



Business Plan 2016/2017

Approved by Council on 12 July 2016

INTRODUCTION

This is Biggleswade Town Council's first corporate Business Plan. It is a management tool intended to identify how the financial, human and technological resources available are to be used to achieve declared objectives set out in the Council's Corporate Strategy "**Doing the best for Biggleswade: 2016-2020**". The Plan concentrates on the current year but a number of actions stretch well beyond this period. It is a living document which will be modified as situations develop. It will also be adapted or supplemented to support different funding applications as opportunities arise.

The Council's Corporate Strategy is summarised on Page 2. It builds on the Biggleswade Town Centre Strategy and Masterplan published in 2011. The analysis of both the Council and the Town is set out in this Plan, both by way of explanation and so it can be readily seen where the Strategy emerged from. It sets out how the Council will respond to issues identified either by a strategic analysis of the Town's needs or identified through consultation.

BACKGROUND

Biggleswade is a market town and civil parish located on the River Ivel in Bedfordshire. It has grown in population by nearly 10% over the past decade, primarily due to good transport links. New housing developments mean that expansion is predicted to continue into the foreseeable future.

It is situated along the A1 road between London and the North, as well as having a railway station on the main rail link North from London (the East Coast Main Line). Located about 40 miles north of Central London and 20 miles west-south-west of Cambridge, the fastest train to London, King's Cross, takes 29 minutes. The Biggleswade civil parish also includes the nearby hamlet of Holme.

The area around Biggleswade is thought to have been inhabited from around 10,000 BC. In Roman times, a loop road known as the White Way passed through Biggleswade (possibly along the course of the present-day Drove Road), linking up with the Ermine Way at Godmanchester. Biggleswade is mentioned in the Domesday Book. In the 5th century AD, Saxon invaders settled. The name Biggleswade is thought to be derived from Biceil, an Anglo-Saxon personal name and Waed, the Saxon word for ford. The spelling "Bykleswade" and its variations occur in Law records of the 15th century.

In 2001 a gold coin bearing the name Coenwulf was discovered at Biggleswade on a footpath beside the River Ivel. The coin's inscription, "DE VICO LVNDONIAE", indicates that it was minted in London. The coin was bought by the British Museum in 2006, the most expensive British coin purchased until that date.

St. Andrew's Church, still the town's main Anglican church. In 1132, Henry I granted the manor of Biggleswade to Bishop Alexander of Lincoln to help endow Lincoln Cathedral. The town was granted a charter to hold a market during the reign of King John (1196–1216), a market is still held in the market place in the centre of the town every Saturday. Biggleswade Castle existed in earlier times, as did a manor at Stratton Park Moated Enclosure.

On 16 June 1785 there was a large fire in the town which spread rapidly through the neighbouring streets, destroying nearly one-third of the town. A national appeal was launched to raise funds for the many people who had lost their homes and their livelihoods. In the local parish church there is a stained glass window depicting the fire¹.

The Great Northern Railway opened in 1850, and Biggleswade was for a time the first and only town in Bedfordshire to have a mainline station. Later it was one of three towns in the county to have one (on the East Coast Main Line), along with Bedford and Dunstable. Buses in the town were provided by Eastern National until 1952 when the western division of Eastern National was handed over to United Counties. The company had a garage in Shortmead Street opposite Ivel Gardens until 1989 when it was sold for redevelopment into flats. United Counties was acquired by Stagecoach in November 1987 and moved to the current site in Hitchin Street in 1989.

Traditionally, Biggleswade has been a vegetable- and produce-growing area with trains often taking daily loads of vegetables to London's produce markets. Even though much of this has now stopped, Bedfordshire Growers, based on the outskirts of the town, still supplies major supermarkets with UK-grown potatoes and onions. Biggleswade is also the base of the Jordan's cereals business. There also used to be a glass bottle factory on Brunts Lane which was destroyed by fire in 2000. The town was also home to the Ivel Cycle Works, founded by Dan Albone. The town had a large brewery in the town centre for many decades; its last owners were Greene King but it closed down in October 1997 and the site is now occupied by an Asda supermarket.

Biggleswade Swimming Club celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2006. It now uses the new indoor Saxon Pool and Leisure Centre, which underwent expansion in 2015 to add a new sports hall to the back of the complex. There is also a small skate park located behind the complex. The town has two football clubs – Biggleswade Town, of the Southern League Premier Division, and Biggleswade United, of the Spartan South Midlands Premier Division. Biggleswade Rugby Club plays in the Midlands 3 East (South) league, and has 3 senior sides alongside active Mini and Youth sides from under 7 to 17 years. Biggleswade Cricket Club provides teams for all ages including youth teams. The club's adult teams compete in league cricket on Saturdays and Sundays throughout the season.

The town is mentioned twice in the diaries of Samuel Pepys. On 22 July 1661, Pepys stopped off in Biggleswade (called 'Bigglesworth' by Pepys) to buy a pair of warm woollen stockings. John Byng, 5th Viscount Torrington often refers to the town and the Sun Inn. Nearby is the Shuttleworth Collection of vintage aeroplanes, sometimes referred to as Biggleswade Airfield. The organisation also operates the Swiss Garden and a large play area on the premises.

The Town has been twinned with Erlensee, Germany since 2000.

“DOING THE BEST FOR BIGGLESWADE”-
CORPORATE STRATEGY 2016-2020

OUR VISION:

Our Town will be vibrant and continually developing. One community, working collaboratively to deliver a shared blueprint of an improved local environment. The Town will seek to become Master of its own Destiny and through localised planning will shape its infrastructure, ensuring the protection of its amenities and open spaces.

To achieve this, we will strive to satisfy the needs of our community in work, rest and play. We will stimulate new economic growth within our town. We will develop the confidence and presence to positively influence others whilst acting in a culture of honesty trust and openness.

OUR PURPOSE:

is to build the success of Biggleswade, creating a single town community, identifying the economic, physical and social needs and delivering services to meet those needs, working collaboratively with the community and partners.

To achieve this, all members of the council will work together and with others, to serve and lead the community with a determination to undertake the fullest range of services, responding to the wider need of its residents with fair and proportionate governance.

Main Priorities:

Our Main Priorities are:

- **Stimulating new growth within the town whilst developing and protecting amenities.**
- **Building the success of a sustainable Biggleswade.**
- **Creation of a single Biggleswade community.**
- **Developing the potential of the council to tackle local issues, deliver better services and effective leadership.**

The Biggleswade Community Promise (Our Core Values)

Biggleswade Town Council promise to be open, trustworthy and honest; providing value for money whilst empowering and working with the community to achieve success for all.

An overview and analysis of the Town

Biggleswade town is located in the east of Central Bedfordshire, and is divided into two Central Bedfordshire wards: Biggleswade North and Biggleswade South. These are not to be confused with the three Town Council electoral wards of Stratton, Holme and Ivel.

The town population increased by 17% between 2011 and 2016 to 19,500 residents. Age and ethnicity were similar to the Central Bedfordshire averages.

20% of the population were 0-15 years, 65% were 16-64 years and 15% were 65 years +. There was an increase in the proportion of people who were not White British, from 4.2% in 2001 to 8.2% in 2011. The only individual ethnic group to comprise more than 2% of the population was 'White Other' (which includes people with a White ethnic background who are not 'White British', 'White Irish' or 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller').

There was an increase of 1,310 dwellings (18%) across Biggleswade between 2011 and 2015 to 8530.

Most households were owner occupied, with an increase in private renting since 2001. There was little variation in household composition, when compared to the Central Bedfordshire figures.

Deprivation is not a particular issue in Biggleswade, although some areas have high levels of children and older people in income deprived households. Unemployment is comparable to the Central Bedfordshire average, as was the rate of residents claiming out of work benefits. A similar proportion of Biggleswade residents (6.3%) were claiming out of work benefits compared to Central Bedfordshire. This was lower than the England average (9.4%). Residents were less likely to have degree-level qualifications.

Almost one third of residents worked within the town, while the main destinations for work were other parts of Central Bedfordshire. 71% of commuters travelled by car, similar to the Central Bedfordshire average.

Serious acquisitive crime in Biggleswade is lower than the Central Bedfordshire average. There were no major differences either in overall health, or in the proportion of residents providing unpaid care compared to Central Bedfordshire overall.

The proportion of households with dependent children was the same as in Central Bedfordshire overall. A similar proportion of children achieved good GCSEs. Biggleswade, as part of Central Bedfordshire, has a three-tier schooling system with lower schools catering for ages between 5 to 9, middle schools from 9 to 13 and Stratton Upper School continuing education up and into Sixth Form. Two of the local schools, Stratton Upper School and Biggleswade Academy, attained Academy status in 2011.

Manta list 650 companies in Biggleswade.

There are some 80 clubs and voluntary organisations listed on the Biggleswade Community Website including 6 churches.

Policies

The Council is not able to set out all of its policies and principles in its Strategy and is developing a suite of supporting policy documents which clarify and add detail. Some of these documents will be statutory requirements, others will be best practice. All will be available in the Constitution. Policies currently adopted or in draft form are:

Complaints Code & Vexatious Policy	Environmental Policy	Equality Policy
Information & Data Protection Policy	Grant & Funding Policy	Community & Social Policy
Employee Handbook & Personnel Policies	Volunteer Policy	Risk Management Policy
Protection of Children & Vulnerable Adults	Training & Development Policy	Pensions Discretions Policy
IT, Website & Email Policy	Procurement Policy	Flag Flying Policy
Customer Care Policy	Safety Policy	Community Engagement Policy
Publication Scheme & Information Guide		

Stakeholders and Clients

The main stake holders in the activities of the Council are the electors, residents, and businesses of the Town, all of which benefit from an improved Town environment and protected heritage, better services and improved community facilities. Other stakeholders are our partners such as Central Bedfordshire Council, other public sector organisations, voluntary and community groups, local trusts and other private organisations who work for the good of the Town.

Our clients are the individuals, organisations, visitors, tourists and users of the Council's facilities and services or who benefit from its financial support.

Capability Analysis

Appendix 1 sets out the SWOT analysis which examines the strengths and weaknesses within both the Town and the Council itself and the opportunities and threats which they face. The Business Plan has built on the strengths and opportunities and develops a response to the identified weaknesses and threats. This appendix also includes a summary of the Pest Analysis which uses the four headings of Political, Economic, Social and Technological factors to assess the wider environment in which the Organisation operates.

Appendix 2 summarises the key business risks which have been taken from a more in depth exercise using an in-house model. The aim will be to lower a number of the risks.

The Council recently commissioned an independent review of how it compared with best practice. The headline conclusion was of “a service oriented authority, ambitious but realistic councillors and a motivated workforce. The council is well managed and services are continually evolving to meet needs. It was decided that governance had fallen a little behind the best and that a review of strategic direction would now be timely. Ideas and commitment to developing the council for the good of the town come from both councilors and officers, and are not driven solely by one or the other. This “shared vision” avoids major internal conflict and leads to a balanced and stable council”.

Council has responded to this by undertaking facilitated strategic planning and producing its first Corporate Strategy and this, its associated Business Plan. It has set in train a comprehensive review of its governance which will be completed during the current year.

The Council has recently decided to aim to achieve the Local Council Award Scheme and has had undertaken an assessment of how it currently compares with the three levels of Foundation, Quality and Gold standards. As a result, it has placed targets times for attaining each level in the Business Plan and intends to apply for the Foundation Level in the second quarter.

The Council received extremely good internal and external audit reports for the previous year.

Marketing & promotion

Biggleswade Town Council's main areas of promotion are:

The Town - Promotion of the Town to attract day visitors and tourists
Promotion to attract people looking to live in the Town
Promotion to businesses looking to invest in the Town

The Council - Statutory and other information to help residents and businesses understand its decision making.
Marketing of its services to ensure accessibility for all

The Council is developing both Communications & Marketing and Community Engagement policies. Communications activity is a key driver in public perception of overall Council performance. Research suggests that keeping residents informed, listening to their concerns and involving them when making decisions has a significant impact on their satisfaction with the Council and its services.

The Council will promote the Town on its Web-site, through social media, by improving signage, by supporting local events, by supporting local tourism and business initiatives and by helping local organisations with media articles and press releases.

The Council will market its services and promote local governance through its website & social media, by providing a newsletter and notice boards and by supporting promotions of other public bodies and the voluntary and community organisations.

ICT Provision

Biggleswade Town Council considers e-business as vital to its efficiency and will therefore ensure it keeps abreast with technology, and will adopt it where it delivers a proven benefit. Council are currently intending to provide tablets to each councillor and deliver agendas and documents electronically.

The Council has a dedicated computer network and printers with offsite data back-up. It holds a Data Protection registration and is developing an Information and Data Protection policy to ensure compliance. The network is operated under an IT, Website & Email Policy. Each computer is password protected. All computers operate on Microsoft Windows 10 and Office 2015. The Council have a support contract in place for maintenance of both hard and software.

The Web Site is modern and functional, containing a comprehensive range of information and will be regularly updated. The Council will continue to expand the range of information contained on it. The Council will gradually increase its use of social media whilst ensuring the necessary checks and balances to ensure high quality information is in place. The Council will consider a Social Media Policy to supplement its Councillor Code of Conduct.

The Council use the Omega Accounting software and upgrade it as necessary. It currently has a support package in place for this. It has commenced electronic banking but has retained the authorisation of the Town Clerk and 2 councillors for electronic payments.

Staff & Member Development

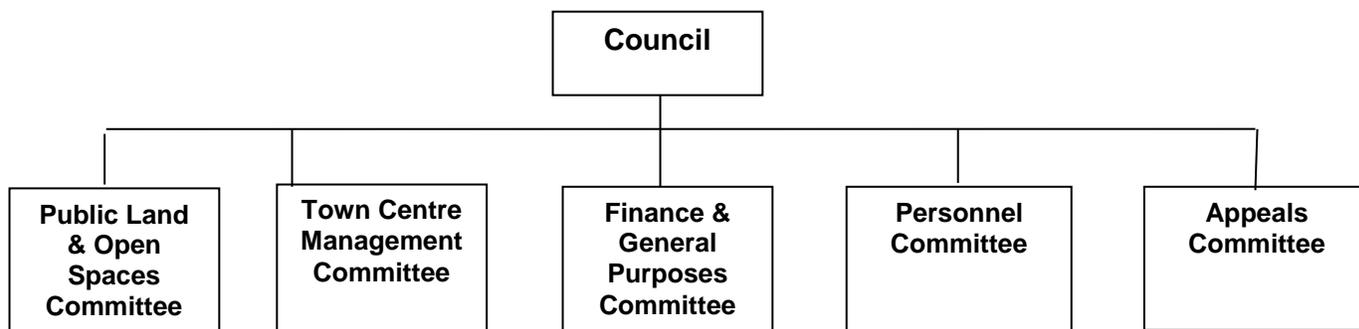
Biggleswade Town Council have adopted the collective agreement known as the “Green Book” issued by the NJC for Local Government Services (comprising representatives of employers & employees). It regularly revises its local conditions and personnel policies, setting them out in an Employee Handbook. It has also adopted its Pension Discretions Policies. The Council sets out to reward the commitment of its staff, consistent with its financial resources and to provide a satisfying and flexible working environment in which staff have the opportunity to develop. Council have recently adopted a new Training and Development Policy for both staff and Councillors.

Rob McGregor is the Town Clerk and holds the statutory roles of Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer. Rob has responsibility for all staff and for overall management. He has a number of responsibilities delegated to him and is responsible to the Council as a whole. Mike Thorn is Deputy Town Clerk and lead responsibilities for the direct labour force and health and safety. Kay Croft joined the Council in May in the new post of Office Manager. Jan Durn, Sue Crowther and Angela Thomas complete the administration team and between them also undertake reception duties and provide secretarial support to the Mayor.

Colin Keeble is the Market Superintendent. Mike Dean is the Works Foreman and heads up a work force consisting of 6 operatives.

Elected Members bring a vast range of skills and experience to the table, however both local government and the environment in which they operate are fast changing. The Council, in recognition of this have included a training and development programme for all councillors within their Training and Development Policy.

Committee Structure



All Councillors meet together as the full council on the second and fourth Tuesday each month (except only one meeting in December), including the annual Council Meeting in May. Here Councillors decide the Council's overall policies, set the budget each year and deal directly with the more major issues. Planning matters are also dealt with directly by Council.

The Council appoints committees which deal with the more detailed or routine items of business. Certain decisions may be delegated by full Council to these committees however currently all items are dealt with as recommendations to be ratified at a meeting of full Council. Council are currently reviewing the terms of reference of committees with the intention of introducing more delegation to them and officers so that business can be conducted more efficiently. Council has four main standing committees with separate responsibilities: Public Land & Open Spaces, Finance & General Purpose, Personnel and Town Centre Management. In addition it has an Appeals Committee.

Council also establish working parties, which do not have decision making powers but look at the detail of future policy or services in a depth which would not be possible in the formal arena. These are often on a task and finish basis.

The Council are also members of Biggleswade Joint Committee with Central Bedfordshire Council, the purpose of which is to serve as a forum for all those involved in initiatives impacting on Biggleswade Town to consult each other and co-ordinate their activities.

Financial Appraisal

This Business Plan is intended to be read alongside the 2016/17 Budget and when completed the Medium Term Financial Plan.

The shutdown of the 2015/16 accounts took place in April 2016 and the final accounts, which are available to the public, were approved by Council on 28th June 2016. At the same meeting the Annual Return approved for forwarding to the external auditor. The Internal Audit Report, which reported no significant issues had been accepted by Council on 14th June 2016.

The Council has maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption, and reviewed its effectiveness. Proper arrangements are in place to safeguard the public money and resources in their charge. All reasonable steps have been taken to assure themselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and proper practices that could have a significant effect on the ability of the Council to conduct its business or on its finances. It has only done things that it has the legal power to do. Council does intend to become eligible to adopt the General Power of Competence which would this scope.

The Council provided proper opportunities during the year for the exercise of elector's rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations. Members of the public have been given opportunities to inspect and ask questions about the Council's accounts. The Council carried out an assessment of the risks facing the Council and took appropriate steps to manage those risks including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.

The Council has disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant. These have been included in the financial statements.

As a result of consistent budgeting, particularly the regular provision of Capital Funds within the Precept, the Council is financially sound and finances are well managed. The Council is prepared to invest in the future of the Town but is prudent when budgeting and committed to providing value for money.

Provision has been made through the use of reserves for service expansion such as taking on further devolved services from Central Bedfordshire Council, a Community Hall and possibly addition recreation and sports facilities funded through development.

The Council's finances are regulated by its Financial Regulations and Standing Orders, both of which will be reviewed during the year. Expenditure is incurred by the Town Clerk only within the limits of delegation or a specific resolution but settlement of the liability arising is only on the express signatory of two authorised members. Legally the Council is no longer bound to this requirement but do not intend to change it.

The Council has an Asset Register identifying insurance valuations & replacement costs, supplemented by the Tangible Fixed Assets notes in the Annual Accounts.

Key Achievements 2015/16

- Continued to offer grants to assist voluntary and community groups.
- Continued to make observations on planning applications.
- Held a number of Civic events including Remembrance Day and Civic Service.
- The Mayor attended a high number of civic and community events to promote the Town.
- Continued to produce a monthly newsletter to every house through the Bulletin.
- Continued to deliver a public office servicing councillors, meetings and the democratic Process.
- Continued to provide an Information Gateway service at the Old Court House to CBC & other organisations.
- Provided business office accommodation for rental at the Old Court House.
- Continued to provide CCTV provision and contracted monitoring.

- Continued to provide and operate Allotments at Kennel Farm Road.
- Continued to manage Council owned River Ivel bank and issue Fishing permits.
- Continued to manage Charter market & provide a Farmers market.
- Continued to provide burial services at both Drove Road and Stratton Way Cemeteries including burial records.
- Continued to maintain Town Council owned street lighting.
- Continued to manage licensing of A boards in Market Square as devolved from Central Bedfordshire Council.
- Continued to provide off street car parking in the Town.
- Continued to provide and maintain a range of play areas to suite different ages.
- Continued to work with CBC to deliver town centre regeneration.
- Continue to provide and manage public open space, sports facilities and sports pitches including Stratton Way, the Lakes and Drove Road Recreation Ground.
- Continue to distribute replacement waste bins on behalf of CBC.
- Approximately £130k was spent on re-surfacing and re-marking car parks.
- Refurbishment of a number of play areas.

Our major disappointment was that the Council were not successful in its bid to Central Bedfordshire Council for Market Town funding towards the regeneration of the Market Squar

The Way Forward

The Council is determined to provide strong community leadership, strengthening its local governance role and working in partnership with the community and principal council. It anticipates being involved in the provision of other services either directly or in partnership, as resources allow. This will be on the basis of gap filling and adding value.

The key actions for 2016/17 are set out below in the table below. For the larger, more complex projects, more detailed project plans will be developed in the form of Gantt chart to support the table. The Business Plan really is about ensuring the goals and actions set out in the Corporate Strategy “**Doing the best for Biggleswade: 2016-2020**” are delivered and properly resourced.

The Council are developing a keen performance management approach, and will continue to report on progress against the Business Plan to Council cycle bi-monthly and to gain the standard necessary for the Foundation level of the Local Council Awards.

Lead Persons: TC = Town Clerk; DTC = Deputy Town Clerk; OM = Office Manager; Others?

Priority 1	STIMULATING NEW GROWTH WITHIN THE TOWN WHILST DEVELOPING AND PROTECTING AMENITIES		
	ACTIONS & OUTPUT TARGETS	LEAD PERSON	DATE
1. Engage with trade groups, local businesses and others to develop the town with a focus on bringing empty shops back into use.	TC	To March 2020	
2. Undertake a feasibility study in to operating a shop front improvement scheme with CBC.	TC	October 2016	
3. Use the planning system to support the development of a desirable number and range of new homes on allocated or suitable other sites, ensuring adequate provision for the young and elderly.	TC	To March 2020	
4. Encourage the development of new employment sites, of good quality and varying size, in suitable locations by use of the planning system and liaison with CBC and developers	TC	To March 2020	
5. Work with partners to develop an Economic Development Policy	TC	April 2018	
6. Create more parking facilities for the town by enhancing existing car parks and investigating the purchase of land for the provision of additional ones.	TC	To March 2020	
7. Investigate and encourage options for attracting commercial leisure facilities into the town.	TC	To March 2020	
8. Prepare a guide to recreation and leisure facilities within the town, promoting the information on the Town Council website.	TC/OM	May 2017	
9. Develop and use Biggleswade's leisure facilities flexibly, to meet the needs of the community.	TC	To March 2020	
10. Protect, maintain and enhance open spaces	TC	To March 2020	
11. Produce a design guide for the town.	TC	October 2017	
12. Ensure there is adequate broadband services for the Town	TC	November 2018	
13. Seek to ensure Wi Fi is available free of charge within the Town centre	TC	November 2018	
14. Lobby for better mobile phone coverage in the town, including 4G	TC	To March 2020	
15. Play an active role in the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan process to ensure adequate, controlled and suitable development in Biggleswade, ensuring we do not lose our "sense of place"	TC	To March 2020	
16. Ensure we receive an appropriate share of any Community Infrastructure Levy from development and also lobby the principal to use the new CIL creatively for the benefit of the Town.	TC	To March 2020	
17. Undertake a feasibility study in to a new paddling pool/water play area	TC	July 2017	
18. Develop a procurement Policy which encourages "buy local"	TC	October 2016	

Priority 2	BUILDING THE SUCCESS OF A SUSTAINABLE BIGGLESWADE.		
ACTIONS & OUTPUT TARGETS		LEAD PERSON	DATE
1. To become an influential participant in dealing with others, working with partners to manage and improve local services. Develop the ethos of partnership working whilst aligning all activities with the Corporate Strategy.	TC	To March 2020	
2. Focus on gaining the powers important to the people of Biggleswade by working with the principal authority on devolution of services to the Town Council.	TC	To March 2020	
3. Open negotiations with Central Beds Council regarding street cleansing	TC	To March 2017	
4. Develop a Neighbourhood Plan to gain more control over local planning issues & maximize CIL.	TC	November 2018	
5. Seek to facilitate the retention and addition of amenities and funding by commenting on planning applications and lobbying providers.	TC	To March 2020	
6. Encourage the principle authority to develop a Biggleswade sustainable transport strategy which ensures all communities and facilities are linked to the town.	TC	To March 2019	
7. Seek to increase the number and quality of access routes using sustainable modes (bus train, foot and cycle) within in the Town, linking communities and facilities to each other and to other places	TC	To March 2020	
8. Protect and enhance the heritage of the town by supporting organisations which develop the knowledge of local history	TC	To March 2020	
9. Take a proactive role in managing the conservation area and listed buildings.	TC	To March 2020	
10. Protect and enhance our local environment by preserving the natural environment, biodiversity and important landscapes through planning comment, lobbying and use of Council owned land.	TC	To March 2020	
11. Set a high environmental standard for the Council by undertaking an environmental audit and calculating its carbon footprint.	DTC	March 2017	
12. Develop the longer term sustainability of the town by working with others to address wider environmental issues and concerns.	TC	To March 2020	
13. Lead the community on undertaking a Town Sustainability Audit	DTC	February 2019	
14. Lobby for improved highway maintenance and highway safety	TC	To March 2020	
15. Ensure that the benefits from common land rights are maintained	TC	To March 2020	

Priority 3	CREATION OF A SINGLE BIGGLESWADE COMMUNITY		
ACTIONS & OUTPUT TARGETS		LEAD PERSON	DATE
1. Enable the setting up of a Biggleswade Community Forum to coordinate community effort towards delivering priority projects.	TC	December 2017	
2. Facilitate and support the community to work better together with the Council and partners.	TC	To March 2017	
3. Include information from other organisations in our Newsletter and Website	TC	To March 2017	
4. Encourage more people to take an active interest in the Town, its local council and voluntary sector.	TC	To March 2017	
5. Develop a communication and marketing strategy ensuring the council develops efficient and effective communication with the local population and partners.	TC/OM	June 2017	
6. Engage with Central Bedfordshire Council to help it understand local needs with the aim of providing improved services and facilities.	TC	To March 2020	
7. Work to make our communities as inclusive as possible through engaging hard to reach groups, encouraging disability access etc.	TC	To March 2020	
8. Recognise the diversity of the Town's communities.	TC	To March 2020	
9. Facilitate and support community events which build community cohesiveness or promote the town.	TC	To March 2017	
10. Work with others to ensure we have a healthy community	TC	To March 2017	
11. Strive to make our town safer by supporting Neighbourhood watch	TC	To March 2017	
12. Work with Police to disseminate information and report matters of concern.	TC	To March 2017	
13. Issue Home safety advice via the Newsletter and Website.	OM	To March 2017	
14. Participate in the local drug and alcohol partnership.	TC	To March 2017	
15. Partner the Biggleswade community and CBC to help deliver the project priorities in the Town Master Plan.	TC	To March 2020	
16. Support Best Kept Town or "In Bloom" competitions in the Town	DTC	To March 2017	
17. Support Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue in fire safety campaigns	TC	To March 2017	
18. Continue to provide work experience opportunities for young people.	TC	To March 2017	
19. Undertake a feasibility study in to establishing a Town Council Youth Committee	TC	December 2016	
20. Continue to work with schools on promoting democracy	TC	To March 2017	
21. Monitor the Equality Policy for equality in governance, service delivery and employment.	TC	February 2017	
22. Take part in the Community Partnership meetings	TC	To March 2017	
23. Support the Town's Pub Watch Scheme	TC	To March 2017	

Priority 4	DEVELOP THE POTENTIAL OF THE COUNCIL TO TACKLE LOCAL ISSUES, DELIVER BETTER AND EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP		
ACTIONS & OUTPUT TARGETS		LEAD PERSON	DATE
1. <u>Develop the capacity and a diverse skill base within the Council</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a Training and Development Policy 2. Implement the Member Training Programme for the current year. 3. Implement the Staff Training Plan for the current year. 4. Update Business Risk Assessment 5. Be innovative in finding external funding. 6. Undertake comprehensive safety risk assessments 7. Review Treasury Management Policy including investments 8. Review our investments and banking in accordance with Investment Policy 9. Review committee terms of Reference and delegation to committees and officers 10. Provide tablets to each councillor and deliver agendas and documents electronically 11. Undertake a Crime Reduction Audit on the Council's activities & facilities 		TC TC TC TC/OM TC, DTC, OM DTC TC TC TC TC DTC	July 2016 To March 2017 To March 2017 December 2016 To March 2019 October 2016 December 2016 March 2017 September 2016 October 2016 December 2016
2. <u>Continue to deliver excellent services according to both need and consumer choice</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to deliver a public office servicing councillors, meetings and the democratic Process. 2. Continue to provide an Information Gateway service at the Old Court House to CBC & other organisations 3. Continue to offer business office accommodation and meeting room hire at Old Court House. 4. Continue to provide CCTV provision and contracted monitoring 5. Upgrade the mobile CCTV equipment 6. Continue to run and facilitate events e.g. Remembrance Day, Civic Service, Christmas Lights/Fayre 7. Continue to provide and operate Allotments at Kennel Farm Road 8. Continue to manage Council owned River Ivel bank and issue Fishing permits 9. Continue to manage Charter market & charity stalls 10. Continue to provide Farmers market 11. Seek to operate craft fairs at some Farmers Markets 12. Continue to support the community and promote the Town through the Mayoral engagements 13. To continue to burial services at both Drove Road and Stratton Way Cemeteries including burial records 14. Continue to maintain council owned street lighting 15. Continue to manage licensing of A boards in Market Square as devolved from CBC 		TC, DTC, OM TC, DTC, OM TC TC TC DTC DTC/OM TC TC TC DTC DTC DTC	To March 2017 To March 2017 To March 2017 To March 2017 September 2017 To March 2017

16. Continue to provide off street car parking in the Town.	TC	To March 2017
17. Continue to provide and maintain a range of play areas to suite different ages	TC	To March 2017
18. Continue to work with CBC to deliver town centre regeneration	DTC	To March 2019
19. Continue to promote the Town across various media	TC	To March 2017
20. Continue to provide and manage public open space, sports facilities and sports pitches including Stratton Way, the Lakes and Drove Road Recreation Ground.	TC	To March 2017
21. Continue to distribute replacement waste bins on behalf of CBC	DTC	To March 2017
22. Continue to support local service for stray dogs	DTC	To March 2017
23. Manage public toilets in Market Square	TC	To March 2017
	DTC	To March 2017
3. <u>Take on New Services where there is an identifiable Community Need</u>		
1. Take on and open to the public the new Community Hall.	TC	September 2016
2. Take over new recreation and sports facilities through s106 in East of Town	TC	February 2017
3. Review the need for additional allotments in the Town	DTC	August 2017
4. Develop Town Emergency Plan	TC/DTC	June 2017
5. Develop Business Continuity Plan	TC/OM	December 2016
6. Become eligible for the general power of competence to increase ability to offer services	TC	June 2017
7. Investigate establishing an Information Point at the new Community Hall	TC	March 2017
8. Review Car Park Strategy for the Town with CBC	TC	March 2018
4. <u>Take on a more integrated approach to management and be more transparent in our Governance and dealings with people</u>		
1. Deliver the Corporate Strategy objectives through an outcome focussed Corporate Business Plan.	TC	To March 2017
2. Accreditation under, the Local Council Award Scheme, Foundation level.	TC	November 2016
3. Accreditation under, the Local Council Award Scheme, Quality & Gold levels	TC	March 2018
4. Develop a business Plan for 2016/17	TC	July 2016
5. Develop a Medium Term Financial Plan for 2016/17	TC	August 2016
6. Revise Medium Term Financial Plan for 2017/18	TC	March 2017
7. Adopt a budget & set precept for 2017/18	TC	January 2017
8. Review Financial Regulations & develop Standing Orders for Contracts	TC	August 2016
9. Review Standing Orders	TC	January 2017
10. Develop a range of quality based operating procedures (priority).	TC, DTC, OM	March 2017
11. Develop a range of quality based operating procedures (non-priority).	TC, DTC, OM	March 2018
12. Maintain Website with up to date information.	OM	To March 2017
13. Continue to issue a monthly newsletter to each house and business.	OM	To March 2017
14. Review our Publication Scheme and Information Guide	TC/OM	August 2016
15. Develop an Information and Data Protection Policy	TC/OM	September 2016
16. Develop a Communications and Marketing Policy	TC/DTC	June 2017
17. Report progress on our business plan and any unimplemented decisions to bi-monthly Council meetings	TC, DTC, OM	To March 2017
18. Publish our internal & external Audit Reports on the Website.	OM	August 2016

19. Produce an internal audit brief for the current year	TC	January 2017
20. Provide link on Website to CBC Member declarations	OM	June 2016
21. Apply new logo to signs, literature & Website	OM	March 2017

Appendix 1: S.W.O.T Analysis

POSITIVE



NEGATIVE



INTERNAL



Strengths {Town Council}

- Great location with beautiful rural scenery within walking distance,
- Close to major roads & excellent rail network. Free Parking
- Variety of businesses and employment opportunities.
- Historic market town (chartered market) with great heritage
- High quality life in Town. Safe Town
- Lots of community groups & societies
- Land available for development
- Core of old Biggleswade people with good community history
-
- Council has sound finances/ adequate reserves. Prepared to invest in Town
- Councillors have roles in community & good local knowledge
- Common purpose between members & staff. Passionate about Town
- Proactive Town Clerk. Staff work as a team.
- Councillors non-political after election, work together. Bring variety of skills

Weaknesses {Town Council}

- Limited employment, few high skill, high pay jobs
- Lack of homes for elderly & young
- Difficult to retain young people.
- Lack of facilities & services
- Dormitory town for London
- Lack of parking in town
- Some community apathy
- Some pockets of deprivation
-
- Room for improvement in external communication & self promotion.
- Required strategic focus, lack of forward planning
- Need to revise governance
- Slow pace of doing things
- Lack of awareness with some councillors of detailed issues before decisions
- Not always good at communication and promotion.
- Lack of capacity in service provision e.g. play areas
- Some duplication of discussion on issues

- Offices and services are accessible. Council is proactive
- Well managed, punches above weight. Decisions get turned to actions.
- Provide good range of / good relations with other public service providers
- Partnership with community

EXTERNAL



Opportunities {Town Council}

- Imaginative development in town centre
- Heritage of Town
- Opportunity for more commercial and leisure development
- Growing population will make town more attractive to business.
- Range of new residential development including for young and older people
- More use of s106 monies and CIL to improve facilities
- Developing opportunities for the youth.
- Promotion of Town.
- Improve facilities & take on new services.
- Develop Neighbourhood Plan & Obtain CIL. Provide additional car-parking.
- Improve working relations with principal authority

Threats {Town Council}

- Over-development & pressure on local facilities, schools, GPs etc.
- Rising house prices
- Closure of some remaining facilities & loss of green space
- Further increase in traffic. More pressure on town centre parking
- Small super output area
- No Local Plan.
- Lack of interest in Council by public.
- Inadequate notice by principal authority re opportunities for devolved services
- Lack of external funding opportunities.
- Reduced services by principal authority

P.E.S.T

Political

Emerging agenda of Government
 A Government funding cuts to local government &
 N communities
 A Borough Council's supportive of neighbourhood

Economic

Strengthening national economy
 Consumer spending is increasing

L communities but under pressure to
A reduce costs
S Uncertain effect of EU referendum result
I
S

Interest rates low but likely to rise within a year
Effects of global economy
Demand for grants to support Town council outstrips availability
Uncertain effect of EU referendum result

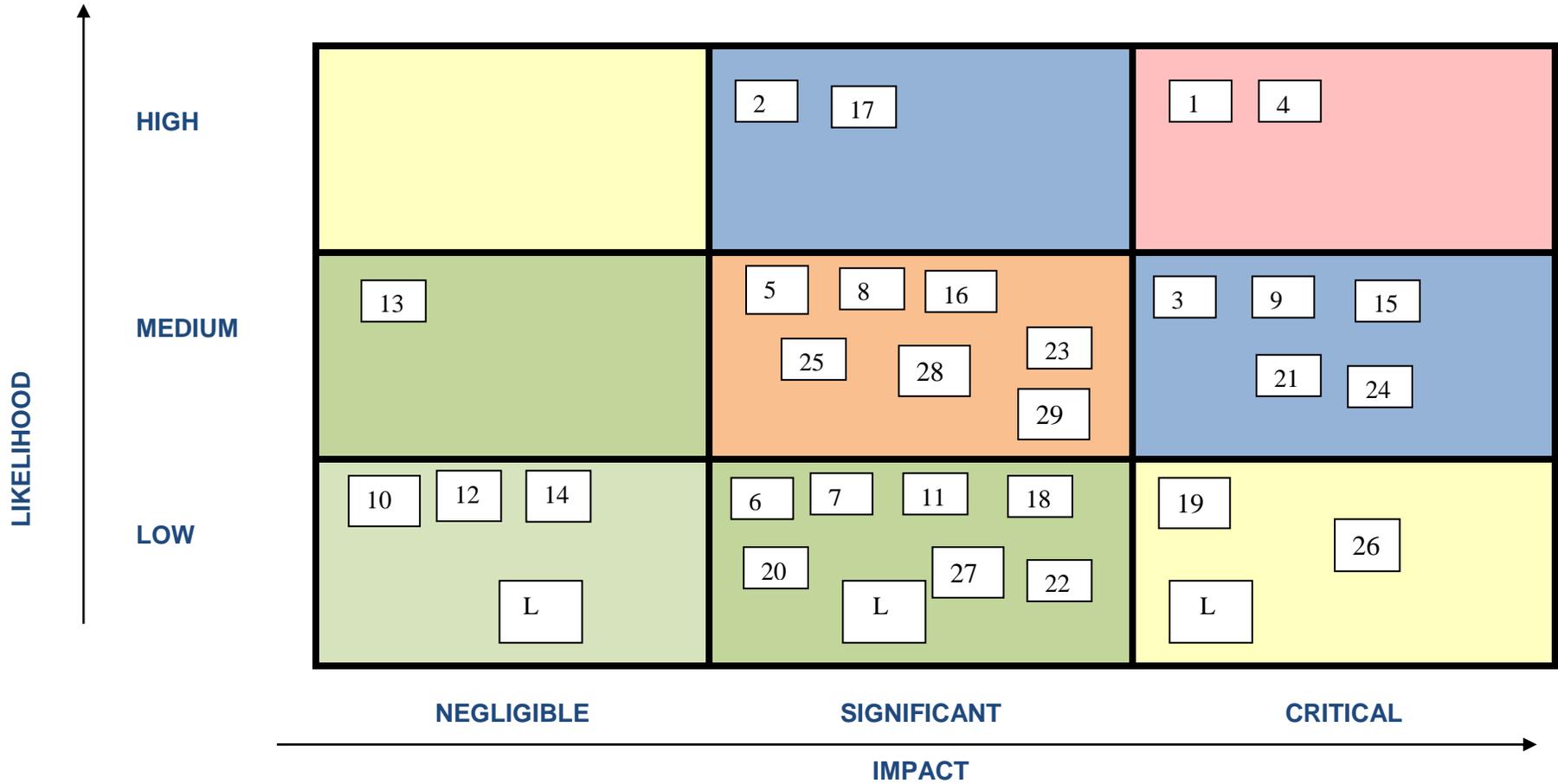
Social

Pockets of deprivation in a reasonably prosperous community
Recession & public sector cuts still biting residents & businesses
Strong community spirit in Town
Low interest in local government
Social Media

Technological

Fast developing e-technology
More E-business as a method of trading
IT soon becomes obsolete
Social Media

Appendix 2 Summary Map of Risks facing Biggleswade Town Council



There are also a number of low risk matters which have been assessed but require no action.

L

KEY

1	Lack of strategic plan	18	Cost of additional recreation land under s106
2	Lack of support policies	19	Adequate Insurance cover
3	Need to update governance documents	20	Maintenance of Asset Register
4	Adequacy of precept	21	Council health & safety risk assessment
5	Cash banking	22	Loss of key personnel
6	Investment Income	23	Maintenance of assets
7	Income from new Community Centre & 1 st Floor Office	24	Office & computer security
8	Grant funding, power to pay	25	Effectiveness of office administration
9	Loss/damage to assets	26	Contract compliance
10	Cash fidelity risk.	27	Training Plan for Members and staff
11	Adequacy of ear marked reserves	28	Code of Conduct/ Compliance
12	Election costs	29	Provision of Operating procedures
13	VAT analysis		
14	Financial Records/Accounts		
15	Lack of medium term financial plan		
16	Need to Review Grant Scheme to strategic priorities		
17	Need for Business Plan to implement priorities		