

Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council

ADOPTED BY COUNCIL

8th December 2016

Policy Plan
2016 - 2021

Introduction

In 2006 Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council reviewed its 2001 Business Plan and produced a further Business Plan to run until 2009. In 2009, the Council reviewed that Business Plan and decided that it wished to set out its Vision for the five years to 2014 by way of a suite of documents. The documents have been reviewed to set out the Council's vision to 2021 as follows:

1. **A Policy Plan.** This document sets out the Councils Vision, together with its Mission and Values Statements, bringing together broad policies to achieve its Vision.
2. **A Performance Management Strategy (PMS).** This document provides a means by which the Town Councils performance, as a corporate body, can be measured and managed. It will go into greater detail as to how the broad policies in this Policy Plan will be achieved. The Performance Management Strategy will also contain policies specifically relating to such matters as Employment, Financial, Procurement, Performance Management etc.
3. **A Financial Management Strategy (FMS).** This document will complete the suite of documents by which the Councils performance may be monitored and will govern the Councils financial management. As Finance cuts across all the Town Councils business, the FMS is written and applies across the board rather than being applied to the specific business of each of the Councils standing Committees. Therefore, the FMS concentrates on Policy number 2 – Finance, in the Policy Plan. For ease of reference these policies are reproduced at the beginning of the FMS. The Town Councils financial planning will be based on the information contained in both documents and the FMS will give details of short, medium and long-term financial strategy.

These documents will be published so that the electorate of Royal Wootton Bassett, as well as other interested individuals and organisations, are able to monitor the Town Councils actions and success in achieving its stated Vision.

The first of these documents, the Policy Plan, outlines the broad policies through which the Council will seek to achieve the best that it can for the Town of Royal Wootton Bassett, based on the identified needs of the residents of the town. These needs have been identified through consultation carried out by the Town Council itself and its partners. The Policy Plan is designed as an easy to read document written in plain English.

VISION STATEMENT

THE COUNCILS AIM IS TO PROMOTE ROYAL WOOTTON BASSETT AS AN INDEPENDENT AND VIBRANT COMMUNITY.

MISSION STATEMENT

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU IS TO BE A FORWARD THINKING ORGANISATION, PROVIDING EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP FOR ROYAL WOOTTON BASSETT

WE WILL OFFER:

- Quality services, founded on community involvement and responsive to your needs
- Support our staff and value them in delivery of services to you
- Through effective leadership and quality service provision, we will promote a sustainable and balanced future for our town.

VALUES STATEMENT

To meet our commitment to you we will, at all times, be guided by the following values:

QUALITY

To provide quality services that are accountable, continuously improving and focused on your needs.

LEADERSHIP

To be leaders of the community, offering innovative solutions to difficult problems.

RESPONSIVENESS

To listen and respond to your needs in a timely and consistent manner.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

To encourage you to become involved with the activities of the Council.

SUPPORTIVE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

To provide a safe, friendly working environment that supports development and respect of our staff.

SUSTAINABILITY AND BALANCE

To promote a safe, clean, healthy environment for all and to facilitate a sustainable future for our Town, with a balance between social, cultural, heritage, environmental and economic factors.

About this policy plan

This Policy Plan is structured on the Town Councils three Standing Committees:

Revenue & Resources
Amenities
Planning

Each Committee has its own Objectives and Policies detailed in this document. These Objectives and Policies flow from the Town Councils Mission Statement and Corporate Objectives. Each Committee has its own budget and responsibilities. Committee budgets are detailed in the Town Councils annual budget. Committee responsibilities and delegated business are detailed in the Scheme of Delegation annexed to the Council's Standing Orders.

The Town Council is the sole Trustee of the Town Hall and Trust Charity. The Charity is responsible for the following matters:

- The Grade II Listed Town Hall
- Markets

A section of policies entitled 'Town Hall and Trust Charity' has therefore been included in this Policy Plan to cover these items.

About Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council

In 1998 the Town Council moved its offices to 117 High Street. This move enabled the District and County Councils to have offices within the High Street, thus offering a "one-stop shop" for all Council services. However, against the wishes of the Town Council, both authorities have now vacated the building, although some of the vacated rooms are now rented out to other organisations. The Town Council offers a Tourist Information Point in the foyer of the main Library at Boroughfields. The information available is mainly leaflets about destinations outside of the town.

The Town Council provides locally based facilities including the historic Town Hall, a market, a cemetery, recreation grounds, floral decorations, open spaces and children's play areas, local events together with Christmas lighting. It funds services such as CCTV, including volunteer monitoring.

The Council owns Jubilee Lake, designated as a Local Nature Reserve, which is open to the public for informal recreation and well as providing for angling.

Political Structure

The Town Council comprises 16 members. They are all elected in a single election every four years. The next elections are due in 2017.

Councillors and Officers – The Difference

Councillors – otherwise titled Members – are elected to office every four years by the people of the town. Officers are paid employees working for the authority as a whole and not for any single political group.

Councillor's responsibilities are to take the main business decisions concerning the authority's policies and finances, for which they receive no pay or allowances at Town Council level. The Officers are the Council's paid employees and work for the authority as a whole, providing professional advice to ensure that Councillors are properly informed of all relevant matters. Having done so, it is entirely a matter for Councillors to make decisions within legal constraints.

Officers are responsible for the day-to-day running of all the Council's services and facilities and for managing staff and resources within the constraints of Council policy.

The Budget Process

During the summer and autumn, work is carried out to identify the issues with which the Council is likely to be faced when considering its budget for the following financial year.

This culminates in Council's decisions in November/December on the broad approach to budget preparation taking into account anticipated inflation, known commitments, service growth, potential for raising additional income and the effect of the budget on Council taxpayers.

The Town Council then sets a Precept, which is served on Wiltshire Council and subsequently appears on Council tax demand notes as part of the final demand that includes Wiltshire Council, Police and Fire Authorities.

Unlike the other authorities mentioned, the Town Council receives no Government Grant Aid or Business Rate.

Revenue and Resources Committee

This Committee is responsible for the following areas of Town Council business:

- Corporate Management
 - Employment and Staff
 - Finance
 - Partnership Working
- Democratic Representation
 - Preparation of Agendas and Minutes
 - Elected member support
- Civic and Ceremonial
- Grants and Donations
- Crime & Safety Initiatives (CCTV)
- Communication (Newsletter and Website)
- Retail, Commercial and Industrial Regeneration

Corporate Management

1. Employment and Staff

1.1 Objective

TO PROVIDE APPROPRIATE LEVELS OF STAFF SUPPORT TO ENABLE THE TOWN COUNCIL TO OPERATE EFFICIENTLY, ECONOMICALLY AND EFFECTIVELY IN THE PROVISION OF ITS SERVICES.

1.2 Policies

Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council will:

- 1.2.1 Ensure that recruitment of staff is carried out in a non-discriminatory and fair way, taking into account any such anti-discriminatory Regulations or Acts of Parliament as may be in force at any given time.
- 1.2.2 Take care that its employees are suitably qualified, trained and motivated to provide a high quality service to elected members and the general public.
- 1.2.3 Ensure that all employed staff are treated in accordance with prevailing employment legislation.
- 1.2.4 Commit to ensuring that all working practices, equipment and accommodation comply with the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974.
- 1.2.5 Carry out an annual review of staffing to ensure that staff levels are commensurate with the services being provided. Undertake an independent establishment review at least every five years.
- 1.2.6 Regularly review all equipment used by staff to ensure it is fit for purpose and allows staff to carry out their work efficiently.

NB To ensure that all of its responsibilities as an employer are met, the Town Council uses the services of Peninsula Limited, a specialist Human Resources company. An Employee Handbook has been issued to all existing staff, and will be issued to any new staff. This handbook covers all aspects of employment by Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council, including up to date employment legislation and all staffing policies.

2. Finance

2.1 Objective

TO DETERMINE AND MONITOR THE LEVEL OF INCOME AND SPENDING BY THE TOWN COUNCIL TO ENSURE THE APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF FUNDING FOR THE PROVISION OF ITS SERVICES.

2.2 Policies

Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council will:

- 2.2.1 Ensure that sufficient funding is available to provide a high quality standard of services consistent with affordability.
- 2.2.2 Have due regard to the effect that any increased spending will have on the Council Tax payers of Royal Wootton Bassett.
- 2.2.3 Maintain effective control over the Town Councils expenditure by means of continuous monitoring of the finances throughout the year.
- 2.2.4 Review the Town Councils Standing Orders and Financial Regulations at least every four years, to coincide with elections.

3. Partnership Working

3.1 Objective

TO DEVELOP AND FACILITATE PARTNERSHIPS WHICH ASSIST IN BUILDING A SOUND, STABLE YET DIVERSE COMMUNITY

3.2 Policies

Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council will:

- 3.2.1 Actively encourage, and participate in, partnership working with other statutory authorities and community organisations in Royal Wootton Bassett.
- 3.2.2 Respond positively and constructively to consultations from other statutory authorities.
- 3.2.3 Actively develop increased levels of co-operation and partnership between the Town and the Unitary Council as well as other statutory authorities.

- 3.2.4 Continue to press the statutory authorities to provide the necessary levels of health, police and education facilities to provide for a growing town.
- 3.2.5 Consider partnership funding that may assist to draw in matching funding from other bodies, particularly in the case of community organisations.

4. Value for money

4.1 Objective

ROYAL WOOTTON BASSETT TOWN COUNCIL WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO CONDUCT ITS BUSINESS IN ACCORDANCE WITH AFFORDABILITY AND VALUE FOR MONEY PRINCIPLES.

4.2 Policies

Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council will:

- 4.2.1 Where possible seek improvements in the delivery of services, having regard to the principles of economy, effectiveness and efficiency.
- 4.2.2 Seek to consult all the communities within the town to ensure that required services are delivered in the most accessible way.
- 4.2.3 Regularly monitor and review service provision to be assured that it is competitive when compared with other local councils in the area.
- 4.2.4 To outsource services where it is more cost effective to do so.

5. Civic and Ceremonial

5.1 Objective

TO ARRANGE THE TOWN COUNCILS CIVIC AND CEREMONIAL DUTIES IN A DIGNIFIED MANNER SO AS TO UPHOLD AND ENHANCE THE STATUS OF THE TOWN AS WELL AS TO ENGENDER CIVIC PRIDE IN THE TOWN.

5.2 Policies

Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council will:

- 5.2.1 Ensure that the ceremonial robes and the town insignia are maintained in good condition and protected at all times.
- 5.2.2 Through education, engender a civic pride in the town, particularly through the active participation of the schools in the town.
- 5.2.3 Maintain, uphold and actively promote the dignified status of the Town Mayor and the Town Council.

6. Grants and Donations

6.1 Objective

THROUGH THE GRANTS AND DONATIONS BUDGET TO FINANCIALLY SUPPORT COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS IN THE TOWN.

6.2 Policies

Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council will:

- 6.2.1 Financially support locally based community organisations, particularly where there is a quantifiable benefit to the townspeople or the town's facilities.
- 6.2.2 Give special consideration to the financial support of new community organisations that may have difficulty in attracting funding from other sources through lack of a track record.
- 6.2.3 Annually review the Grants and Donations budget to ensure that it is sufficient.
- 6.2.4 Review the criteria for awarding grants to community organisations at least once in every four year term.
- 6.2.5 Regularly publicise the availability of the funding in the grants and donations budget, whilst explaining the criteria to avoid invalid requests.

7. Crime and Safety Initiatives

7.1 Objective

TO WORK CLOSELY WITH OTHER AGENCIES IN THE TOWN TO ASSIST IN DEALING WITH CRIME AND SAFETY MATTERS AND TO PROVIDE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR THE TOWNSPEOPLE

7.2 Policies

Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council will:

- 7.2.1 Meet its responsibilities under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 by considering the impact on crime and safety matters of any decisions it makes.
- 7.2.2 Maintain its existing provision of CCTV and consider installation of new cameras in locations where the purpose of additional cameras is to protect Town Council assets or services, to protect residents from crime, and/or reduce the fear of crime.
- 7.2.3 To consider mobile CCTV cameras for coverage of outlying areas of the town to address specific issues of anti-social behaviour.
- 7.2.4 To work closely with the police during monitoring of the areas covered by CCTV.

8. Communication (Newsletter and Website)

8.1 Objective

TO CONTINUOUSLY SEEK METHODS OF PROMOTING OPEN LOCAL GOVERNMENT BY MEANS OF IMPROVED COMMUNICATION WITH THE TOWNSPEOPLE AND BUSINESS COMMUNITY IN ROYAL WOOTTON BASSETT

8.2 Policies

Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council will:

- 8.2.1 Fund and continuously monitor content of the quarterly newsletter to ensure that it communicates up to date, clear information about all aspects of the town of Royal Wootton Bassett.
- 8.2.2 Ensure that information is freely available as outlined in the Freedom of Information Act 2000 Publication Scheme adopted by the Town Council.
- 8.2.3 Regularly update the web site – www.royalwoottonbassett.gov.uk – with council agendas, minutes and other appropriate information.
- 8.2.4 Endeavour to widely inform townspeople in as many ways possible of Town Council business accepting that certain information has to remain confidential.
- 8.2.5 Explore methods of communicating more closely with the business community, both in the town centre and on the industrial estates.

9. Retail, Commercial and Industrial Regeneration

9.1 Objective

TO WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE BODIES IN ENCOURAGING THE ECONOMIC VIABILITY OF THE TOWN TO BE BUILT ON A SOUND, SUSTAINABLE BASE.

9.2 Policies

Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council will:

- 9.2.1 Identify measures, and exert pressure on Wiltshire Council to address the pressing need for changes to parking in the town centre.
- 9.2.2 Form closer links with the business community to ensure that the retail offer in Royal Wootton Bassett is sufficiently varied to retain shoppers in the town, bearing in mind the proximity of the substantial Swindon retail offer.
- 9.2.3 Explore ways and means to ensure that the infrastructure of the town centre is such that shoppers will want to return to the town.

- 9.2.4 Seek to work closely with the Wiltshire Council Economic Regeneration Team, to attract new businesses to both the town centre and the industrial estates.
- 9.2.5 Lobby the South West Regional Development Agency to take note of the urgency for regeneration of small market towns such as Royal Wootton Bassett.
- 9.2.6 Press other authorities and developers to investigate alternative methods of sustainable energy production and waste management, particularly in new industrial or retail developments.

Amenities Committee

This committee is responsible for the following areas of the Town Councils business:

- Cemetery
- Play Areas and Open Spaces
- Sporting Facilities
- Community Hall provision
- Environmental Matters
- Events and Festivals

10. Cemetery

10.1 Objective

TO MAINTAIN DOWNS VIEW CEMETERY TO A HIGH QUALITY STANDARD AND TO KEEP UNDER REVIEW THE NEED FOR FURTHER BURIAL SPACE AS THE TOWN GROWS.

10.2 Policies

Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council:

10.2.1 Constantly review cemetery maintenance and procedures to ensure a high quality standard and to provide a quiet place of contemplation for bereaved relatives.

10.2.2 Ensure that the Town Councils staff, contracted grave diggers, funeral directors and monumental masons carry out their work in accordance with the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974.

10.2.3 Provide training for all staff so as to continue the current practice of dealing with all burial matters in a sympathetic, diplomatic and caring way.

10.2.4 Continue the current Health & Safety audit of headstones.

10.2.5 Provide a balance between land for burials and cremated remains.

10.2.6 Work towards a cost neutral basis for cemetery fees.

11. Play Areas and Open Spaces

11.1 Objective

TO CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN TO A HIGH STANDARD THE EXISTING CHILDRENS' PLAY AREAS AND OPEN SPACES, AS WELL AS TO IDENTIFY SPACE FOR NEW CHILDRENS' PLAY AREAS AND OPEN SPACES, PARTICULARLY THROUGH S106 AGREEMENTS WITH DEVELOPERS.

11.2 POLICIES

ROYAL WOOTTON BASSETT TOWN COUNCIL WILL

11.2.1 Continue to maintain and improve, to a high standard, the existing Town Council owned children's play areas, with particular emphasis on providing opportunities for disabled and able-bodied children to play together.

11.2.2 Actively seek opportunities to enter into s106 Agreements with developers in the town to provide additional childrens' play areas and open spaces within their developments.

11.2.3 Support, and work in partnership with, local organisations whose stated aims are the development, provision and upgrading of open space and/or woodland areas within the town.

11.2.4 Meaningfully consult with residents in the vicinity of any proposed new play area provision.

11.2.5 Seek matching funding from other bodies when providing new play areas, play equipment or open space features.

12. Sporting Facilities

12.1 Objective

TO SEEK TO ENSURE THAT SPORTS PROVISION MEETS THE STANDARDS PROPOSED BY SPORT ENGLAND.

12.2 Policies

Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council will:

12.2.1 Continue to work in partnership with sports clubs in the town to meet the needs of those clubs, particularly where there is a proven need to meet a demand for facilities for the young people of Royal Wootton Bassett.

12.2.2 Work in partnership with the relevant sports clubs to help provide a Sports Hub for cricket, rugby, tennis and football at Ballards Ash and adjacent sites.

13. Community Hall Provision

13.1 Objective

TO ENSURE SUFFICIENT PROVISION OF COMMUNITY HALL SPACE.

13.2 Policies

Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council will:

13.2.1 See to provide the Community Hall to the high standard expected by those who hire the building.

13.2.2 Through active marketing, maximise usage of the Community Hall.

14. Environmental Matters

14.1 Objective

TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR THE COMMUNITY THROUGH ENHANCEMENT OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT, PARTICULARLY IN THE TOWN CENTRE

14.2 Policies

Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council will:

14.2.1 Continue to press for appropriate traffic measures throughout the town, particularly in residential areas and close to schools.

14.2.2 Assist Wiltshire Council in the provision of traffic calming measures.

14.2.3 Consult, and work in partnership, with the principal authorities towards devolution of services, including street cleansing, weed spraying, grass verge and pavement maintenance.

14.2.4 Ensure provision of a high standard of street furniture and bus shelters where needed.

14.2.5 Promote sponsorship by local businesses for the continued provision of floral displays in the town centre and at the main entrances to the town including sustainable planting schemes at appropriate locations.

14.2.6 Promote planting of trees on housing estates within the town to enhance the quality of life for local residents.

15. Events and Festivals

15.1 Objective

TO ENSURE A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR THE CHRISTMAS LIGHT SWITCH ON EVENT AND TO WORK WITH PARTNERS TO SECURE OTHER EVENTS AND FESTIVALS IN ROYAL WOOTTON BASSETT.

15.2 Policies

Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council will:

15.2.1 Ensure that sufficient budget is allowed to secure the Annual Christmas Light Switch-on Event and the bi-annual Town Crier competition.

15.2.2 Notwithstanding the above policy, to pursue and welcome any sponsorship that may be forthcoming from businesses and organisations within the town.

15.2.3 Continue to work in partnership with Royal Wootton Bassett Chamber of Commerce, to provide occasional events in the town.

15.2.4 Actively promote Royal Wootton Bassett and its facilities by working with any other partners on events that will appeal to residents and non residents alike on the basis of “something for everyone”.

Town Hall Trust and Charity

16. Town Hall

16.1 Objective

AS SOLE TRUSTEE TO CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN AND UPGRADE THE TOWN HALL BUILDING, WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE MUSEUM TRUST.

16.2 Policies

Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council will:

16.2.1 Continue to maintain and preserve the Town Hall to the high standard required for a Grade II Listed and historic building of great importance to the town.

16.2.2 Support the Museum Trust in its work to provide a museum of town history.

16.2.3 Support community access to the Town Hall.

16.2.4 Monitor the physical accessibility and use of the building in relation to the Disability Discrimination Act.

17. Markets

17.1 Objective

TO PROMOTE AND ENCOURAGE THE WEDNESDAY MARKET AND INVESTIGATE THE PROVISION OF INDIVIDUAL SPECIALIST MARKETS ON A REGULAR BASIS IN ORDER TO PROMOTE TOURISM AND ECONOMIC REGENERATION.

17.2 Policies

Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council will:

17.2.1 Attempt to attract new traders to the market to provide a variety of locally produced goods for sale.

17.2.2 Actively investigate the community desire for specialist markets and promote these on a regular basis.

18. Planning Committee

This Committee is responsible for the following areas of Town Council business:

- Consultation on Planning Applications
- Street Naming
- Licensing Matters when appropriate
- Framing recommendations in response to consultation on Structure Plans and Local Development Framework Plans, to then forward to the Town Council

18.1 Objective

TO PROTECT, CONSERVE, IMPROVE AND ENHANCE THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT OF THE TOWN WHEN FULFILLING ITS DEVELOPMENT CONTROL ROLE.

18.2 Policies

Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council will:

18.2.1 Adopt a sensitive and constructive approach to development proposals which are put to the Town Council for comment, always taking into account planning law constraints.

18.2.2 Lobby the principal authorities to ensure that sufficient affordable homes are provided to meet the needs of Royal Wootton Bassett residents.

18.2.3 Particularly consider the impact of development proposals on the infrastructure of the town and where appropriate negotiate s106 Agreements to the benefit of the town.

18.2.4 Seek to ensure that proposed developments are appropriate to the character of the town and offer maximum benefit to the townspeople.

18.2.5 Work in partnership with the principal authorities and other organisations, both within and without the town, to ensure that the built environment of the Conservation Area is enhanced and protected, having regard to the constraints of modern day living.

18.2.6 Take account of the appropriateness of the names suggested for new streets in the town.

18.2.7 Particularly consider the impact on local residents when dealing with licensing matters and comment accordingly to the appropriate authorities.

18.2.8 Report constructively and concisely to the full Town Council on the impact on the town of such consultation documents as Local Development Framework plans, Regional development strategies and any other strategic development plans.