



Introduction

Biddulph Town Council prepares an annual action plan to ensure that operational decision-making is transparent, and priorities are appropriately resourced. In 2022, the Town Council developed a Business Plan statement, providing a strategic overview of the key documents that guide our work. This overarching document details the four pillars of our work, which run through all of the actions below:

1) Efficient and responsive services

We endeavour to provide excellent customer service, ensure repeat business, high levels of satisfaction and low numbers of complaints. We will support public and community transport schemes.

2) Growth and development of our community spaces

We will seek to grow the role of the Town Council by enhancing our community facilities whilst addressing climate change issues and protecting and improving leisure and recreational facilities.

3) Excellent Governance

We work to ensure effective planning and robust systems of financial control as a result of high levels of knowledge acquired through experience and training. Good leadership gives confidence in service delivery and decision-making.

4) Appropriate and meaningful community engagement

We will strengthen local democracy, encouraging inclusivity and seeking to engage with communities using a wide range of methods, providing feedback and the opportunity for comment and involvement in decision-making. These documents were all developed following identification of key priorities by the community. The Town Council continuously seeks to represent the community, building stronger communities and providing good governance.

The following opportunities are available to communities to identify priorities for the town:

- Public participation at the beginning of each Council meeting.
- The publishing of agendas and minutes for all Council meetings on the website, in the office window and on a notice board within the town.
- Active involvement in the Annual Town Meeting with its public question time.
- The annual External Audit provides the opportunity for questions to be asked about the latest Statement of Accounts and Balance Sheet. A synopsis of the financial accounts is published within the Annual Report.
- The Town Council Grant Scheme and the Town Councillors' Community Grant Fund identify voluntary and community sector priorities.
- The ability to provide Town Council information, when requested, to those with a need for alternative formats or languages.
- The Annual 'Tea with the Town Council' event, as part of the Biddulph Festival.
- Making Councillor contact details available on the website.
- News and events are publicised through the website and a variety of social media platforms.
- When the Council is considering specific issues, methods of engagement such as surveys, focus groups/ workshops or seeking comments through social media may be used.

Further information is available in the Town Council's Community Engagement Statement.

The priorities below are attached to standing Committees, but may be delegated to Working Groups. This action plan is reviewed by the Finance Strategy and Management Committee.

No.	Aim	Key Task	Funding allocated	Timescale
<p>Town and Community Committee Overall Strategic Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote opportunities for economic success of the area, working with High Street traders and businesses. Work to become greener in our activities, lobbying those who have key responsibilities for improvements and supporting our communities. Signpost and inform residents and visitors, guiding them through the range of services available to them. Improve safety and reduce anti-social behaviour Improve the wellbeing of the people of Biddulph. 				
1	Provide Support and Information to Town Centre traders	<p>a) Seek opportunities and funding to implement priorities identified in the Regeneration Plan.</p> <p>b) Be business-friendly. We will investigate: digital connectivity/ Wi-Fi hotspots; Business Improvement Districts; 'Buy Local' schemes; options for embryo and pop-up businesses; and, lobby to provide support with business rates.</p> <p>c) Support businesses to re-establish a traders forum, with support from the Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce. Develop opportunities for businesses to seek specialist advice and support.</p> <p>d) Consideration of a shop front grant scheme in line with the Neighbourhood Development Order.</p>	<p>EMR- Neighbourhood Plan Implementation (£160,000)</p> <p>General Fund- Regeneration budget (£8,000)</p> <p>EMR- Traders Forum kick-start (£500)</p> <p>EMR- Business Development projects (£2,000)</p>	<p>a) Throughout year</p> <p>b) Throughout year</p> <p>c) First meeting by November 2022</p> <p>d) Launch New Year 2023</p>
2	Enhancement of partnerships within the town	Continue to support community groups: implement the Dementia action plan, Tree Charter actions, collaborate with Friends Groups, health and mental health partners and support for the voluntary sector.	<p>Dedicated support through Events and Partnerships Officer and Support Staffordshire Community Officer (EMR- £7,000).</p> <p>General Fund budgets allocated for Dementia Action Plan (£800) and grants scheme (£74,000)</p>	<p>Support provided throughout year.</p> <p>Town Council Grant Scheme- June 2022; Councillor Scheme Aug-Jan 2023.</p> <p>Tree Charter Actions- November 2022.</p>
3	Consider public realm improvements in the town centre, to enhance the appeal of the town for visitors and the community.	a) Consider pedestrianisation of the town centre and/ or a 'flexible event space' following further consultation. This will necessitate the development of town centre improvement programmes that attract grant funding.	<p>EMR- Neighbourhood Plan implementation (£160,000)</p> <p>EMR- Highways Development (£50,000)</p>	Seek government and/or principle authority funding Summer/ Autumn 2022 for capital projects (a, b and d).

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) Work with Amey and Staffordshire County Council to identify public realm improvements that are both easily achievable and aspirational. c) Promote new Twilight Market and Fresh Food Friday. d) Ensure that enhancements to public realm within the town centre link to surrounding green spaces. e) Develop proposals and seek quotations for stage 2 of Station Road development (including memorials to the town's industries) f) Consider plans for Town Hall frontage, with installation of mining memorial. g) Investigate the installation of electric car charging points at Town Hall. 	<p>General Fund- Regeneration (£8,000) General Fund- New Events (£3,000) General Fund- Markets (£6,000)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c) Twilight Market new in May 2022; continue to promote and enhance throughout 2022. e) Stage 2 Station Road to commence Feb 2023. f) Consider plans in Summer 2022; commence work Autumn 2022. g) Consider proposals November 2022.
4	Understand who uses our town and when the peak usage times are.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Understand themes and analyse footfall analysis (commissioned via Welcome Back funding). b) Enhance signage to ensure visitors are directed to key areas of the town. 	<p>EMR- Neighbourhood Plan implementation (£160,000) EMR- Highways Development (£50,000) General Fund- Regeneration (£8,000)</p>	<p>Footfall work to continue throughout 2022-23. Signage review to take place Summer 2022.</p>
5	Work with key enforcement agencies to tackle anti-social behaviour within the town.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Ensure that CCTV provision within the town provides a deterrent for damage to public assets; look to enhance provision at Station Road green space. b) Continue to ensure that the relationship with the Police is positive and supportive. 	<p>EMR- Projects (£50,000)</p>	<p>Improvement and review throughout 2022-23.</p>
6	Implement actions from the Environment and Climate Change Working Group, delivering key environmental improvements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Consider initiatives such as being a Bee Friendly town. b) Enhance open spaces and biodiversity through additional planting; look for funding for the development of more 'pocket parks'. c) Complete additional mapping with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust d) Enhance reputation of 'Garden Town of Staffordshire', working closely with Biddulph in Bloom partners. e) Improve flood risk areas, implementing recommendations from within Neighbourhood Plan mapping work. f) Create safe links and spaces within the town, focusing on the needs of cyclists and walkers in the area. g) Hold additional Energy Costs Café and Eco Fest. 	<p>EMR- Environment and Climate Change (5,000) EMR- Projects (£50,000) General Fund- New Events (£3000)</p>	<p>Actions to continue throughout year. Events to take place Autumn/ Winter 2022.</p>

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7	Complete restoration projects and protection of heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Continue to work on 'local listing' process that takes into consideration our community assets and heritage features. b) Work to enhance, restore and improve these assets, where possible. c) Deliver MPB projects and identify other options. d) Explore options with regard to the restoration of war memorial. 	General Fund- Regeneration (£8,000) EMR- Projects (£50,000)	Throughout year.
8	Enhance arts and culture in the town.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Work with creative and artistic communities to support and showcase the incredible talent within our community, promoting festivals and community events. b) Work with partners to apply for grant funding to support new and emerging projects that will increase access to arts within the town. c) Increase opportunities to engage in art and cultural activities, re-visiting the concept of a Biddulph Arts Forum. 	EMR- Projects (£50,000) General Fund- New Events (£2,000) EMR- Volunteer Support Projects (£4,000)	Throughout year.
9	Enhance tourism opportunities within the town, increasing the number of people that visit the town and choose to spend time here.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Create opportunities for attractions to promote their offer within Biddulph Town Hall, increasing the amount of literature and other products that are available. b) Endeavour to retain visitors from Biddulph Grange, attracting them into the town. c) Explore opportunities at Biddulph Grange Visitor Centre in partnership with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust. d) Provide support for walking and Ramblers initiatives. 	EMR- Tourism enhancements (£5,000) General Fund- Tourism (£2,000) EMR- Visitor Centre refurb (£15,000)	Throughout year.
10	Improve health and wellbeing opportunities for residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Enhancements to cycling provision within the town. b) Pursue the installation of a Changing Places facility within the town centre (including shower facilities for cyclists). c) Commence phase 2 of the Station Road community garden, ensuring license/ lease arrangements are in place with SMDC. d) Provide opportunities to purchase fresh seasonal food through markets and events, which also promote existing town centre traders. e) Ensure appropriate management arrangements are in place for fountains. 	EMR- Projects (£50,000) General Fund- New Events (£3,000) EMR- Development of Station Road project (£50,000).	Throughout year.
11	Continue to lead and develop community events, providing and encouraging volunteering opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Continue to work on events such as the Biddulph Festival, Christmas Lights, Volunteer events, heritage celebrations, etc. b) Lead town with Ceremonial occasions. c) Identify new opportunities to promote the town centre, e.g. the Classic Vehicle Event and Garden Festival (previously considered in 2020) 	General Fund budgets allocated for Events (£3,000), Tourism (£1,500) and Christmas Lights (£26,000). Grants scheme available for local organisations (£74,000).	Throughout year.

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			EMR- Tourism enhancements (£5,000)	
12	Provide services and support for young people	a) Hold youth consultation event to seek their views on the town's priorities. b) Work with Community Council to develop a youth vision. c) Work with Biddulph Youth and Community Zone to establish the effectiveness of a detached youth worker scheme. d) Facilitate Young People's Working Group. e) Work with School's Learners Forum f) Support 'Staged' youth theatre project. g) Consider enhancements of play opportunities and youth facilities. h) Work with individual schools to support the delivery of the curriculum and enhance the reputation of the Town Council.	EMR- Youth facilities (£3,000)	Youth consultation in October 2022. Events ongoing throughout the year.
13	Develop innovative and imaginative uses for the Bus Hub	a) Work with communities to develop ad hoc exhibition and event space b) Work with Young People's Working Group to identify detached youth work opportunities	EMR- Management/ maintenance of bus hub and old toilet block (£20,000)	Throughout year.
Finance Strategy and Management Committee Overall Strategic Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversee the strategic direction of the Town Council. Manage the Council's assets and resources responsibly and transparently. Be an exemplar of Local Government. 				
14	Management of Community Facilities	a) Consider future investment in the Town Hall and promotion of the asset. b) Ensure there is a clear role for Biddulph Town Hall, Biddulph Grange Country Park Visitor Centre and the public convenience buildings within the town centre c) Effective management of health and safety, including statutory testing. d) Ensure appropriate management of tenancies and new opportunities for tenant creation.	EMR- Management/ maintenance of bus hub and old toilet block (£20,000) EMR- Town Hall external lighting, electrics and TV (£15,000) EMR- Town Hall internal development (£20,000)	Operational management delegated to Asset Management Working Group; meets monthly.
15	Ensure GDPR Compliance	a) Consideration of working with a Data Protection Officer from Staffordshire County Council. b) IT Working Group to establish process for management of Councillor Town Council IT equipment.	EMR- IT enhancements/ replacements (£5,000) General Fund- Office Costs (£200)	Investment in additional IT to be complete by February 2023.

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16	Continuous monitoring of Asset Register	Effective monitoring of fixed assets and Town Council owned property.	General Fund- Office Costs (£200)	Changes to be reported through FSM Committee.
17	Regular review of policies	a) Ensure Town Council is operating legally and with transparency. b) Solicitor instructed to provide employment advice on retainer basis. c) Implementation of Business Continuity Plan and Emergency Planning document, providing strategies for dealing with future possible outbreaks.	Chief Officer responsibility General Fund- Office Costs (£200)	Throughout year.
18	Administer community-led grants scheme	a) Provide support for local organisations through the main grant fund and the Town Councillors' Community Grant fund. b) Ensure evaluation takes place in robust manner to provide feedback on impact of grant process.	General Fund- Grants (£74,000)	Town Council Grant Scheme- June 2022; Councillor Scheme Aug-Jan 2023.
19	Effective management of risk	a) Continue to review and assess risk, to be reported to Council annually. b) Ensure appropriate insurance cover for new and emerging asset management.	General Fund- Training (£2,000)	Risk management ongoing; new process in place for managing events.
20	Consideration of investments and use of earmarked reserves.	a) To keep income and expenditure under review b) To invest reserves in low-risk financial services.	FSM Committee to lead.	Regular review through FSM Committee. Opportunities identified for investment.
Recreation and Amenities Committee Overall Strategic Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage the Council's operational services effectively to meet the needs to the communities we serve. • Strive for continuous improvement, lobbying partners to make improvements to assets within the town. 				
21	Effective provision of Lengthsman activities	Ongoing review of Lengthsman scheme; support provided to Biddulph in Bloom volunteers.	General Fund- Lengthsman (£8,000)	Throughout year.
22	Biddulph Grange Country Park Visitor Centre	a) Ensure building is well maintained. b) Work with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust to develop events collaboratively with the Friends Group. c) Consider the financial viability of the building beyond 2021.	EMR- Biddulph Grange Country Park Visitor Centre refurbishment (£15,000)	Throughout year.
23	Improvement of Highways	a) To consider speed and use of town centre highways roads, in partnership with Amey and Staffordshire County Council. b) Install new signage at entrance of Biddulph	EMR- Highways Developments (£50,000)	Signage complete September 2022.

No.	Aim	Key Task	Funding allocated	Timescale
			General Fund- Regeneration (£8,000)	
24	Development of Allotments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Continue to look for development opportunities, particularly Shepherd/ Slater Street. b) Work with existing sites to ensure sites managed appropriately. 	General Fund- Allotments (£2,000) EMR- Slater Street allotment development (£10,000)	Site management ongoing.
25	Maintain and monitor footpaths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Work with Ramblers to identify issues and resolve these via Staffordshire County Council. b) Identify small improvements that are possible with BTC funding. c) Lengthsman to keep some town footpaths clear of debris and overgrown vegetation. 	General Fund- Footpaths (£1,000) General Fund- Lengthsman (£8,000)	Throughout year.
26	Effective management of Burial Grounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To keep in obedience introduction of Exclusive Rights of Burial b) Drainage/ footpath improvements on Section M&C c) Re-visit tree planting priorities d) Introduce Memorial Testing e) New surface/ drainage to be installed in Section L. f) Commission plans for new Garden of Remembrance in Woodhouse Burial Ground. 	General Fund- Burial Grounds (£30,000) EMR- Future burial area, GOR development (£115,000)	Section M&C improvements complete by September 2022. Section L improvements complete by October 2022.
27	Effective maintenance of Town Council Open Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Ensure riparian duties at Butterfly Gardens are undertaken b) Develop proposals for grass cutting that finds an appropriate balance between improving biodiversity and ensuring areas are 'tidy' c) Complete Pocket Park and identify new areas for improvement. d) Develop Tree Planting Strategy e) Identify training on ancient and veteran trees. f) Grass cutting within town. 	General Fund- Butterfly Garden (£1,000), Maintenance of Springfield Road (£1,000) EMR- Projects (£50,000)	Pocket Park complete 5 December. Tree Strategy emerging. Training complete in relation to ancient and veteran trees.
28	Improvement of transport options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) 93 bus service extended until March 2022; service to be re-rendered before this date. b) Active Working Group tackling range of public transport issues, including innovative approaches to working with schools at peak times. c) Consider improvements to transport and infrastructure within the town centre, focusing on bus and taxi services. 	General Fund- 93 Bus (£40,000) EMR- Highways Development (£50,000)	93 tender process to be complete by February 2023.

Planning Committee Overall Strategic Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represent residents on key planning and strategic issues 				
29	Provide timely responses to Planning applications	To ensure that responses to Planning applications are transparent and consistent.	Planning Committee to lead.	Throughout year.
30	To develop/ implement the Neighbourhood Plan	Support SMDC to understand their obligations; referendum planned for Autumn 2022.	Planning Committee to lead.	Referendum Autumn 2022.