

NEWBURY TOWN COUNCIL

STRATEGY 2018-2020

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, with quarterly progress reports to the Strategy Working Group and our Policy and Resources Committee and is revised as required every October, by Full Council.

2 THE TOWN COUNCIL'S MISSION STATEMENT

Newbury Town Council is committed to continuing to make Newbury a better place to live, work and visit.

3 Delivering our Mission Statement

The Town Council will:

- Objective 1:** Deliver Services for the people of Newbury which:
- Are responsive to their needs and aspirations
 - Are sustainable and represent excellent value for money
 - Are recognisable as being delivered by Newbury Town Council
 - Promote cultural identity and equality of opportunity.

Where it offers best value and/or can expand the range of services provided, we will deliver services in partnership with others.

- Objective 2:** Represent the aims, ambitions, views and concerns of all the people of Newbury as the elected body for the Town.

- Objective 3:** Exercise Good Governance and best practice to ensure that we are open, transparent and accountable.

Policy Area 1: Delivering Services for the People of Newbury

We will continue to provide and improve 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.

We will strive to 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.

In order to achieve this, we will:

- O1.1 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
- O1.2 Promote the use and enjoyment of the Town Hall for all of the people of Newbury, including as a venue for meetings, conferences, receptions, the celebration of weddings, etc.
- O1.3 Run regular high quality markets
- O1.4 Maintain and run high quality allotments and promote our allotments to attract new tenants
- O1.5 Maintain and run cemeteries to a high standard
- O1.6 Maintain and run high quality parks, playground and leisure spaces/ facilities
- O1.7 Provide bus shelters in appropriate locations
- O1.8 Provide and maintain public conveniences
- O1.9 Provide roadside salt/grit bins in appropriate locations
- O1.10 Provide and maintain benches and other street furniture in appropriate locations
- O1.11 Provide and maintain trees, flower beds, hanging baskets and other plantings in appropriate locations
- O1.12 Provide brochures, maps, signage and other information for the benefit of visitors to Newbury
- O1.13 Support Community safety, including Town Centre CCTV, through working with partners in this area and where required, to expand the provision of CCTV
- O1.14 Support and promote community events through financial assistance and/or provision of venues and facilities
- O1.15 Lobby and work with West Berkshire Council to devolve appropriate assets and services to us
- O1.16 Encourage and facilitate residents' participation in social, recreational and sporting activities
- O1.17 Hold an Annual Family day, in early summer, in Victoria Park, to promote the Park and the wide range of facilities it offers
- O1.18 Work with and support West Berkshire District Council to maintain library services in Newbury
- O1.19 Work with West Berkshire District Council to encourage/ support the wider use of low emission and sustainable vehicles, and to advance this, support its programme of installing sustainable vehicle charging points
- O1.20 Increase the biodiversity of the town, through drought and pest resistant planting, reduced use of pesticides, herbicides and peat, replacing diseased trees and extending tree planting.

Short-Term Projects

To further enhance and improve the services we deliver for the people of Newbury, this is what we plan to do in the next 12 months:

- O1.STP1 Construct new café facilities in Victoria Park and provide a suitable venue for the rejuvenated Park
- O1.STP2 Construct new changing rooms in Victoria Park to meet the needs of the improved facilities at the football pitch and the tennis courts
- O1.STP3 Consider options for taking charge of Northcroft and Goldwell Parks
- O1.STP4 Consult residents in the area and prepare a plan for the development of leisure and amenity facilities at City Recreation Ground
- O1.STP5 Assess the viability of an ice-rink at the pond in Victoria Park
- O1.STP6 Prepare an action plan to further raise the profile and improve the appearance of the Council's markets, taking into account the changing shopping patterns and requirements of the people of Newbury.
- O1.STP7 Develop a sensory garden in Victoria Park

Medium-Term Projects

Some things will take longer to do, so we have also set ourselves targets which we plan to achieve in the next 2 years:

- O1.MTP1 Explore with West Berkshire District Council options to fully pedestrianise an area of the Town Centre
- O1.MTP2 Work with West Berkshire District Council to promote and provide signage and footpaths for walking and cycling routes to and from the Town Centre and local schools
- O1.MTP3 Provide drinking fountains in locations considered appropriate and cost effective.
- O1.MTP4 Maintain Victoria Park as a first class amenity and recreational area for the benefit of all the citizens of Newbury and achieve the Green Flag Award for Victoria Park
- O1.MTP5 Newbury Town Council should, when finances and resources permit, take over primary responsibility for all the town's public open spaces.

When delivering these services we will:

- Use local suppliers wherever possible
- 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
- Minimise waste created by the Council and the services we provide
- Maximise opportunities to recycle waste created by the Council and the services we provide wherever possible
- Work with other partners and stakeholders to achieve efficiency savings in service delivery and where appropriate, expand the range of services provided by the Town Council.

Policy Area 2: Representing the People of Newbury as the elected body for the Town.

We will actively seek to hear the needs, desires and ambitions of the people in Newbury, and will respond as quickly and as comprehensively as possible within the limits of our resources and other constraints.

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.

We will uphold and promote the role of the Mayor as Civic Head and First Citizen of Newbury

We will represent the views of the people of Newbury when working with other partners and stakeholders or other bodies, both local and national, who can improve the quality of life for our citizens.

In order to achieve these objectives we will:

- O2.1 Make ourselves available to the public by holding Saturday morning surgeries
- O2.2 Encourage public questions at Council meetings
- O2.3 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
- O2.4 Support and encourage the devolution of decision-making and service delivery to the most appropriate level
- O2.5 Support Remembrance Day and other important civic events
- O2.6 Run and sponsor Newbury's annual Civic Award scheme
- O2.7 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
- O2.8 Support the Newbury Youth Council (NYC)
- O2.9 Continue our support for Newbury Town Twinning Association
- O2.10 Promote annual events for Local Democracy Week, in particular for young people.
- O2.11 Lobby the Local Planning Authority as appropriate on issues of importance for the wellbeing and prosperity of the people of Newbury
- O2.12 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
- O2.13 Comment and respond to the Highways Authority (West Berkshire District Council) on consultations and proposals for highways, traffic and parking schemes in Newbury.
- O2.14 Promote and encourage investment in the Town Centre, south of the Canal Bridge
- O2.15 Promote Newbury in Bloom and participate in Britain in Bloom to raise civic pride and encourage and acknowledge efforts by the community, businesses, residents and other organisations of Newbury

- O2.16 Continually improve and upgrade our website and social media in order to inform, engage and consult the people of Newbury
- O2.17 Work with West Berkshire Council and others to continue Local Listing in Newbury in order to enhance the protection of character buildings in the town
- O2.18 Encourage the District Council to have low-cost (inexpensive) and Affordable (social) housing provided throughout the town to meet identified local needs
- O2.19 Work with West Berkshire Council to ensure a sustainable transport policy
- O2.20 Promote the heritage and conservation of Newbury and its appreciation to the public and promote events and activities that recognise, highlight and protect the town's traditions, heritage and history
- O2.21 Urge BT to improve the appearance of the BT tower in the Town Centre and work with any other interested parties who can make this happen
- O2.22 Work with partners to make Newbury "arrival points" (Junction 13, Tesco roundabout, rail station, bus terminal, car parks, etc.) which will impress our visitors
- O2.23 Work with partners to grow Newbury's reputation as a centre of High tech excellence
- O2.24 Encourage owners of obsolete and derelict sites to regenerate and renovate their properties
- O2.25 Acknowledge the contributions made by those who improve Newbury life
- O2.26 Publish a monthly newsletter covering important events and achievements of the Town Council
- O2.27 Support Newbury BID and any other relevant organisations who wish to pursue the Fairtrade Town initiative
- O2.28 Hold an Annual Town Meeting for Town Council electors
- O2.29 Support initiatives to make Newbury a more inclusive town, including Dementia- friendly objectives
- O2.30 Act as the umbrella body for Friends groups delivering environmental projects providing advice on constitution and governance and publicising their activities, but leaving all activities and initiatives to the groups as at present. This should encourage new groups to form where new scope for activities arises. The groups should remain self-funding, and the Council will endeavour to help with the provision of space for public meetings.

Short Term Projects

We plan to carry out the following projects in the next 12 months:

- O2.STP1 Complete the formal town twinning with Carcaxient, Spain
- O2.STP2 Monitor the implementation of the Newbury Town Plan and report twice yearly to the Planning and Highways Committee of the Council.
- O2.STP3 Add a chapter to the Town Design Statement addressing The Canal Corridor
- O2.STP4 Support, assist and promote the proposed Jack of Newbury statue in Northbrook Street

Medium-Term Projects

Some projects may take longer to deliver, so we have also set ourselves targets which we plan to achieve in the next 2 years:

- O2.MTP1 To work with partners and stakeholders to establish a Newbury Arts Council, to support and encourage co-ordination and co-operation between the many different bodies promoting the arts in Newbury/ West Berkshire.
- O2.MTP2 Agree a co-operation plan with coach operators who bring visitors to the Town (Newbury is a frequent stopping place for coach drivers because of its central position on the national coach network, and we should encourage close relationships with operators)
- O2.MTP3 To work with partners and stakeholders to establish a Newbury Sports Council, to support and encourage co-ordination and co-operation between the many different bodies promoting sports in Newbury
- O2.MTP4 Oppose the use of Permitted Development Rights for change of use to residential in established employment areas, and request the planning authority to seek article 4 directions in this matter
- O2.MTP5 Urge West Berkshire district council to complete conservation area Appraisals for the town.

Policy Area 3: Exercising Good Governance and best practice to ensure that we are open, transparent and accountable.

- O3.1 We will maintain openness and transparency in our actions and decision making.
- O3.2 We will make our information, public meetings and records as widely accessible as possible
- O3.3 We will maintain an up-to-date public website that is informative and easy to access and use
- O3.4 We will publish and distribute an annual newsletter, with the Precept Leaflet and/or consider other options to publish this information
- O3.5 We will consult on issues of significance to Newbury, using tools such as public meetings, surveys, questionnaires, petitions, etc.
- O3.6 We will respond promptly to complaints and act as quickly as possible to resolve them.
- O3.7 We will maintain the assets of the Town Council and ensure public access to them
- O3.8 We will constantly monitor and review Newbury Town Council's current asset register to ensure that we are getting best use/value of the assets
- O3.9 We will continue personal development for Members and Officers so that they are suitably equipped with knowledge and skills to carry out their roles and maintain effective working practices, fulfilling their duties and responsibilities to residents professionally and effectively.
- O3.10 We will encourage and facilitate public engagement at meetings of the Council and its Committees
- O3.11 We will keep abreast of all relevant legislative changes impacting on our activities and services

- O3.12 We will report quarterly on our performance against KPI's and review our KPI's to ensure that they are relevant and appropriate
- O3.13 We will report every 3 months on our progress towards achieving the short and medium term projects contained in this Strategy
- O3.14 We will review this Strategy annually and make any appropriate amendments, additions or deletions.
- O3.15 We will exercise best practice as an employer, promoting fairness and equality for our employees and volunteers
- O3.16 We will continually review our work practices and purchasing arrangements to drive efficiencies and ensure best value for the people of Newbury
- O3.17 We will embrace technological advances to progress smarter working methods, where feasible, in order to reduce waste and be more efficient
- O3.18 We will continually review our Committee structures and Working Groups and implement any improvements identified.