



Biggleswade Town Council

Aspirations for Biggleswade 2021 - 2025

INTRODUCTION

The town that we serve is growing fast and there are many challenges to be addressed. Those challenges also bring opportunities and we must make the most of those opportunities to improve our town and support our community.

The Town Council is changing in order to be the best it can be in delivering our services and to be more effective in representing the vital interests of our community to others. This document sets out our aspirations to enable us to achieve those goals.

These aspirations will be regularly monitored to ensure progress and this is a living document which will be reviewed regularly and updated as issues evolve. As future issues arise, other aspirations may be added.

VISION

“Our vision for Biggleswade is that it should be a thriving and sustainable market town with a range of employment and community facilities, providing quality of life and economic opportunities to meet the diverse needs of the community and with a high-quality environment, including green spaces, to promote healthy lifestyles.”

MISSION / PURPOSE

We want to be an outstanding and innovative local council, representing the best interests of the town and people of Biggleswade.

We can achieve this by making the Council more effective, working with our community and being a strong advocate for the town by influencing statutory and other organisations whose decisions and actions have an impact on our town.

We want to preserve the best of our past and make the most of future opportunities.

VALUES

Our core principles are:

- Openness, responsiveness, innovation and constructive relationships to maximise effectiveness and the use of resources.
- Active engagement with all stakeholders, positively and inclusively.
- Being business-like, professional and delivering on our promises.
- Councillors committed to working collaboratively, supported by a high-quality team of staff.
- Managing change as evolution not revolution, allowing time to adapt.
- Ensuring value for money for the community while delivering services to a high standard.

COMMUNITY: A Town to be Proud Of

The Town Council will:

- Protect the distinctive character and heritage of Biggleswade as a market town serving our own community and the surrounding area. Seek to protect the Conservation Area with better standards for architecture and signage.
- Influence the regeneration of the town centre to encourage and support high quality leisure and retail experiences. Improve the Market Square for the market and outdoor events to encourage visits to the town centre.
- Ensure public open spaces are maintained to a high standard with regular maintenance of street furniture, attractive floral displays and a zero-tolerance approach to waste, litter, and clutter.
- Establish a database of business contacts within the town and use this to establish regular communications with business leaders.
- Maintain our efforts to influence Government and CBC strategic plans and their impact on the town.
- Work closely with the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sectors to build a strong community.
- Ensure Biggleswade is a safe and confident community, working with Bedfordshire Police and other emergency services so that they are aware of our concerns and priorities.

PLACE: A Vibrant Town

The Town Council will:

- Promote the Town Centre and allow it to adapt to changing needs and realise its economic and community potential.
- Continue to work with all the key stakeholders to influence the planning and building of the East Biggleswade Garden Village to the highest standards.
- Finalise the Neighbourhood Plan and put it to the town for approval.
- Improve the environment of the cemeteries in Drove Road and Stratton Way and upgrade and re-purpose the Grade II listed chapel in Drove Road.
- Complete a review of the Orchard Centre and improve the facilities we offer to the community.
- Further develop our allotment offer by increasing the number of allotment plots and request additional allotment space from future housing developments.
- Re-develop the Council's tennis courts to provide a broader tennis offer to the community.

- Continue to use the Biggleswade Town Centre Strategy and Masterplan SPD 2011 to provide an overall framework for the development of the town.
- Encourage a sustainable transport system within the Town that provides opportunity for improved East-West connectivity.
- Ensure the provision of CCTV that supports the Council's anti-crime initiatives and policies.
- Work collaboratively to develop an arts, culture and tourism strategy which recognises the unique heritage and culture of the town and publicise events through an annual calendar.
- Request "Historic Market Town" directional signage to the Town Centre and ensure that the entry and exit points of the town are attractive to visitors and residents.

ENVIRONMENT: A Green Town

The Town Council will:

- Fully support the Green Infrastructure Plan produced by Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity and actively seek to deliver those actions within the Town Council's land holding, including the protection of the Local Green Spaces.
- Have the appropriate designation of Local Green Spaces identified in the Neighbourhood Plan.
- Work with BRCC and Central Bedfordshire Council on the wider development and management of the Green Infrastructure Plan.
- Consider the recommendations of the audit of play areas and how we might invest to improve those areas.
- Have a comprehensive tree inventory and formulate an arboriculture management plan.
- Work with BRCC; the Ivel Valley Countryside Project; Ivel Valley Conservation Volunteers; Friends of Biggleswade Green Wheel and local ecologists to protect Biggleswade Common and the Green Wheel.
- Seek to support environmentally friendly transport options.

ECONOMY: A Thriving Town

The Town Council will:

- Support businesses and other initiatives designed to enhance the Market Square and the town centre offer, providing a wide range of amenities for residents and visitors.

- Promote the 'Buy Biggleswade' campaign.
- Continue to invest in the Saturday Charter Market, as well as exploring options of more themed markets to complement the existing offer.
- Develop a programme of events for the Town Centre.
- Improve the management of the car parks, including modernising payment options, and exploit opportunities to secure additional parking.
- Continue to upgrade street furniture including seating and signage.
- Review the provision of public conveniences within the town boundaries.
- Develop a Place Shaping Strategy for the town.
- Work with Central Bedfordshire Council to identify potential opportunities for economic investment.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING: A Healthy Town

The Town Council will:

- Continue to develop indoor and outdoor recreational and leisure facilities.
- Promote walking and cycling.
- Support plans for the proposed Health and Social Care Hub at Biggleswade Hospital.

ENGAGEMENT: A Town Where People are Involved

The Town Council will:

- Improve our engagement with all stakeholders, including hard-to-reach groups.
- Work to ensure equality of access to services for everyone and that Council facilities are accessible to everyone whatever their physical abilities.
- Develop and implement a multi-channel communication strategy.
- Communicate regularly with our residents through social media, the website and written publications, including the print media.
- Ensure that content on the website is open, transparent, up to date and clearly identifies the Town Council's intention and purpose in everything it does.

PERFORMANCE: A Council that Delivers

The Town Council will:

- Work to become an excellent Town Council, achieving the Local Councils' Gold Award.
- Develop open and transparent interactions and appropriate strategic compacts with key partner agencies.
- Develop and support our workforce through good management, training and skills development to increase our capacity and capability.
- Provide strong, clear and consistent leadership at Councillor and Chief Executive level, providing training opportunities for everyone.
- Continuously improve our efficiency and effectiveness through a Service Review Plan.
- Maximise opportunities to generate revenue through a Revenue Optimisation Project so that the Council is less reliant on its Precept.
- Take a holistic approach to managing and mitigating risk.

FINANCIALS:

The Town Council will:

- Ensure that the Town Council continues to operate within legislation, regulation, ethical guidelines and best practice.
- Maintain a Contracts Database and encourage the development of local suppliers and the generation of jobs for the local community.
- Implement the recommendations of the recently completed fundamental review of the finance function.
- Where appropriate, engage the services of professional support service providers to ensure best practice.
- Review the specification of work issued to Internal Auditors.
- Maintain annual reviews of risk management procedures in line with best practice, further mitigated by regular reviews of the Council's Business Continuity Plan.

November 2021
(to be reviewed November 2022)