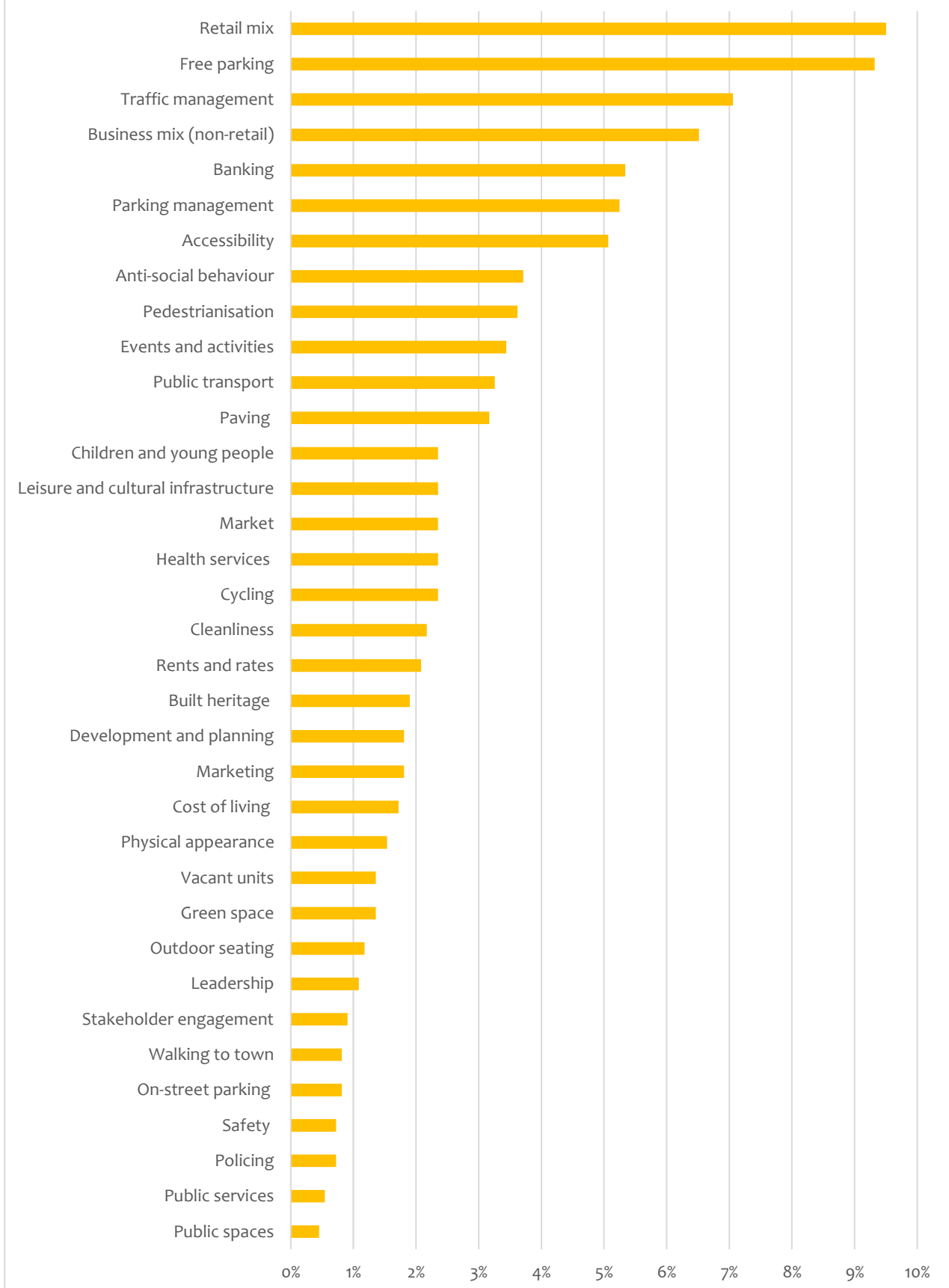
The need to respond to perceived levels of anti-social behaviour including congregation in public spaces, excessive drinking and a desire for an increased police presence, were a significant priority (4%). The need to show awareness of and respond to the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis on a section of the local population was a second social issue to receive a significant proportion of responses (2%).

Concerns about the extent of recent development and pressure placed on existing to infrastructure was the main leadership issue (2%) that customers considered needed to be addressed.

Leisure and tourism

Within the broad category of leisure and tourism, there was an even spread of priorities between a desire to see more town centre events and activities (3%), investing in leisure and cultural facilities (2%), providing activities for children and young people (2%) and improved marketing (2%) of such activities and the wider town.

Customers' Future Priorities by Sub-category



Comparing Business and Customer Perceptions

It is instructive to compare and contrast the different perspectives of town centre businesses and customers. Businesses of course in part take the perspective of how the town centre environment and mix, impacts on their ability to trade that might be specific to the type and location of their business. Different types of customers too will bring their own perspectives based on what they seek from a town centre. The prompts used in the survey are also in part different and therefore account for some of the differences in the responses.

Looking at the responses from both sets of stakeholders, we should be able to see these contrasting perspectives as well as compatible elements that are key to attracting footfall and encouraging foot-flow around town, increased dwell-times and higher levels of satisfaction.

Looking at the top positive and negative perceptions of both businesses and customers for Buckingham Town centre, shows remarkable similarities. The list of top positive perceptions for both sets of stakeholders feature cafes and restaurants prominently, and pubs to a slightly lesser extent. Independent shops, grocery retail, markets and access to health services are also all aspects of the mix of businesses and services viewed as making positive contributions to the town centre. Cleanliness, public spaces, physical appearance and the ability to walk to town, all aspects of environment that feature in both lists of positive features. Issues that do not appear in both listings are the appeal to local customers and customer service /convenience that might be considered as different sides of same coin.

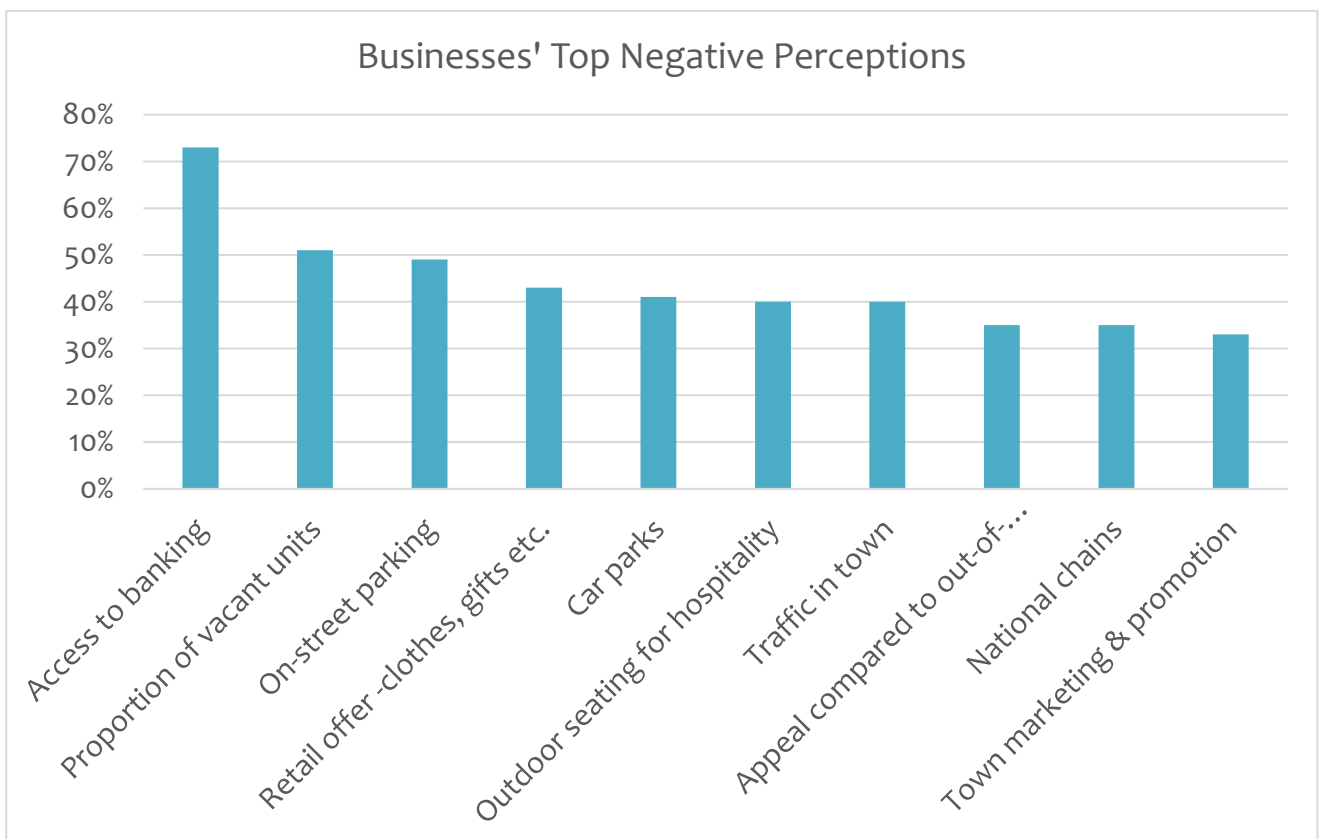
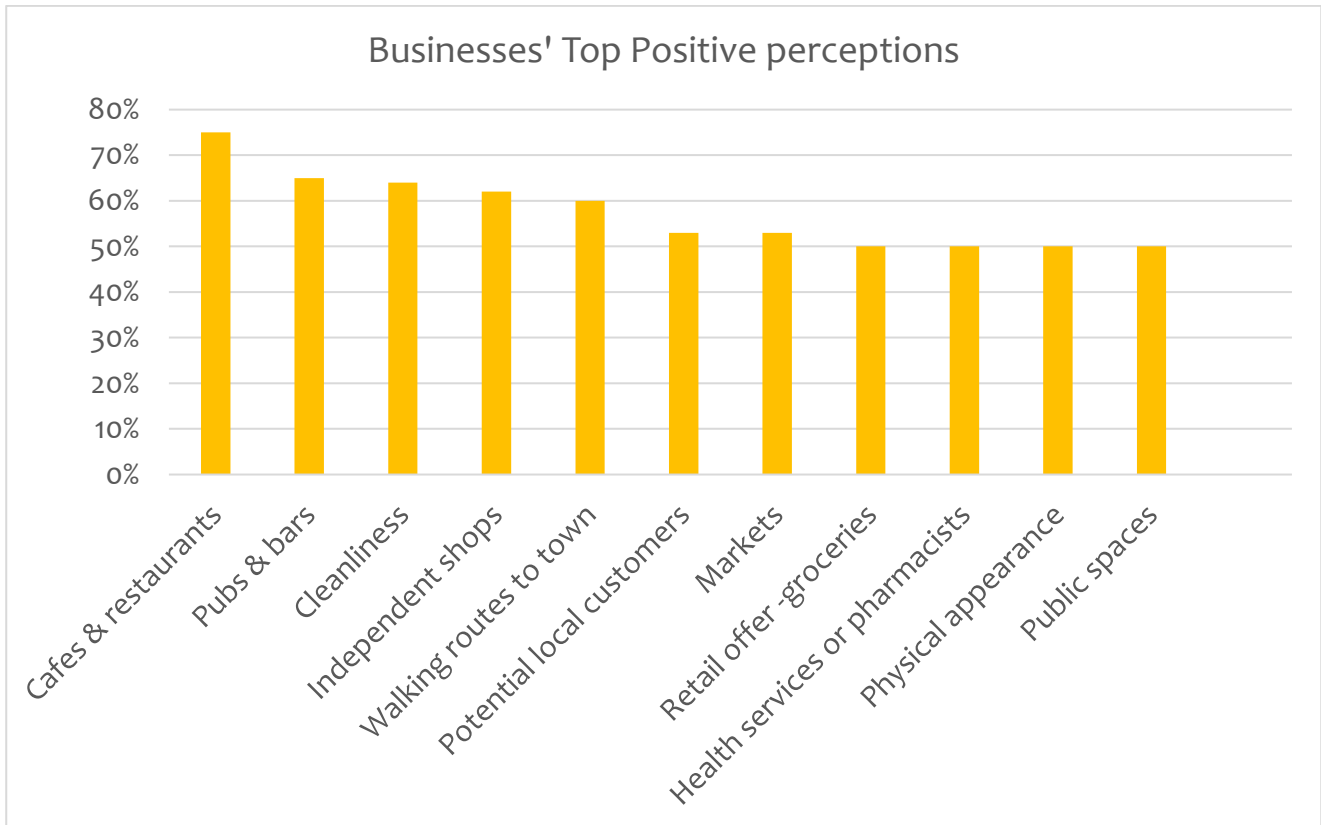
Current negative perceptions for both sets of stakeholders were unsurprisingly topped by access to banking services which have been temporarily lost from the town centre.

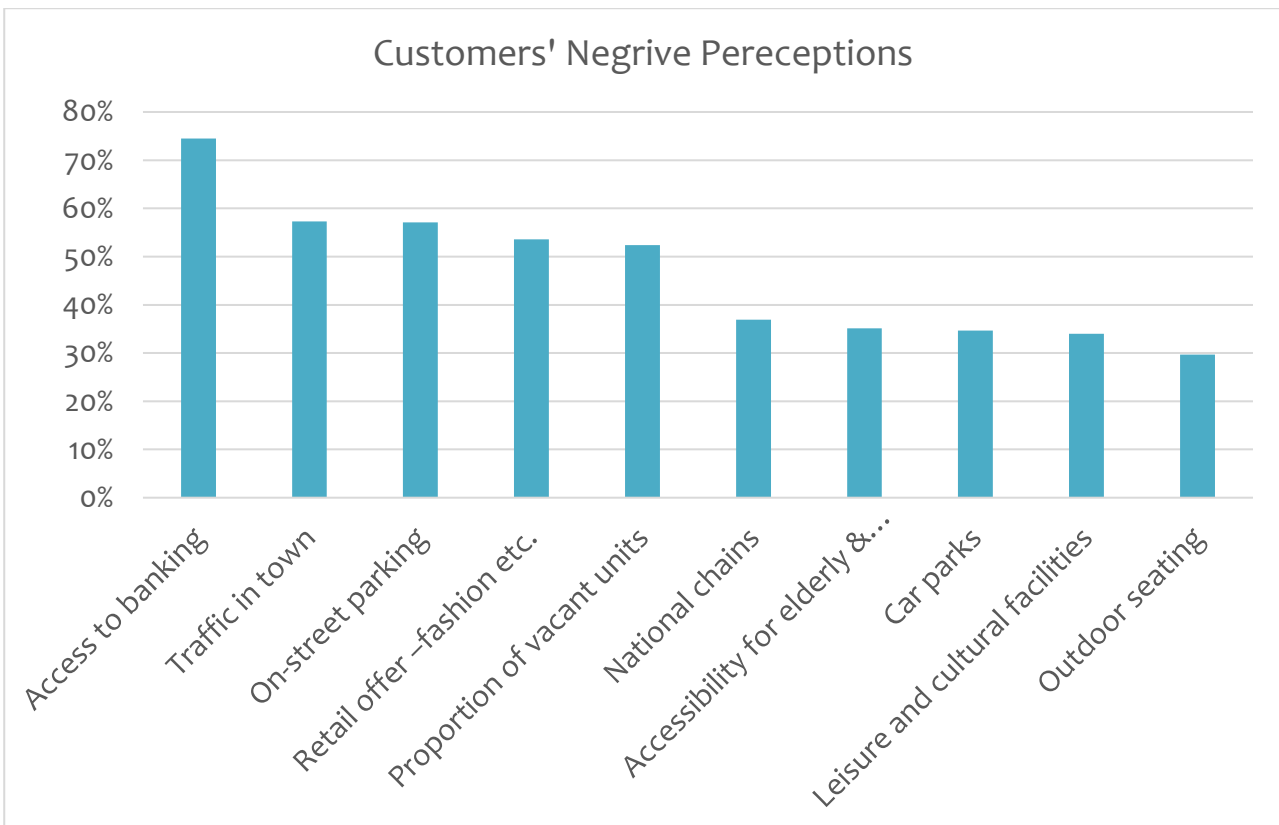
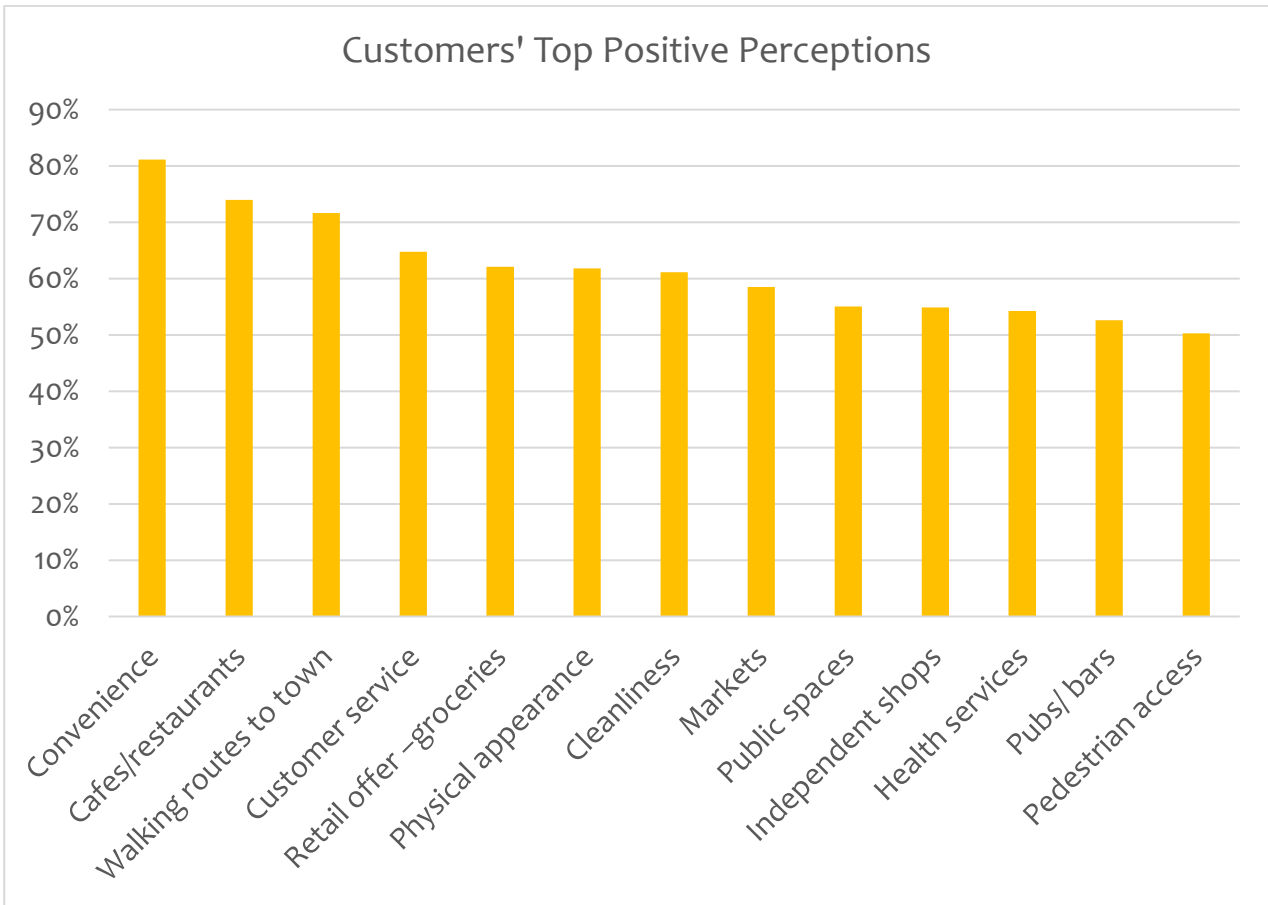
Comparison retail such as fashion and national chains and are considered negatively by both businesses and the customers. Traffic, the proportion of vacant premises, outdoor seating and both on and off-street parking are considered as significant negative factors by both. The appeal relative to out-of-town retail and the levels of town-wide marketing are negative perceptions specific to businesses, while negative perceptions about the level of cultural and leisure provision is particular to customers. Only customers perceive the accessibility around the town centre for the elderly and disabled as a significant negative issue.

Comparing Business and Customer Priorities

There is a broad level of synergy between businesses and customers' priorities for improving Buckingham town centre. Of customers' priorities receiving a significant response from at least 3% of those surveyed, retail and business mix combined, traffic management, banking, parking management, accessibility, anti-social behaviour and public transport all receive similarly significant responses from businesses. Issues such as free parking, business mix, pedestrianization and paving are relatable to sub-categories of high priorities of businesses. Customers' high priority for events and activities is not matched by business responses.

Combined with the analysis of negative perceptions for both sets of stakeholders, this analysis points to a need to address aspects of the town centre's changing business mix, as well as elements of travel to town and around town. Concerns about banking provision have been at least in-part addressed through the opening of the permanent Banking Hub. These priorities strengthen businesses' cases for improved town-wide marketing that might focus on Buckingham's recognised strengths. These priorities add to customers' concerns and the case for greater investment in cultural/leisure facilities and events.





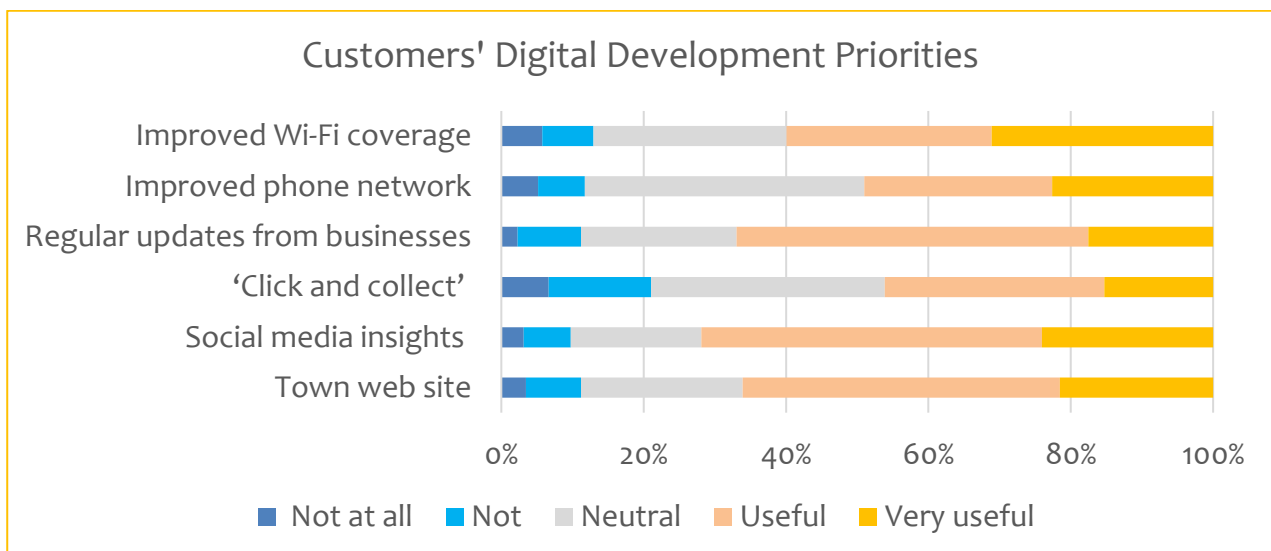
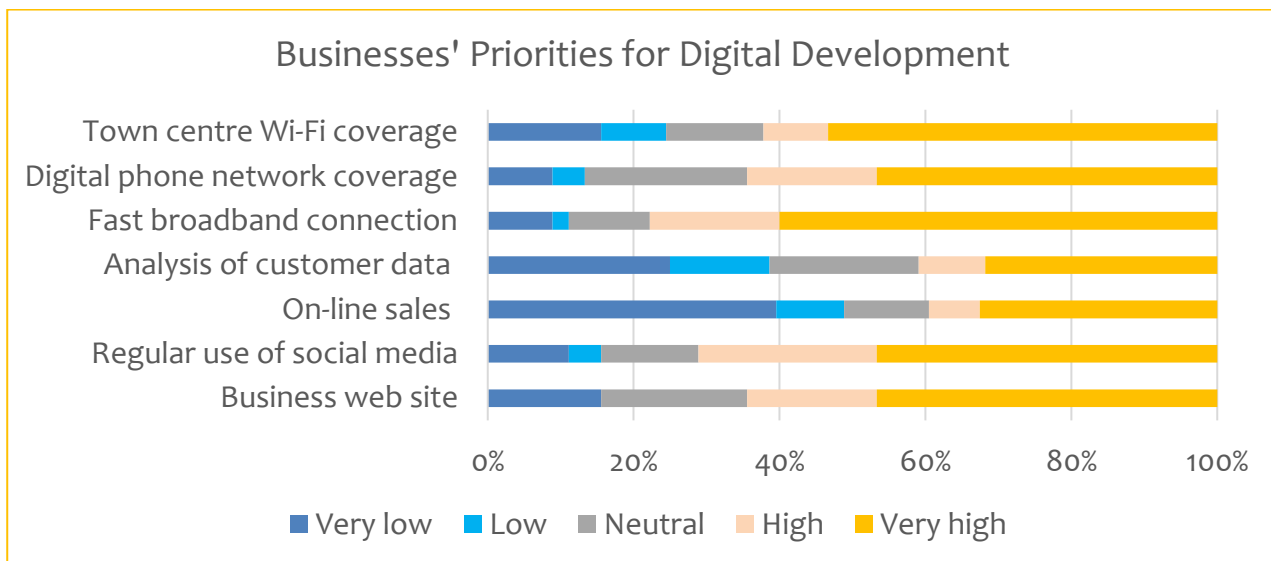
Businesses' Top Priorities	% of total	Customers' Top Priorities	% of total
Anti-social behaviour	12%	Retail mix	10%
Retail mix	11%	Free parking	9%
Place marketing	11%	Traffic management	7%
Banking	8%	Business mix (non-retail)	7%
Appearance	8%	Banking	5%
Accessibility	8%	Parking management	5%
Active travel	8%	Accessibility	5%
Parking management	7%	Anti-social behaviour	4%
Traffic management	7%	Pedestrianisation	4%
Public transport	4%	Events and activities	3%
Hospitality	3%	Public transport	3%
		Paving	3%

Top Customer and Corresponding Business Priorities
by Sub-category



Digital Development Opportunities

Both businesses and customers were given a similar set of prompts to determine their digital development priorities for Buckingham town centre. As is normal, businesses gave a slightly higher priority to continued investment in town centre digital infrastructure including continued investment in fast broadband connections which was a high or very high priority for 78% of respondents. Businesses did give a high or very high priority to them providing regular social media updates (71%) and creation and management of their own web sites (65%).



Customers gave a higher priority to the development of services that make use of improved infrastructure with a high proportion ranking as useful or very useful, social media insights (72%), the creation and management of a town web site (67%) and receiving regular updates from businesses about products, services or events (67%). Customers gave a moderately high priority to good Wi-Fi coverage (60%).

Local Leadership: Creating a Forward Framework

For a partnership to evolve in its effectiveness, it is important to plan for constant progress through regular review and writing things down! This can be achieved by annually reviewing the town centre checklist provided by Local Government Association's Revitalising Town Centres Toolkit and updating a 'Forward Framework' comprising an over-arching strategy and two component plans: an organisational or business plan covering the 'how' of revitalisation and an action plan covering the 'what'.

The 'How' of Town Centre Revitalisation : People & Partnerships

Revitalising a town centre is a complex and long-term venture. It is as important to focus on the people and partnerships necessary to drive success as it is to focus on the 'what' of delivering projects. Experience shows that it requires resources and leadership to make things happen in this way and that it should not be left to chance. The Local Government Association's Revitalising Town Centres refers to the 'f' factors for success as a guide for structuring an organisational or business development plan.

These 'f' factors begin with the 'foundations' that include creating the evidence base and engaging stakeholders to help determine priorities, as being undertaken here. A next consideration is the 'form' of an organisation necessary to move things forward and this covers its set-up, structure, governance, partnerships and legal status. The form of a partnership should follow its 'function'. Key determinants of this organisational form to consider include: the balance sought between being a consultative partner or can-do delivery body; available financial support and the need for independent fund raising; and close alignment with council policy verses the capacity to reach-out, engage with and empower sectors of the community.

There are many variations of the organisational models available for leading town centre revitalisation. Different options for organisational form include: council-led partnerships which coordinate activity and often inform policy; business-led town teams which can be very "can-do" and have a marketing focus; neighbourhood planning groups which can help shape future growth and its impact on a town centre; development trusts which are very adept in managing community-owned property; and Business Improvement Districts (BID) which combine financial independence and business leadership. The appropriate organisational form is also likely to evolve over time and two organisations can work side-by-side with clearly defined and well-coordinated roles.

An organisational business plan covering the foundations, form, folk and organisational finances will determine whether there is an effective and sustainable partnership able to deliver improvements. This organisational plan should define the inter-relationship and respective roles of partners such as the local authority(ies), town council, business partners, civic society, chamber of commerce or a BID.

Overleaf is a summary of the advantages and disadvantages of different approaches to partnership development which has been taken from a case study of [creating talented town teams](#) prepared by the People & Places Partnership for the LGA.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Different Approaches to Partnership Development

Approach	Advantages	Disadvantages
Council-led partnership	Close connection to other council departments; budget provided	Vulnerable to council budgetary pressures; can be difficult to fully engage with community & businesses
Council-coordinated partnership	Good connections to council departments; brings stakeholders together if clear purpose and/or delegated budget	Vulnerable to changing priorities; can create imbalance between action & strategic influence if role unclear
Town centre manager & forum	Partly arms-length though probable budget contribution from council	Vulnerable to cuts; important to get balance between strategic influence and engaging with business & community
Town council hosted partnership	Close local links; arms-length though conduit between authorities; modest budget need and ability to access some external funds	The 'can do' attitude can be stifled if too formal; can be difficult to fully engage with businesses without suitable sub-group of link to Chamber of Trade, for example
Business-led town team	Business-like approach & understanding of economic issues and collective marketing	No assured funding stream; can have narrow business focus & lack strategic influence
Neighbourhood Plan group	Considers wider economic and community planning; exerts long-term influence	Long-term and strategic process; can lack tangible, short-term impacts or town centre focus
Development trust	Capital asset base generates revenue income; strong community focus	Requires available property and large capital investment; can have narrow focus & lack strategic influence
Business Improvement District	Income stream from rates levy; strong business focus and contacts	Can have narrow business focus & lack strategic influence if not part of wider strategy alongside council
Public-private partnership	Combine council and commercial expertise and investment with strong development focus to deliver key sites	Likely to have a narrow, site-based focus and limited life though should sit within wider strategy

Obviously, in a town like Buckingham, there are existing partners already involved at least in part in seeking to shape the future of the town centre and wider community. These include the Town Council, Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and Buckinghamshire Council. It will be important for these and other partners to begin to determine how they will continue to work together going forward as part of an organisational or business plan covering the 'how' of revitalisation.

Action planning: A Timetable for Change

A town centre action plan is necessary to determine and define objectives, projects, responsibilities, budgets, timescales, outcomes and impact measures as the building blocks of the coordinated delivery of improvements on the ground. The annual review of such an action plan should begin and end with a review of available evidence and the monitoring of impacts and changes. This needs to be developed alongside or as part of delivery and governance proposals for the Neighbourhood Plan.

The draft recommendations in the final section of this report, focus on the activities that would need to be included in a town centre action plan to deliver the 'what' of town centre revitalisation.

Delivering Change: Recommendations

This section of the report focuses on the activities that would need to be included in a town centre action plan to deliver the ‘what’ of town centre revitalisation. It is subdivided in to physical changes or the ‘look’ of the town centre as short-hand and the ‘feel’ or softer changes that involve how places are promoted and animated. It is currently written as proposals for consideration that can be updated later as agreed recommendations.

The ‘Look’

Planning and property

Planning policy and development has a pivotal role in underpinning long-term revitalisation when combined with an understanding of hands-on place leadership for town and city centres.

It will be important for the Buckingham Neighbourhood Plan Working Group to work closer with Buckinghamshire Council to make use of the current opportunity to review the vision, aims and objectives of planning policy in relation to the direct and indirect impacts on the town centre. This can include polices for managing the ‘look’ of the town through physical changes including the diversification of the mix of town centre businesses and services; enhancing public spaces and historic streetscape; and improving the journey to and around town.



Such an approach will help shape policies and practices outlined below and inform the Local Plan review including previous policy support for the allocation of land for retail, office and mixed development through previously identified sites.

Re-stated objectives can also provide a context for developing policies/plans for the delivery of the town centre’s ‘feel’ through softer non-statutory interventions such as business support, events organisation and marketing.

Analysis of the proportion of properties occupied by different use classes in 2023, shows that nearly three-quarters (71%) of town centre premises are now occupied by businesses within use class E and therefore their owners do not have to get planning permission to change the use of their building. This offers a positive impact in making re-lettings easier to achieve though can enable the mix of different businesses to become skewed. Another point to note is the, for now, modest change of use from business to domestic use. Both factors are trends to continue monitor and respond to with policies, where appropriate and as possible.

Beneath these aims and objectives, the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group with partners could investigate what options there are for maintaining the primary and secondary retail frontages including restricting permitted development as housing. Over the four-year period between 2019 and 2023 there had been a significant flux in the business mix with over 40% of business premises having changed in use.

The Town Council also previously had a Community Action to produce a Community Building Strategy including proposals for a new cultural arts venue, sports facilities, a community building and a venue for religious services. It will be good to review progress and next steps with this action.

Travel to town

The perceptions and practicalities of how people travel to town, congestion caused, parking provision and alternative sustainable options, can have a profound impact on the frequency of visits.

Through planned further consultation on the Buckingham Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan -Lite, there is the opportunity for the Town Council, Neighbourhood Plan Working Group and other local stakeholders to work together to influence and help prioritise the recommendations for future improvement during the next stage.



Key national active travel benchmarks help assess the potential to increase current levels of walking and cycling in Buckingham. Nationally, nearly half of people (49%) walk or wheel five or more days per week and the most popular reason is to reach a particular destination, e.g. work, shopping (51%); followed by enjoyment or fitness (42%). The Buckingham customer survey responses indicate comparable levels of activity with perhaps scope to achieve even more of a modal shift in the 50% of residents who regularly travel to town by foot as their primary means, to target the 25% who choose to walk as their second-choice travel mode. According to national data, popular changes that could encourage residents to walk more are to create nicer places along streets to rest (78%), followed by better pavement accessibility (74%).

Important benchmarks about the potential for cycling include that only 15% of people cycle regularly and the most popular purpose for cycling are work (34%) and shopping, personal business and social trips (33%). This compares to only 1% of Buckingham town centre users travel by bike as their primary mode of transport, with scope to potentially build-on the 4% and 3% respectively who cycle as a secondary option. Top popular personal improvements to encourage cycling include access or improvements to a cycle sharing scheme (47%), whilst the most popular infrastructure investment for encouraging more cycling was more traffic-free cycle routes away from roads, e.g. through parks or along waterways (67%).

Calls for improvements to more sustainable modes of transport (6%) made-up a significant proportion of the overall customer responses in the survey undertaken for this review. This included calls for the prioritisation of improvements to public transport provision (3%), cycling infrastructure (2%) and walking routes into town (1%).

Traffic levels and both on and off-street parking, are considered as significant negative characteristics of the town centre by both businesses and customers. From businesses' perspective, the broad theme of travel to town (27%) got the greatest response when businesses were asked their top two future priorities, and within this pedestrian access (8%), active travel (8%), parking management (8%) and traffic management shared similar response rates.

Within a variety of issues relating to customers' experiences of travel to town, comments covering perceived high levels of traffic in the town centre were prominent (7%). Amongst comments about wider parking management (5%), many responses related to the Cornwalls' Meadow Car Park and especially to the unreliability of payment machines, which could be readily resolved to provide a 'quick win'.

It appears there is considerable scope to update and further strengthen already incisive policies under the Neighbourhood Plan objective for improving movement into and around the town in a healthy and safe manner.

The Neighbourhood Plan's section on infrastructure provides a clear objective to improve movement into and around the town with a specific policy commitment that pedestrian routes should be made suitable for disabled access, including the provision of seating as rest points. In addition, there is a community commitment that the Town Council strongly supports the provision of good connections, via pedestrian and cycle links.

The section on developer contributions includes a recommended Community Action to seek contributions towards providing new pedestrian and cycle links. It was also proposed that improved public transport could be provided along Tingewick Road that encompasses new developments.

The Town Council and Neighbourhood Plan Working Group can work closely with Buckinghamshire Council departments to determine the potential scope and feasibility of undertaking reviews, plan preparation and delivery covering:

- The reduction/amelioration of the impacts of traffic on travel to and within the town centre.
- The delivery of cycling and walking improvements to encourage increased active travel to the town centre, in conjunction with the full Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan development being led by Wiltshire Council. This will include pursuing the delivery of active travel routes where developer funding contributions have or could be determined.
- Quick win parking improvements such as the upgrading of payment machines in Cornwalls' Meadow and potentially a wider review of off and on-street parking provision using a customer-focused approach such as the People, Places & Parking process developed by People & Places. Such a wider review should consider the previous Neighbourhood Plan policy for providing additional town centre car parking.
- The possibility of enhanced public transport to the town centre from surrounding villages.

Streetscape and access

Creating well-designed and accessible streetscapes has a leading role in enabling prosperous and welcoming places for the benefit of both businesses and residents.

The list of survey responses about the top positive perceptions about Buckingham's town centre environment for both business and customer stakeholders, feature cleanliness, public spaces, physical appearance and the ability to walk to town. In contrast, outdoor seating provision is considered as a significant negative factor by both, while only customers perceive the accessibility around the town centre for the elderly and disabled as a significant negative issue.



The broad themes of streetscape and appearance was the third highest future priority of businesses (20%), with appearance (8%) and pedestrian access (8%) prominent within this.

Priority given by customers to improving public access across the town centre (14%) included the prioritisation of better accessibility (5%) through improved conditions for walking, wheeling and road crossings, alongside specific calls for pedestrianisation schemes (4%) mostly covering the Market Place and mentions of the need to improve footpath paving (3%). Calls for a range of streetscape improvements (3%) included cleanliness (2%), built heritage (2%) and the physical appearance of the town centre (1%).

The Neighbourhood Planning Working Group could seek to expand the Plan's section on design, heritage and environment to reflect these concerns and include policies and proposals for conserving and enhancing Buckingham's built heritage, historic setting and public spaces.

The section on culture and leisure included a policy for protecting and retaining identified green and open spaces as designated Local Green Space. It might be good to also include the aspiration to enhance them including by the riverside and Cornwall Meadows car park.

An additional community-based action might be that the feasibility is investigated with Buckinghamshire Council for involving local stakeholders in undertaking a deliverable audit of town centre access improvements.

The ‘Feel’

The Town Council, Neighbourhood Plan Working Group and partners can also determine how policies/plans and plans are shaped for the delivery of the town centre’s ‘feel’ through softer non-statutory interventions such as business support, leisure and cultural activity and marketing and events organisation.

Business diversification

Through a town-wide and evidence-based understanding of changing customer habits and demands, the Town Council and partners can support town centre businesses in adapting as well as creating new business opportunities.

Over the period between 2019 and 2023, just under a quarter (23%) of business premises in Buckingham town changed in tenant and/or type of business use. The vacancy rates of 9% is typical for a town of Buckingham’s size, though with 43% of businesses reporting that their profitability was reduced or greatly reduced over the preceding 12 months, the indication is that many more are perhaps vulnerable to closure.



The levels of comparison retail such as fashion and national chains are considered negatively by both Buckingham businesses and the customers, as is the proportion of vacant premises. In contrast, the list of top positive perceptions for both sets of stakeholders feature cafes and restaurants, pubs, independent shops, grocery retail, markets and access to health services are also all aspects of the mix of businesses that are viewed positively.

The broad theme of the mix of businesses and services (25%) was the second highest future priority for Buckingham’s businesses with the imbalance of the town centre retail mix (11%) and banking provision (8%) at the time prominent within this.

The businesses and services mix (30%) was the broad theme that received the highest level of responses when customers were asked to give their top two priorities for the future of the town centre. Looking in detail at the responses about the business mix alone, calls to improve the retail mix in Buckingham town centre accounted for 10% of responses and priorities for improving a perceived imbalance of the wider mix accounted for a further 7% of responses. In terms of services there was a significant number of calls for improved banking there were a significant number of responses (2%) relating to health service provision because of both its perceived importance and high demand, as well as calls to improve the market (2%).

Previous town centre policies the Buckingham Plan included retaining and enhancing both the primary and secondary retail frontages. In addition, the culture, leisure and health section included a policy for the provision of new or extended health care facilities on two existing sites at the Community Hospital and on Verney Close.

Leisure and culture

The provision of cultural and leisure facilities and activities is a key part of broadening the role and appeal of town centres as multi-purpose places at the heart of their communities and with a wider appeal to visitors.

The “What’s On” page of the Discover Buckingham web site and listings on the Town Council web site currently present a busy schedule of monthly events. Many of these are based in and around the town centre and complement its roles as a hub for the local community. Some higher profile events such as Buckingham Live Weekend and Buckingham Summer Festival can also help attract visitors from further afield.



From the survey responses it is apparent that customers have mildly negative perceptions about the current level of cultural and leisure facilities in Buckingham with over a third viewing it negatively (34%), compared to just under a quarter who had a positive perception (23%). Nearly 4 in 10 respondents (39%) were positive about town centre events though, compared to less than 2 in 10 (18%) who had a negative perspective. In terms of customers top-two future priorities, there was an even spread of calls between a desire to see more town centre events and activities (3%), investing in leisure and cultural facilities (2%) and providing activities for children and young people (2%).

These findings support the Neighbourhood Plan’s existing commitment to encourage development that strengthens culture, leisure, sport and play facilities in the town. The culture, leisure and health section included a Community Action to produce a Community Building Strategy including proposals for a new cultural arts venue, sports facilities, a community building and a venue for religious services.

It may be beneficial to add an additional community-based action to support the creation of new cultural and leisure events in town centre public spaces, including for example, more activities for children and young people. These can be added to an annual events programme and listing for the benefit of the local community, with perhaps highlighted sections for different audiences and visitors from further afield.

Place Branding and Marketing

Capturing the changing identity of a town centre and stakeholder /audience perceptions through place branding and marketing, helps strengthen a local sense of place and shapes a positive external image.

As far back as the 2015, the Buckingham Retail Appraisal, Health Check and Opportunities Assessment recognised that better promotion is needed about the town's 'success' and that it is important to build on the positives such as the role as a meeting place with a good social and food offer, including markets.

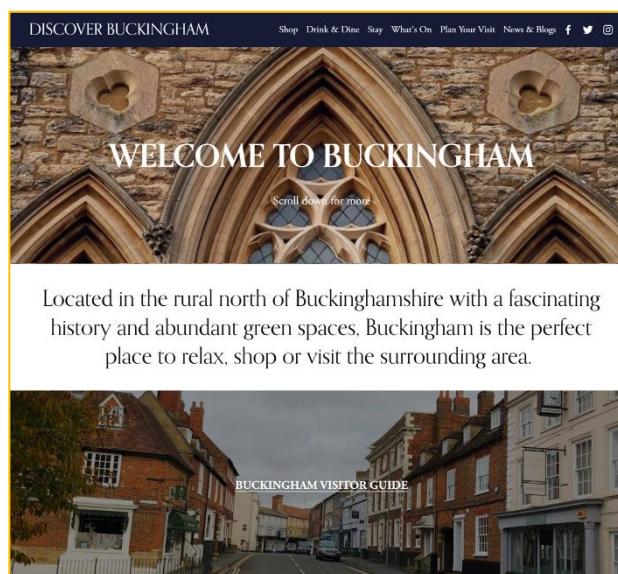
As well as the informative Discover Buckingham web site, there is a related Instagram account and a Tourist Information Centre Facebook page. Other Facebook pages include a popular Buckingham Events account and a Buckingham Town account that promotes local businesses and services. There are web pages and Facebook accounts specific to particular events and destinations/businesses. A Visit Buckinghamshire web page is no longer operational and a Visit the South East web page includes limited information about Buckingham or events in the town.

The analysis of the Buckingham prospect population size by drive-time shows that there is a population of nearly half a million (454,574) potential customers within a 25-minute drive and that this has grown by a significant 16% (62,480) since 2011. Analysis of Buckingham's competing towns by drive-time, shows that there are 4 towns plus Milton Keynes where 10-minute catchment areas overlap.

The customer survey responses show that grocery shopping is by far the most popular, primary reason (58%) for coming to Buckingham town centre, whilst leisure uses such as using hospitality businesses (35%), account for more than a further third of people's reasons for visiting the town centre.

When customers were asked how their experience of Buckingham town centre had changed in recent years, over a third (37%) reported that it had worsened, with as many reporting that it had changed in a mixture of good and bad ways. When asked if they would recommend a visit to the town centre, nearly two-thirds said 'yes'.

The list of top positive perceptions for both businesses and customers feature cafes and restaurants prominently, and pubs to a slightly lesser extent. Independent shops, grocery retail, markets and access to health services are also all aspects of the mix of businesses and services viewed as making positive contributions to the town centre. Cleanliness, public spaces, physical appearance and the ability to walk to town, all aspects of environment that feature in both lists of positive features. The appeal relative to out-of-town retail and the levels of town-wide marketing are negative perceptions specific to businesses.



When asked to give a single word that sums-up Buckingham town centre, prominent words used included a mix of positive sentiments such as ‘friendly’, ‘pleasant’, ‘convenient’ and ‘quaint’ to more negative descriptions to ‘tired’, ‘decline’, ‘dull’ and ‘traffic’.

Businesses and customers gave a high or very high priority to providing social media insights (72% & 71% respectively). Customers gave a similarly high priority to the creation and management of a town web site (67%) and receiving regular updates from businesses about products, services or events (67%). Just two-thirds of businesses gave a high or very high priority to the creation and management of their own web sites (65%).

In terms of digital infrastructure, businesses gave a high or very high priority to continued investment in fast broadband (78%). Customers gave a moderately high priority to good Wi-Fi coverage (60%).

Place branding and marketing is unsurprisingly not specifically covered by the objectives and policies of the Neighbourhood Plan. It is, however, something that perhaps could be recognised as a Community-based action that cross-references work being led by the Town Council. This could include analysis to capture Buckingham’s current identity in a way that recognises change, accentuates the positives and provides a narrative to pitch to different audiences, beginning with residents.

A communications and marketing plan for the town could cover:

- A positive representation of change and the partnership involved in shaping it including the Town Council, Neighbourhood Plan Working Group and Buckinghamshire Council.
- Targeted social media campaigns aimed at different types of local town centre user by location, e.g. town residents and surrounding villages; or demographic group such as children and young people.
- Training and support for businesses; attractions and local groups to promote themselves and the town in ways that reinforce the collective identity.
- Targeted promotion aimed at visitors that highlights distinctiveness of Buckingham and the appeal of its heritage, events, businesses including hospitality, and attractions.

Town Centre Stewardship

Ensuring the ongoing, routine stewardship of town centres by managing aspects such as litter or ant-social behaviour is essential in managing stakeholders’ perceptions and meeting their needs.

Cleanliness (61%) and safety (49%) were considered as positives by town centre customers. Businesses considered the town centre’s cleanliness as a positive (64%).

There were more balanced opinions from customers about ant-social behaviour with equal



numbers considering its absence a positive (23%) compared to those considering its presence a negative (24%). Considering stakeholders' future priorities, it is important to recognise that anti-social behaviour was the sub-theme receiving the highest number of responses, with comments focusing on a perceived lack of police presence to address nuisance caused by people congregating at times in and around the town centre. The need to respond to perceived levels of anti-social behaviour including congregation in public spaces, excessive drinking and a desire for an increased police presence, were a significant priority (4%). The need to respond to perceived levels of anti-social behaviour including congregation in public spaces, excessive drinking and a desire for an increased police presence, were also a significant priority for town centre customers with over 40 (4%) respondents rating it amongst their top two future priorities.

Looking to the future it will be important to maintain and promote the positive perceptions about the towns centre's cleanliness and safety. It will also be important to work with the police to better understand, communicate to stakeholders and address as appropriate, the causes of concerns about anti-social behaviour in the town centre. This could be recognised as a community-based action in the Neighbourhood Plan and/or wider partnership plan.

Next Steps: Making it Happen

This report is a detailed piece of work that necessarily pulls together existing policies/proposals and a stakeholder perspective of issues in a systematic way. Its aim is to provide an action-orientated approach that can be delivered by a coming together of key local partners and a realistic appraisal of priorities and resourcing needs. In this way, it is possible to set about making a meaningful difference to the long-term vitality and viability of Buckingham's town centre. Realistically, this should be viewed as a 5-10 year project that will need extra resources, including organisationally, to coordinate delivery. It will however, be important to deliver quick-wins over the next 12 months to gain stakeholder confidence and increase engagement.

Below are the proposed next steps that partners will need to consider and undertake in the process of developing and delivering a robust partnership and action plan that would be able to aid the town centre's recovery and revitalisation.

1. *Discussion with key partners/stakeholder groups:* This draft report should be presented to and discussed with key partners and stakeholder representatives to finalise it and agree recommendations.
2. *Adapt recommendations for inclusion in Neighbourhood Plan and other local strategies:* Key stakeholder organisations can work through the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group, Town Council and Buckingham & Villages Community Board, to incorporate recommendations within existing plans and strategies.
3. *Potentially publish stakeholder summary:* A short, illustrated version of the of this report and its findings could published by for wider distribution, and as record of findings and actions related to the town centre. Alternatively, a suitable section on the town centre might be included in the Neighbourhood Plan.
4. *Meetings of theme-based sub-groups:* Initial meetings could be organised of theme-based sub-groups to discuss the development of proposals for the 'look' and 'feel' of the town centre and partnership working/governance. People & Places can help assist in determining the membership and format of these groups, as required.
5. *Initial business engagement:* The publication of the summary could be used to begin engagement with businesses through a meeting. This would discuss the findings and future role of businesses including through the formation of a representative group. People & Places can help assist in this as an extension of the current work.
6. *Partnership development and governance:* The existing stakeholders on the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group, Town Council and Buckingham & Villages Community Board, as well as businesses representatives, need to determine the partnership development and governance arrangements for revitalising Buckingham's town centre. This can include focusing on the representation and roles for a core group responsible and equipped to manage the coordination and communication of activity. This needs to be developed alongside or as part of delivery and governance proposals for the Neighbourhood Plan.

7. *Determine initial delivery priorities:* The evolving partnership needs to determine initial delivery priorities that underpin long-term strategy and capacity as well demonstrate 'quick wins' to stakeholders and the wider community. The Shared Prosperity Fund provides an initial and flexible injection of funds to help achieve this.

BUCKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL**FULL COUNCIL****MONDAY 13th May 2024**

Contact Officer: Louise Stubbs, Deputy Town Clerk

Access 4 All Budget**1. Recommendations**

1.1. It is recommended that Mr. Russell and the previous members of the Access for All are asked for written confirmation of which charity they would like to direct the remaining £251 that had been given to the group and held as a 'just in case' fund by Buckingham Town Council. Once confirmed £251 should be donated to the chosen charity. The charity should support those with disabilities and their access needs.

2. Background

2.1. At the Interim Council meeting in April 2023, The Chairman of Buckingham Access for All, Mr. Russell, informed Members of the closure of the group. He requested that the funds held with Buckingham Town Council and the balance in the group account is donated to a local charity.

2.2. In 2015 Buckingham Town Council received funding from Buckinghamshire County Council of £500.00 for Access for All – this was placed in **EMR 9045/901**.

2.3. This EMR of was carried in the budget year to year until 2023 when it was not carried forward with the 2023/2024 budget.

2.4. In 2018-2019 Mike Smith and Ed Grimsdale donated an additional £300.00, making total fund donations £800.00 This donation was towards wood and materials for the wheelchair accessible bench that was built in Bourton Park.

2.5. In 2017-2018 £280.00 was spent and in 2019-2020 £269.00 was spent, leaving a total of £251.00 available to the group at the time the EMR was closed.

2.6. It has been confirmed with group members that the funding held by Buckingham Town Council for use for Buckingham Access for All was not the only funding or bank account available to the group (that is, the Council was not acting as an unofficial trustee for the group's assets) and was used as a 'just in case fund' but was rarely needed. Now that the group has disbanded

this means there are no clear agreements in place as to how the funding should be disposed of.

3. Options

3.1. **Option 1:** Consult with Mr. Russell and the previous members of the Access for All group on which local charity the £251 unspent funds should be directed to as a donation, and with written confirmation, direct this donation accordingly. If this option is chosen, it would be sensible to request that the chosen charity also supports those with disabilities and their access needs.

3.2. **Option 2:** On the basis that the funding was given by Buckinghamshire County Council for the use of Access for All, and that neither of these organisations now exist, the remaining funding could legitimately be reabsorbed into the Council's general reserves.

Buckingham Town Council
Full Council
Monday 13th May 2024

Contact Officer: Jodie Baughan – Finance Officer

Returning of funds held for an outside body / charity

1. Recommendations

- 1.1. It is recommended that Members agree to return the money held for Buckingham Park Run.

2. Background

- 2.1. In 2015 BTC agreed to hold funds of £250.00 for the newly created Buckingham Park Run. They could draw on the funding by providing receipts for items purchased directly for the park run set up, for example cones and bibs for volunteers.
- 2.2. BTC currently hold £89.08 in an Earmarked Reserve.
- 2.3. No requests for funding have been made to BTC for a number of years. It was agreed that the Finance Officer would contact Buckingham Park Run to arrange the return of the remaining funding and to ascertain if they now had a bank account. They do not have an individual account.
- 2.4. The Park Run is now national, and funding is held centrally, however, each run has their own page where you can donate, making sure funds reach your local run.
- 2.5. Buckingham Park Run have requested the return of the remaining funds.

Buckingham Town Council**Full Council****Monday 13th May 2024**

Contact Officer: Claire Molyneux, Town Clerk

Ear Marked Reserves.**1. Recommendations**

- 1.1. It is recommended that Members note that the Annual Internal Audit is due to be completed on the 10th May and therefore the final accounts, Annual Internal Audit Report and AGAR will be presented to the Interim meeting on the 17th June.
- 1.2. It is recommended that Members agree the attached ear-marked reserves for the 2024-2025 financial year.

2. Ear- Marked Reserves

- 2.1. Each year Council agrees to ringfence money into ear- marked reserves (EMR). These are different from the general reserve as they are there to cover expenditure that is planned.
- 2.2. There are two general uses of EMR - for a specific project such as the removal of the old bridge in Bourton Park. This project was budgeted to take place this last financial year but due to delays in moving the right of way the project will now take place this financial year. Therefore, it has been recommended to move the money budgeted into an EMR. The second use is to build a 'war chest' ready for a future expense. A good example of this is the play area replacement fund. Each year money is budgeted to be added to this fund ready for when each play area requires replacement.
- 2.3. BTC owns a number of assets, and it is sensible budgeting to put money aside ready for replacement and repair. Therefore, this report recommends saving money for known future expenditure.

3. Expenditure 2023-2024

- 3.1. As noted above the final audit report has not been completed in time for this report. However, it is clear that the council's expenditure was well within budget, although movements to EMR should not be considered an underspend. The money is still required, it is just for one reason or another it wasn't spent in the last financial year. It is recommended that the EMR are agreed now in order that the new year's accounts can be set up and start to be used.

- 3.2. Staff wages, pension contributions and NI costs are difficult to budget as the payrise is not known at the point that precept is decided. There are also multiple other factors such as staff leaving, going on long-term sick, being auto enrolled in the pension scheme or choosing to opt out. This year the pay rise was slightly less than budgeted for and the Green Spaces Team ran a member short for a period.
- 3.3. In total there across the entire staff (Staff wages, pension contributions and NI costs) £38,466 was unspent. It is recommended that this money be moved to a Resourcing Reserve EMR. This will allow future flexibility and cover for unforeseen staffing changes and challenges.
- 3.4. Use of the CCLA fund generated £36,455 more income than was anticipated. It is recommended that this money is used to complete repairs on the war memorial and to top up the cemetery development fund. Should the new cemetery not be ready to open this year then work will be required on the old cemetery to create new grave spaces.

Current Ear-Marked Reserves.

	Spent in 2022-2023	Funds remaining	Recommended 2024-2025	Recommendation
9001 Youth Council	£0	£2,015	£2,015	No change - Expected to be spent this financial year
9002 Cemetery development	£9,770	£42,663	£72,663	Transfer £30,000 from 1190 the extra interest received.
9003 Legal Costs	£0	£3,421	£6,871	Transfer from 4016 - Invoices due
9005 Website	£2,665	£1,335	£0	Remove and transfer the balance to 9069
9010 Flood relief fund	£0	£826	£826	No change - Money held for other party
9011 War memorial	£2,000	£0	£2,000	Transfer £2000 from 1190 the extra interest received. Repairs are needed.
9012 Christmas lights	£529	£758	£2,171	Add unspent £1,413 from 4201. This will be required for the new lights.
9014 Town in Bloom	£457	£1,000	£1,000	No change - to be spent this year
9015 Charter fairs	£568	£4,573	£5,141	No change
9019 memorial testing and repair	£2,000	£0	£0	Project completed
9025 Play area replacement	£0	£52,932	£57,932	Add planned £5000 from 4275

9030	Tourism leaflets	£1,521	£883	£883	No change - Expected to be spent this financial year
9035	Parks Development	£11,986	£244	£8,916	Rename to Green Spaces Development and transfer £8672 form 4122
9036	Election costs	£2,150	£0	£0	Not needed for this year as new budget line created
9040	Park run	£0	£89	£0	To be returned to Park Run
9049	Neighbourhood Plan	£15,275	£6,725	£7,661	Add £936 from 4624 - Expected to be spent this financial year
9050	Bridge Repairs	£13,263	£0	£44,640	Project to be completed this year - add funds from 4270
9051	Office development / furniture	£540	£156	£156	No change. To be spent this year.
9052	Depot equipment	£3,785	£7,850	£7,850	Rename depot and hold funds and project to be completed this year.
9053	AEDs	£0	£555	£850	Add the unspent £295 from 4168. Invoice expected.
9054	Lace Hil repairs & Maintenance	£0	£25,000	£25,000	No change - Expected to be spent this financial year
9057	Cemetery Lodge repairs	£0	£5,180	£7,840	Transfer £2990 from 4609 as redecoration due this year
9058	Bowls Club Pavillion repairs	£0	£770	£2,493	transfer £1723 from 4606 as roof repair required.
9059	Making good / boundary repairs	£0	£45,000	£45,000	No change - Expected to be spent this financial year

9062	Grants	£0	£3,000	£3,000	Hold and rename Emergency Grant
9063	Twinning	£0	£2,418	£2,483	Add the unspent from budget 4260
9065	Purchase cemetery & allotment	£0	£87,000	£87,000	No change - Expected to be spent imminently
9066	Summer sculpture Trail	£3,500	£800	£800	Towards next project
9067	Training	£3,500	£800	£8,953	Add the underspend from 4023 and 4269. Training planned and new staff to be inducted. Fund in place for new councillor training in next council year.
9069	Computer Equipment	£0	£3,500	£5,633	Rename Computers and software. Transfer funds from 4038
9070	Rates	£0	£1,706	£1,706	No Change. Expected invoice.
9074	Accessibility	£0	£2,513	£2,513	No change - History being investigated
9075	Recruitment	£0	£1,000	£1,000	Move to new staffing costs EMR
9077	Wildlife Conservation Volunteers	£0	£361	£1,461	Transfer £1100 unspent from 4276
Recommended New EMR					
	Machinery replacement and repair	£0	£0	£9,949	And the £9,949 unspend contingencies budget (4500)
	Buildings replacement and repair	£0	£0	£6,500	Transfer unspent from 4156

Resourcing reserve	£0	£0	£38,466	New EMR to cover unexpected staffing requirements
Vehicle replacement and repair.	£0	£0	£3,445	Transfer £2535 from 4063 and £910 from 4035
Staffing costs	£0	£0	£3,169	To cover unplanned HR, occupational health and recruitment costs. Transfer available funds from 9075, 4008, 4025, 4026 into one flexible pool.
Totals	£73,509	£305,073	£477,986	