

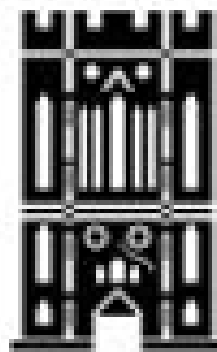
BURY ST EDMUNDS TOWN COUNCIL

BUSINESS PLAN 2024 - 2027

Part 1 - Introduction

Who is Bury St Edmunds Town Council?

Bury St Edmunds Town Council is the first tier of local government closest to the community, with an important role to play in promoting the town by representing its interests. Within its limited remit, it provides and monitors efficient services and amenities to meet local need, influences other decision makers and strives to improve the quality of town life. The council represents the views of its community to improve or provide cost effective services and amenities. The Town Council have the right to be notified of, and comment upon, planning applications.



Residents have the opportunity to elect 16 councillors every four years. These councillors represent eight wards of the town. The Council elects a Mayor and Deputy Mayor annually in May. Councillors are unpaid and receive no allowance for their duties other than travel costs for duties beyond the town. Details of all councillors can be found at the following website page: [Councillors' details » Bury St Edmunds Town Council \(burystedmunds-tc.gov.uk\)](http://burystedmunds-tc.gov.uk)

The Town Council comprises of 16 Councillors, each elected to hold office for four years. Elections are next scheduled for 2027 and at intervals of four years thereafter. The Council has a Mayor and Deputy Mayor, elected annually by councillors. They represent the Council at civic functions and are entitled to wear the Mayoral chains.

Vision

Bury St Edmunds Town Council aims to provide a positive and reliable organisation to meet the needs of the town through its commitment, its awareness of the needs of the town and active communications within and for the town.

It seeks to promote, maintain, and improve a good quality of life by using the keen knowledge of the needs of groups and individuals within the town and by making efficient and positive use of its income. It will also strive to be pro-active on the introduction of measures that will enable the community to live healthily and safely together.

How the Town Council operates.

The Town Council will carry out its statutory duties as required by:

- Meeting 12 times per annum (including the annual residents meeting) to deal with the business of the Council and running these meetings within the Standing Orders of the Council. *One of these meetings will be the Annual Council Meeting of the town council at which the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for the coming year will be elected.* All meetings are open to the public with a period set aside for members of the public to address the Council. The meetings take place in the Guildhall to allow good access and adequate meeting space.
- The Council has its own Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, which lay down the rules by which it operates and conducts its business. Council's Standing Orders are based on a model prepared by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC).

- All Town Councillors are expected to adhere to the Code of Conduct 2020 which will also apply to the Council's Committees. Working Groups upon which the Town Council are represented are expected to work to terms of reference agreed at full council.
- The Council will facilitate an Annual Residents meeting between the 1st of March and the 1st of June each year to review the activities of the previous year and give an opportunity for residents to raise issues of concern. If in attendance, the Mayor of the Town Council will preside over the meeting.
- The Town Council aims to promote the economic, social, and environmental wellbeing of the town and to contribute to a sustainable and inclusive community.
- The Town Council is working towards further development to regain the Quality Council status under the concept of the Local Council Awards Scheme and to achieve appropriate awards for the benefit of the Town of Bury St Edmunds.

Business Plan Objectives

The purpose of the Business Plan is to describe the Town Council's strategic direction in a way that shows that it has evolved through consultation and demonstrates leadership, best value and meets statutory requirements. It provides a focused framework from which measurement, monitoring and evaluation can be made and from which efficiency, effectiveness and economy of resources can be observed. Specifically, the plan serves:

- **Town benefit** – to represent Bury St Edmunds Town Council to improve the facilities and infrastructure within Bury St Edmunds. This will be achieved by being a professional and competent Town Council which is open and accountable and ensures sound financial management of Town Council resources.
- **Town administration** – to ensure the ongoing administration of Bury St Edmunds Town Council and the facilitation of the Council's activities. Be a good and fair employer by providing fulfilling work opportunities and conditions for staff. Continue to seek and improve established channels of communication and find new ways of engaging and communicating with the residents of Bury. To produce an Emergency Plan to ensure the safety of residents, visitors, and businesses in Bury St Edmunds.
- **Council development** – to provide the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Councillors, the Town Clerk, Deputy Clerk and staff with the education and knowledge to enable them to contribute to the advancement and improvement of Bury St Edmunds Town Council. To ensure Councillors can keep abreast of new opportunities and policies. To improve Council services to the public by encouraging members and staff to develop their skills through appropriate training. To investigate employing our own Town Warden.
- **Financial planning and control** – to ensure the ongoing financial viability of Bury St Edmunds Town Council and provide high quality, efficient, cost effective and sustain able services. To ensure the Financial Budget is monitored on a regular basis to ensure any anomalies are highlighted to the Town Council for appropriate action. A financial report will be presented to the full council each month at its meeting.
- **Strategic planning/key projects** – to ensure Bury St Edmunds Town Council has a long-range plan for the future, the following objectives will be included in the Town Councils business plan:
 - i. Ensure continued communication with Suffolk County Council regarding the Pavements and Public Services (PPS) scheme run by the Town Council, but work carried out by Suffolk County Council.
 - ii. To continue funding two PCSO's.

- iii. Ensure works carry on maintaining the current allotment sites but to also finalise the adoption of new sites at Moreton Hall and Marham Park.
 - iv. Work with both Suffolk County and West Suffolk Councils to agree any areas for devolved powers to the Town Council.
 - v. Improvement of communication and engagement by the Town Council. This can be just keeping the website and Facebook up to date.
 - vi. To continue to address concerns by residents on speeding and monitor data from the Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs).
 - vii. Share the data from the SID's with Suffolk Highways and Suffolk Police.
 - viii. Work with other partners to support youth provision.
 - ix. To apply best value considerations in the review of precept and economic development (including tourism and local heritage).
 - x. To enhance community engagement by putting on our own events.
 - xi. Help the vulnerable in the cost-of-living crisis.
 - xii. Providing our own Town Warden
 - xiii. Acquiring our own premises/additional space.
- **Communication and Engagement** – To provide a channel of communication for the views and expressions of the local community and to be responsive to its needs and aspirations. The Town Council will ensure its officers receive the relevant training on website and social media training. This will ensure the communication/engagement to residents is improved, whilst providing reports on the Town Council in a professional manner.
 - **Planning, Licensing, and Finance Committee** – The Town Council is a statutory consultee in the West Suffolk Planning process. All planning applications within the town of Bury St Edmunds are examined and commented on by this committee on behalf of the town council. The Planning, licensing and Finance Committee have full delegated powers to make Council decisions regarding responses to the appropriate authorities. This committee also comment on premise licences, pharmaceutical list applications, street naming and numbering. The Finance part of the committee, have delegated authority to approve expenditure of up to £1,000 per item, capped at expenditure of £10,000 per financial year, within the class of expenditure in the council's approved budget, except the Highways (Pavements and Public Spaces) (PPS) budget for which the threshold is applications up to £25,000.
 - **Staffing and Employment Committee** - Shall deal with all matters pertaining to staffing and employment, especially recruitment, appraisals, grievances, or disciplinary issues. All decisions must be adopted by the full council.

1. **Town Benefit**

| Action | Measure |
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| Ensure continuing engagement with local groups and organisations | Councillors to be involved at a management level with key organisations in the town. |
| Manage/monitor town website | Update as required |
| Ensure continuous communication and engagement with residents | All the council/committee meetings are open to the public and include public questions. Promote and manage the Facebook page and other social media platforms. Ensure the website is up to date |

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| Grant Aid/Locality grants | All applications will be considered by the full council or the councillor as an when is needed. |
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2. Town administration

| Action | Measure |
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| Functional Council meetings in place | Hold 12 meetings per year including the annual; residents meeting. |
| Council transparency to the Town | Public sessions are available in all meetings, meeting minutes available on the Towns website and from the council office. |
| Ensure all actions from the town council are completed | The Town Clerk gives an update at each meeting. |
| Ensure meeting statutory obligations | Annual Residents meeting is held along with at least 4 other council meetings throughout the year. |
| Liaison with Suffolk Police | Ensure that the council has a regular report from the PCSO's funded by the Town Council |
| Emergency Plan | The Town Clerk will work with West Suffolk Council to produce an Emergency Plan for Bury St Edmunds |

3. Council Development

| Action | Measure |
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| Ensure the Town Clerk has the relevant qualifications | The Town Clerk must have at least the training listed as Quality Council requirements. |
| Ensure the Deputy Town Clerk can obtain relevant qualifications | The Deputy Town Clerk should have the training qualifications to obtain the Certificate in Local Council Administration. |
| Ensure all councillors have received basic training as standard | As a minimum all new councillors should attend Councillor training with Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC). All members of the planning committee should attend a training course on planning provided by West Suffolk or SALC. |
| Obtain the Local Council Award Scheme to become a Quality Council | Comply with the latest requirements of the Local Council Award Scheme to achieve the Quality Council status. |
| Maintain links with SALC to ensure the Council receives the best advice | Ensure a representative attends the SALC area meetings. |

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| Provide councillors with the education and knowledge to enable them to contribute to the advancement and improvement of Bury St Edmunds Town Council. | Provide all councillors with information packs to ensure compliance with statutory instruments and financial regulations. Provide the opportunity for councillors to request individual training requirements as necessary. |
| Town Warden | Work with West Suffolk and Suffolk County Councils to discover the works a Town Warden would be able to undertake on their behalf. |

4. Financial planning and control

| Action | Measure |
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| Set and monitor annual operational budget | Budget to be set to inform precept requirement for the following year. Annual precept form to be submitted to WSDC by the deadline. Actual to budget monitoring reports to be presented to full council meetings in accordance with the Council's own Standing Orders. |
| Perform internal quarterly audits | The RFO will provide an audit report detailing actions to be completed by the next Internal audit. |
| Ensure internal audit is procured by the Council | Ensure all matters arising from the internal audit are actioned in a timely and appropriate manner. |
| Ensure external audit submitted by the deadline | Ensure all external audit actions are completed |
| Develop investment strategy and monitor investments | Funds invested are to be reviewed by the Planning, Licensing and Finance Committee |

5. Strategic planning

| Action | Measure |
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| Ensure continued communication with Suffolk County Council regarding the Pavements & Public Services (PPS) scheme | This scheme is run by the Town Council, but all works are carried out by SCC highways. Ensure all councillors are aware of this scheme and what they need to do. |
| Ensure to receive regular updates from the PCSO's. | Attend all monthly full council meetings to give members any reports. |

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| Ensure works carry on maintaining the current allotment sites but also finalise the adoption of new sites at Moreton Hall and Marham Park. | Continue the discussions with West Suffolk Council on acquiring these two new sites. |
| Ensure the Town Council continues to respond to all planning applications as a statutory consultee | The Planning committee has full delegated powers to respond on all matters concerning planning for Bury St Edmunds. |
| Encourage the growth of Bury St Edmunds Town Council | Work with Suffolk County and West Suffolk Councils to agree any areas for devolved powers. This may require bigger office space than we currently have. |
| Ensure the continued communication and engagement by the Town Council. | The importance of keeping the website and any social media pages up to date |
| Ensure the continued engagement with residents over Speed Indicator Devices (SID) | Listen to residents' concerns over troublesome areas. Forward all data onto Suffolk Highways & Suffolk Police. The Town Council will need to purchase replacement SID's in the not-too-distant future |
| Support Youth provision | Work with other partners to provide a sustainable youth provision |

6. Areas of Active Involvement for 2024/25

The Business Plan is to be reviewed annually in July. The areas of active involvement will relate to the budget which is set in November/December of each year and finalised in the following January.

The Town Council will continue to monitor the areas of active involvement for 2024-2025 and will add any new matters as required during the year. As some of the areas covered in the Business Plan are ongoing and will cover more than one financial year, the Town Council will review the Business Plan on an annual basis thereby ensuring that it is updated regularly and that any further appropriate actions identified during the six-monthly period are included or, where appropriate, are signed off as having completed actions.

| Activity | Details | Budget | Review |
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| Policing – Provide funding for 2 PCSO's dedicated to Bury. | Contract with Suffolk Constabulary for the provision of 2 PCSO's for the town of Bury. | £90,000 (£45,000 each). | 2-year contract commenced on 31.03.2023 and expires 31.03.2025. Monthly crime reports are submitted and one or both will |

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| | | | attend the full council meeting once a month. |
| Emergency Plan | To create an Emergency Plan. | Budget required for 2025/26 to provide information to the public. Around £500. | Create an Emergency Plan group to work on its development. |
| Speeding issues | The council has two SID machines. These are moved around the town every four weeks. This allows the town council collection of speeding data to allow for comprehensive evidence to be gathered. | £10,000 + £5,000 in Ear Marked Reserves. | Both SID machines need replacing asap. Continue working with the PCSO's and residents to identify the worst places for speeding. |
| Maintenance of pavements and public spaces (PPS) | That the town council continue to work with Suffolk County Council to deal with minor town issues. | £75,000 | Councillors need to be advised on how this scheme work. An advisory meeting should be set up. |
| Asset management (Allotments) | Agreement that on-going maintenance is carried out on an as and when basis. | £20,000 plus £40,000 in Ear marked reserves. | The Allotments Officer and the Allotment Association continue to monitor and arrange basic maintenance. Advise Council on any major works required. |
| Planning applications submitted to West Suffolk | Contribute to planning process for Bury St Edmunds in conjunction with the Local Plan for West Suffolk – ongoing process dependent upon Local Plan and planning applications | Part of officers' salaries | The Council will continue to respond to all planning applications submitted relating to Bury St Edmunds. |
| Town Council Website | Ongoing. Ensure that all policies are up to date to ensure the council is open and transparent in its | Part of officers' salaries | Review on a weekly basis to ensure information is updated and relevant. |

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| | dealings as a public authority. | | |
| Good Governance of the Town Council | Elections, SALC & NALC membership, policy & procedural reviews on an annual basis or as and when legislation requires. Councillors & officers to have their own training records and to receive annual updates in legislation. | Part of Clerk's salary. SALC & NALC budgeted fee £3,500. | Formal annual review of all policies and procedures by the full council. Reviews carried out May and December. Annual review of training records for staff. |
| Accountability of Town Council's finances | Review and monitoring of internal control systems to ensure financial records are kept and produced in accordance with the guidelines laid down in the Governance and Accountability Guide – Proper practices (2023) | RFO's salary & role of some appointed Town Councillors. | Quarterly reviews on internal control systems to be carried out by a non-signatory Councillor and reported back and considered by full council. The role of internal controller is changed each year. |
| Contractual and employment obligations | Council to ensure that it complies with employment law and health and safety issues – ongoing as part of the review of working environment | Clerk, Mayor and Staffing & Employment committee | Annual review of the performance of all staff. Report to staffing and employment committee before approval by full council. |
| Detached Youth Work Project | Detached youth work project set up to work with Teen Chill but also establish relationships through face-to-face work with young people, to offer support and encouragement and divert them away from negative behaviours and into positive activities. Initiate and deliver a | £15,000 for outreach/youth project. EMR £50,000 for children and young people activities through the school holidays | Work alongside partners including Abbeycroft Leisure (in the first instance) to provide this service. |

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| | programme that encourages young people to engage in positive and constructive dialogue. | | |
| Town Warden | To create the role of a town warden to undertake various activities such as verge cutting, signage cleaning, allotment clearing etc... | EMR £15,000 | Work with Suffolk County Council on their 'Self Help' scheme. Draw up a job description. |