

# NEWBURY TOWN COUNCIL

## STRATEGY 2016-2021

*Adopted November 2015*

*Reviewed October 2016*

### 1 INTRODUCTION

**This Strategy** sets out our aims and objectives, and provides the policy framework within which the elected Members make decisions and the Officers (staff) conduct their day-to-day work.

It has been developed in order to drive our short, medium and long-term goals and to inform our budget-setting and expenditure.

It is reviewed regularly and revised as required

### 2 THE TOWN COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Newbury Town Council exists to serve the citizens of Newbury. It is a catalyst for the development of activities, facilities and services within the town.

The Town Council's overall objectives are to:

- SO1 Provide services responsive to the needs and aspirations of the citizens of Newbury;
- SO2 Provide services that are sustainable and represent excellent value for money;
- SO3 Deliver services in partnership with others where this offers best value;
- SO4 Provide services that are recognisable as being delivered by Newbury Town Council;
- SO5 Provide a channel for the citizens of Newbury to express their needs and preferences;
- SO6 Act as a facilitator for action that will improve and enhance life for everyone who lives in, works in, learns in or visits our town;
- SO7 Work towards the development of a Newbury Town Plan;
- SO8 To develop Victoria Park as a first class amenity and recreational area for the benefit of all the citizens of Newbury;
- SO9 Work in partnership with others to ensure a continuous improvement in the appearance of our town

### 3 THE TOWN COUNCIL'S POLICIES

To ensure that what we do every day is always focused on meeting our overall objectives, we have adopted specific policies to provide a clear framework for our daily work and decision-making.

Our policies are set out under six equally important Policy Area headings:

- PA1. Environment and Sustainability;
- PA2. Communication and Consultation;
- PA3. Community Leadership;
- PA4. Enhancing and Protecting the Town's Facilities;
- PA5. Provision of Services;
- PA6. Equality and Diversity.

This section sets out our position on each of the Policy Areas.

#### Policy Area 1 – Environment and Sustainability

Newbury Town Council recognises that it has an important community leadership role to play in helping Newbury's residents and businesses capture the opportunities and benefits of taking action on climate change and to promote sustainability.

With this in mind, we will:

- PA1.1 **Use local suppliers** wherever possible;
- PA1.2 **Work** to safeguard the vitality of the local economy, ensuring that any adverse impact on the environment and the quality of life in Newbury and its surrounding area is minimised;
- PA1.3 **Minimise waste** created by the Council and the services we provide;
- PA1.4 **Recycle waste** created by the Council and the services we provide wherever possible;
- PA1.5 **Protect** and enhance public open space in the town;
- PA1.6 **Encourage biodiversity** and habitat variety in our parks and other assets;
- PA1.7 **Actively pursue** and encourage the use of renewable energy;
- PA1.8 **Encourage** activities, development and transport plans that promote the health and wellbeing of, and respect for, all our citizens and visitors;
- PA1.9 **Work** to retain and promote Newbury's Fairtrade Town status;
- PA1.10 **Work** with West Berkshire Council to ensure a sustainable transport policy.

## Policy Area 2 – Communication and Consultation

We will strive to maintain openness and transparency in our actions and decision making. We will actively seek to hear the needs and desires of people in Newbury, and will respond as quickly and as comprehensively as possible within the limits of our resources and other constraints.

In order to achieve this, we will:

- PA2.1 **Make** ourselves available to the public by holding Saturday morning surgeries;
- PA2.2 **Encourage** public attendance at meetings of the Council;
- PA2.3 **Encourage** public questions at Council meetings;
- PA2.4 **Make** our information, public meetings and records as widely accessible as possible;
- PA2.5 **Maintain** an up-to-date public website that is informative and easy to access and use;
- PA2.6 **Publish** and distribute an annual newsletter, with the Precept Leaflet;
- PA2.7 **Consult** on issues of significance to Newbury, using tools such as public meetings, surveys, questionnaires, petitions, etc.
- PA2.8 **Respond** promptly to complaints and act as quickly as possible to resolve them.

## Policy Area 3 – Community Leadership

We will use all the tools at our disposal to engage our community in making their own difference. We will encourage public engagement with both the Town Council and local democracy, we will work closely with other stakeholders, and we will organise and support a wide variety of ceremonial and civic occasions.

In order to achieve this, we will:

- PA3.1 **Ensure** that our policies and actions do not exclude any sections of the community, and that our services are accessible by all citizens of the town;
- PA3.2 **Work** closely with West Berkshire Council, the Business Improvement District (BID) and other organisations that are important to the success and wellbeing of the town and its residents;
- PA3.3 **Support** and encourage the devolution of decision-making and service delivery to the lowest appropriate level;
- PA3.4 **Support** Remembrance Day and other important civic events;
- PA3.5 **Run** and sponsor Newbury's annual Civic Award scheme;
- PA3.6 **Run** a community grants scheme which prioritises the award of financial or other support to organisations and causes which serve wholly or mainly the residents of Newbury and have outcomes that support the delivery of our Strategy;
- PA3.7 **Support** the Newbury Youth Council (NYC);
- PA3.8 **Promote** annual events for Local Democracy Week, in particular for young people.

## Policy Area 4 – Enhancing and Protecting Town Facilities

We will enhance and preserve Newbury's heritage, environment, community and cultural vibrancy, and we will protect the town from excessive, unsustainable and conflicting development.

In order to achieve this, we will:

- PA4.1 **Promote** arts, leisure and sporting activities in the town through our Arts and Leisure Strategy and work programme;
- PA4.2 **Lobby** the Local Planning Authority as appropriate;
- PA4.3 **Comment** on all planning and licensing applications in, near, or affecting the town and continue to provide a service to residents of Newbury who wish to comment on them further and seek to influence West Berkshire Council on all planning applications of significance;
- PA4.5 **Work** with others to ensure a vibrant town centre;
- PA4.6 **Work** with others to ensure Newbury is a safe, attractive and friendly place in which to live, work, shop, learn and play;
- PA4.7 **Maintain** the assets of the Town Council and ensure public access to them;
- PA4.8 **Promote** events and activities that recognise, highlight and protect the town's traditions, heritage and history;
- PA4.9 **Promote** Newbury in Bloom to raise civic pride and encourage and acknowledge efforts by the community, businesses, residents and other organisations of Newbury;
- PA4.10 **Work** in partnership with others to improve the range of facilities in our town.

## Policy Area 5 – Provision of Services

We will deliver well-managed services to the town, using direct labour or contractors as appropriate, and always ensure value for money while using local labour and suppliers where possible.

In order to achieve this, we will:

- PA5.1 **Provide** efficient and customer-responsive action in all of our service areas;
- PA5.2 **Maintain** a budget explicitly for local environmental improvement capital projects such as footway lighting, public benches, litter/dog bins, salt/grit bins, and tree planting;
- PA5.3 **Promote** the use of the Town Hall as a venue for meetings, conferences, receptions, the celebration of weddings, etc;
- PA5.4 **Run** regular high quality markets;
- PA5.5 **Maintain and Run** high quality allotments;
- PA5.6 **Maintain and Run** cemeteries to a high standard;

- PA5.7 **Maintain and Run** high quality parks, playground and leisure spaces/ facilities;
- PA5.8 **Maintain** high quality open spaces;
- PA5.9 **Provide** bus shelters in appropriate locations;
- PA5.10 **Provide** and maintain public conveniences;
- PA5.11 **Provide** roadside salt/grit bins in appropriate locations;
- PA5.12 **Provide and maintain** benches and other street furniture in appropriate locations;
- PA5.13 **Provide and maintain** trees, flower beds, hanging baskets and other plantings in appropriate locations;
- PA5.14 **Provide** brochures, maps, signage and other information for the benefit of visitors to Newbury;
- PA5.16 **Support** Community safety, including Town Centre CCTV through working with partners in this area;
- PA5.17 **Support and promote** community events through financial assistance and/or provision of venues and facilities;
- PA5.18 **Explore** efficiency savings through joint working with *the District Council and* other parish and town councils;
- PA5.19. **Provide** and maintain clean drinking water facilities.

## **Policy Area 6 – Equality and Diversity**

Newbury Town Council is fully committed to equality for all and to fully recognising and embracing diversity in our community.

We will fulfil our duties and responsibilities under, and act in accordance with both the spirit and the requirements of, the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty set out in it, and any other relevant legislation.

## **4 TARGETS FOR THE NEXT FOUR YEARS (2017 – 2021)**

It's important that we make measurable progress towards achieving our overall objectives, which means in turn we need to be able to demonstrate that we are making progress towards delivering the policies set out under each of the Policy Areas.

Therefore we have set ourselves specific targets for the short and medium term, each of which relates back to one or more specific Policies.

### **SHORT-TERM TARGETS**

This is what we plan to do in the next 12 months:

- TS1. **Complete** repairs and reinstatements in Victoria Park following the damage suffered since 2010

- TS2. **Produce** a detailed schedule of s106/CIL funds held and proposed spending plans [PA4.1, PA4.4, PA4.7] to expend S106 funds we hold for the purpose of meeting the plans identified;
- TS3. **Review** the future direction of the Newbury Art Trail and the NATSG
- TS4. **Re-energise** the Fairtrade Town initiative
- TS5. **Improve** use of Facebook and Twitter and create a “Mobile-friendly” Town Council website as a means of engaging with the public
- TS6. **Pursue** joint working initiatives with Thatcham Town Council and other Parishes to achieve efficiency savings in service delivery
- TS7. **Review** Newbury Town Council’s current asset register and put forward proposals for best use/value
- TS8. **Review** the Newbury Town Design Statement
- TS9. **Prepare** an operational plan to create the Town Plan.
- TS10. **Report back** to the Council’s Planning & Highways Committee about West Berkshire Council’s sustainable transport Policy
- TS11. **Keep abreast** of Localism and Big Society initiatives and impacts

## MEDIUM-TERM TARGETS

Some things will take longer to do, so we have also set ourselves targets which we plan to achieve in the next 3 years:

- TM1. **Lobby** and work with West Berkshire Council to devolve appropriate assets and services to us [PA3.3];
- TM2. **Work** with West Berkshire Council and others to continue Local Listing in West Berkshire in order to enhance the protection of character buildings in the town [PA4.2, PA4.5, PA4.6, PA4.8];
- TM3. **Promote** and encourage retail investment, *in the Town Centre, south of the Canal Bridge* [PA3.2]
- TM4. **Enhance** the Town Hall as an ongoing project
- TM5. **Provide** a café in Victoria Park to replace the existing kiosk and provide a suitable facility for the rejuvenated park
- TM6. **Construct** new changing rooms in Victoria Park to meet the needs of the improved facilities at the football pitch and the tennis courts

## 5 THE LONGER TERM

We recognise that Newbury Town Council has a responsibility to look further ahead, too, and with this in mind we are committed to a number of ongoing and longer term activities:

- TL1. **Encourage** the development of low-cost (inexpensive) and Affordable (social) housing throughout the town to meet identified local needs

- TL2. **Encourage** residents' participation in social, recreational and sporting activities
- TL3. **Implement** projects that improve the appreciation of heritage and conservation to the public
- TL4. **Prepare** a Newbury Town Plan which fully meets the objectives of Newbury Town Council's Strategy.

**Councillor Dave Goff**

Leader

Newbury Town Council

November 2016