

Bradford on Avon
Town Council
Business Plan
2025-2029



Introduction

The Town Council elected in May 2025 intends to build on the work that has already been undertaken in the last four years.

The Town Council has changed a great deal over the period of the last business plan. Completing the Asset Transfer and Delegation of Services from Wiltshire Council in 2022. This has increased the portfolio of services that it provides, as well as expanding many of the services that were already being provided.

This process has increased the size of the Town Council's estate, with both building and land assets being transferred into the Town Council's ownership.

The underpinning aim of the previous business plan was to build on the community spirit that came to the fore during Covid and to develop a 'Working Together' ethos, building a strong community in Bradford on Avon.

This aim has been demonstrated by councillors, staff and volunteers within the town working together on a large number of projects and have set a firm foundation for the next four years.

Whilst the Town Council has been successful in building on the community spirit, it recognises that a strong community enables individuals to thrive and this depends on:

- Residents being able to benefit from what the town has to offer
- Residents being able to contribute to the life of the town
- Residents being able to take part in decisions that affect the town

In all that we do we will keep climate change, ecological and sustainability issues at the centre of our policy making.



Cllr Jack Vittles
Mayor of Bradford on Avon



Ian Brown
Chief Executive & Town Clerk

Business Plan

The business plan 2021 – 2025 set out the Town Council’s vision, aims and objectives for that period. Those aims and objectives were delivered by a number of different projects, policies and partnership working.

This new Business Plan ensures that the Town Council has an overarching strategy in place to guide the Town Council’s direction, whilst supporting the Neighbourhood Plan [2013-2026] and the Town Vision, which was adopted in March 2024 and will inform our emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

The purpose of the business plan is to show the Town Council’s direction of travel and provide an overview of the Town Council’s strategic objectives; it is a statement of the Town Council’s intentions laid, ensuring that it can take a consistent approach to:

- the development of strategies
- the design and delivery of services
- the need to improve facilities
- the prioritisation and allocation of resources
- the achievement of value for money

The plan remains a living document, which will be regularly monitored, reviewed, and updated, responding to pressures arising from changing circumstances.

The vision for the plan has been strengthened to reflect our desire to recognise the town’s strong community values, whilst the aims to do so have remained the same, to support the community.

Bradford on Avon

Bradford on Avon is a small market town at the southern end of the Cotswolds, with a population of approximately 10,500.

Bradford on Avon is renowned for both its natural beauty and historic buildings. The town crosses the River Avon from the high ground on the north bank into the valley below, surrounded by lush countryside. Widely recognised as one of the most important historic towns in the south-west of England, it has several buildings of national significance and coherent architecture. The town centre sits within a conservation area and gives visitors a wonderful setting for leisure, cultural and tourist activities. Bradford on Avon has delightful shops, restaurants, and accommodation lining the narrow streets of the town centre.

With the redundant mill buildings that have been transformed into modern housing and commercial development, and good direct rail links, the town is an attractive place for people across all walks of life to live and contribute to the town’s economy and community life.

Corporate Vision, Aim and Objectives

Vision

Bradford on Avon Town Council celebrates our community and believes that a cohesive and inclusive community is central to building a happy, vibrant and successful town. To create a strong community where everybody has the opportunity to engage with and contribute to a successful town.

A successful town where its heritage and environment are valued, and the Council works to address the long-term crisis in our climate and natural environment, placing these issues at the centre of everything we do.

A town where all residents have access to a high quality of life and where people want to live, work, play and visit.

The Town Council will aim to support and develop our community through the following objectives:

- A Thriving Town
 - Successful economically, socially, and environmentally
- A Flourishing Community
 - Where individuals thrive best
- A Greener Place
 - Working towards carbon neutrality and improved biodiversity
- An Engaged and Efficient Town Council
 - Listening and engaging because that is how the best decisions can be made

Bradford on Avon Town Council will direct its influence, capacity, and resources to promote the best interests of the town, for the benefit of the whole community.

Objective 1

A Thriving Town - Successful economically, socially, and environmentally

Bradford on Avon is a special town with historic buildings and independent shops, set in a rural landscape. The Town Council wishes to ensure that we are a town where heritage and environment are valued, creating a successful and thriving community for residents, businesses, and visitors.

It seeks to be a town where all residents can have their say and take part in making the decisions that affect their lives, where residents have access to a high quality of life both now and in the future.

Aims

Working with residents and Wiltshire Council we intend to

- ➲ Complete the review of the Neighbourhood Plan, influencing development in the town
- ➲ Investigate the potential for a re-development of the health centre and station car park site
- ➲ Work for the best deal possible on a traffic scheme for the town and improved pedestrian safety
- ➲ Work towards 20 mph zones across the town to reduce speed
- ➲ Work towards a reduction to the weight limit on the town bridge
- ➲ Work to progress a new pedestrian bridge, seeking opportunities to fund the project

Working with the business community we intend to

- ➲ Work to expand the town market to increase footfall in the town centre, supporting local businesses
- ➲ Review the Tourism Strategy 2019-2024 and produce a new version
- ➲ Promote Bradford on Avon as a tourist destination

Working with the Environment Agency we intend to

- ➲ Improve the flood resilience in the town centre
- ➲ Support Nature based solutions to help alleviate flooding

Objective 2

A Flourishing Community – where individuals thrive best

To ensure that we have a flourishing community we need to support the community's well-being, building on the resilience shown during the pandemic to combat social isolation, supporting both physical and mental health. We need to create an environment where anybody and everybody has the opportunity to be involved.

The Town Council will encourage and harness the passion of its residents, and their commitment to the town, by encouraging and supporting volunteers, recognising the added value that volunteers provide, and the community spirit that is generated.

Aims

The Town Council will endeavour to

- Progress refurbishment of the Youth and Community Centre
- Develop and support volunteer groups and encourage community participation in their efforts to contribute to the life of the town
- Engage with residents and encourage participation in decision making, securing better services, and creating a more active and informed community
- Provide grant support to third parties delivering the Council's objectives
- Seek funding to enable the building of a new sports pavilion on Culver Close
- Invest in our outdoor spaces - develop outdoor activities, gym, table tennis and community sports events, across the town
- Complete the Poulton Park play area project and then progress refurbishment plan for all play areas
- Continue the principle of the council community events being entirely or mostly free
- Enhancing community life by actively supporting local youth, sport and cultural/community groups, and encouraging new events
- Support BoA Youth Football Club to identify and develop new premises
- Work with the museum to find improved premises
- Invest in our green spaces, developing sympathetic plans to improve the infrastructure

- Apply sustainable principles in our building and renovation projects
- Support Twinning Associations in their aims of fostering relations with our twin towns

Objective 3

A Greener Place – working towards carbon neutrality and improved biodiversity

We must play our part locally in tackling the global crisis in climate and biodiversity by working towards carbon neutrality and enhancing the biodiversity of our local green spaces

Aims

The Town Council will

- ☛ Measure and reduce its carbon footprint, to work towards net zero
- ☛ Communicate the climate and ecological emergencies
- ☛ Introduce 'rewilding' initiatives as part of our site management plans including developing more wildlife habitat features
- ☛ Support community involvement in looking after our green spaces through volunteer groups
- ☛ Develop Poulton Park
- ☛ Manage our sites ecologically and responsibly and extend the area of meadow land in its ownership
- ☛ Ensure access to attractive green spaces and walks
- ☛ Enhance the benefit of the cemetery to the community with, memorial benches, an area for reflection and better use of the chapels
- ☛ Investigate, plan and instigate the development of the cemetery extension
- ☛ Work with the community to plant more trees across the town
- ☛ Champion environmental and ecological projects, working with the community to minimise waste, from domestic energy, plastics, other projects
- ☛ Champion projects to improve the water quality and benefit of the river in our town
- ☛ Work with Wiltshire Council on environmental projects that benefit our town
- ☛ Support the development of Green Blue corridors in the town

Objective 4

An Engaged and Efficient Town Council – listening and engaging because that is how the best decisions can be made

Developing a culture where people are enabled to have their say and take part in making the decisions that affect their lives. Building an engaged council that works well as a team.

Aims

The Town Council will

- Develop the Residents Panel to increase participation
- Develop our consultations to engage as many residents as possible
- Ensure that listening is at the heart of our decision making process
- Develop our volunteer base, including a 'Volunteer Bulletin'
- Encourage a 'One Council' ethos – maintaining our approach of seeking to involve all councillors and staff in the work of the council as we develop projects
- Working as a Town Council for the benefit of the town, not the benefit of the individual, finding solutions to the challenges the town faces
- Continue to extend the amount of Town Council revenue being secured in ways other than the precept (the Town Council's share of council tax)
- Ensure our funds are ethically invested

Local Government in Wiltshire

Local Government in Wiltshire operates in a two-tier system: Wiltshire Council Unitary Authority (upper tier) and Bradford on Avon Town Council (lower tier). Wiltshire Council being one of the largest Unitary councils in the country and concentrates on strategic services.

Bradford on Avon Town Council is a corporate, public body which is required to act in the interests of its community, there are roles and responsibilities that the council needs to fill. The council shall be governed by statutory duties [Acts of Parliament] which it must do and its own policies.

The Town Council is a progressive council with aspirations to use its influence, capacity, and resources to ensure that it works for the whole community. The Town Council provides local services and promotes the best interests of the town for the betterment of the local community.

The Town Council has signed the Civility and Respect Pledge, which is to prioritise civility and respect and start a culture change in the parish and town council sector.



The introduction of the Civility and Respect Pledge is because there is no place for bullying, harassment and intimidation within our sector. The pledge is enabling councils to demonstrate their commitment to addressing poor behaviour across and fostering positive changes that support civil and respectful conduct.

The Town Council

The Town Council officer team is led by the Chief Executive & Town Clerk, who is both the Council's Proper Officer and the Responsible Finance Officer. The Clerk is supported in managing the council by the Deputy Clerk and the Accountant.

The Town Council's establishment consists of 14 office based staff, 11 town wardens/venues staff and 4 youth workers, this equates to 21.8 full time equivalents. This is supplemented by a number of local volunteers/groups who operate with the council's guidance and support.

The Chief Executive & Town Clerk has obtained the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) which allows the Town Council to use the Section 7 General Power of Competence (September 2014), which it has resolved to use the power. This enables it to deliver an enhanced role and allows it to do things that otherwise it would have been unable to do. The power is to do anything that an individual generally may do, as long as the Town Council does not break the law. It is intended to be the power of first, not last, resort.

The Town Council moved into its current offices, Kingston House Offices, in 2022. This move was necessitated to bring the office staff under one roof, due to the asset transfer process. This move is ultimately for the medium term, whilst it looks for a permanent base.

The Town Council is determined to address the climate and ecological emergencies and has put this agenda at the heart of all its services.



A Quality Council

The Town Council is a professional 'Quality Gold Town Council' committed to providing high standard, cost-effective and efficient services to meet the needs of the town's residents.



The Quality Gold Award demonstrates that a Council operates within recognised best practice and achieves excellence in governance, community leadership and Council development.

Quality Gold councils provide leadership for their communities, bring people together and have excellent business planning processes, ensuring value for money as well as constantly seeking new innovations and opportunities to improve.

The Town Council will be looking to renew this award during the period of this business plan.

Governance

The Town Council is made up of 12 councillors who are elected every four years. The next scheduled elections are to be held in May 2029. The Council is chaired by the Town Mayor, who with the Deputy Town Mayor are elected at the Annual Town Council meeting.

The Town Council has six main committees:

- Full Council
- Environment and Green Spaces
- Community and well being
- Sustainable Travel
- Resources
- Town Development

The Town Council has a permanent sub-committee:

- Delegated Planning

The committee responsibilities are set out in the Town Council's 'Terms of Reference' document.

The committee chairs are elected and then re-elected each year.

The Council posts public notices on the Town Council Notice Boards and on its website to advertise upcoming meetings, showing the summons to the councillors for the meeting and the meeting agenda. The Town Council will ensure that draft minutes are published on the website and made available as soon as possible after meetings.

In all Council meetings, time is set aside at the beginning for members of the public to ask questions, limited to 2 minutes per member of the public and a total of 30 minutes for all questions to ensure the meeting does not overrun.

Financial Information

The Town Council has a budget of £1,556,910 for 2025/26, which is funded by the precept of £1,243,874 (equates for a Band D household to £297.74 per year), and fees & charges. The Town Council looks at innovative ways of raising finance to enable it to deliver its plans, to minimise the impact on the precept.

The Town Council regularly reviews its Treasury and Investment policy to ensure that all capital plans are affordable. The Town Council adopts a measured approach in earmarking its reserves by rolling capital and revenue funds accrued towards identified future projects and ensure they are budgeted for in the forward capital plan. All borrowing and long-term liabilities are within prudent and sustainable levels and investment decisions are taken in accordance with good professional practice.

The Town Council will adopt a balanced approach to its levels of reserves which will be reviewed annually or more frequently if necessary. Due to exceptional circumstances during the last Town Council administrative cycle, the Town Council had to draw on its reserves, which is why it is essential that the Town Council maintains a healthy level of reserves, the Town Council has adopted a policy of returning to holding 6 months of operating costs by the end of 2030, allowing for inflation.

The Town Council is registered for VAT and is therefore able to recover this element.

The Town Council Functions

The Town Council has a few statutory duties that it must adhere to, these generally relate to the administration of the Town Council rather than services; however, it can use powers under other legislation, and the general power of competence to enable the Town Council to provide a variety of services.

A list of current services/responsibilities is provided at the end of this plan.

The Town Council – Corporate Charity Trustee

The Town Council is the corporate trustee for four charities.

- i) The Colonel William Llewellyn Palmer Educational Charity. Providing allotments and the Sladesbrook playing field. The Charity is for the benefit of children and young person's up to the age of 25 attending, or who have attended, schools in Bradford on Avon, and for the provision of recreational facilities for the same age group in the town.
- ii) The Bradford on Avon Playing Field Association. Set up to access and raise funds that are not available to the Town Council. For the provision and maintenance of playing and recreation fields for the use of the inhabitants of Bradford on Avon and the neighbourhood thereof, without distinction of gender, race, or disability, in the interests of social welfare with the object of improving the conditions of life, mental and physical health and well-being for the said inhabitants.
- iii) Bearfield Playing Field. Responsible for all aspects of the playing field as a land holding.
- iv) Festival Garden. Responsible for all aspects of the garden as a land holding.

The Local Government Association and Charity Commission recognise that local authorities are well suited to being charity trustees, due to:

- i) being rooted in the community
- ii) open and transparent in their dealings
- iii) highly accountable in their actions
- iv) have high standards of public conduct embedded in the way they work

The Council as a corporate body trustee **must** be independent when making decisions and managing the charity. The Charity is not an extension of the Council; the Charity must be managed to deliver the aims of the charity.

The Town Council – Councillor Representatives

There are occasions where other charities/organisations in the town, request a councillor(s) to sit on their charity/organisation committees. The Town Council will then nominate individuals to those positions and the term of office will either be an annual term or for the duration of the Council.

What does Bradford on Avon Town Council Do?

Service Area	Service Area
Allotments	Low Energy Cooking Appliance Scheme
Balancing ponds (amenity land)	Market
Benches	Meeting room hire
Buildings	Memorials/graves
Burials	Millennium statue
Bus shelters - Cleaning	MUGA
Bus Shelters – maintenance (BoA own)	Newsletter
Car Park – Cleaning (WC owned)	Noticeboards
Cemetery	Pancake Race
Charities (x4)	Partnership working
Christmas Lights	Planning (consultee)
Civic tradition	Planters
Closed churchyards	Play areas
Community Fridge	Picnic benches
Community phone boxes	Public toilets
Compost station	Residents Panel
Country Park	Shopping trolley removal (amenity)
Dead animal removal (highway)	Shrub Bed Maintenance
Duck Race	Skatepark
Electric Bike Scheme	Snippets – Electronic news
Electric vehicle charging points	Sports pitches
Emergency response support	Street cleaning
Events	Tennis courts
Facilities Management	Terra recycling point
Fireworks	Trees
Fly posting removal	Tourism
Fly tipping removal	Tourist Information centre
Footpaths	Venues
Graffiti removal	Volunteers
Grants	War memorials
Grass cutting	Water Fountains
Green spaces management	Weed control
Green wall	Woodlands
General Enquiries	Youth Club Provision
Grounds maintenance	Youth work
Hard Areas - cleaning	
Hedge rows	
Heritage open days	
Highways (LHFIG)	
Landlord	
Leaf clearance	
Litter bins	
Litter picking	
Live Music Festival	