



## **Business Plan 2016/20 (reviewed June 2019)**

### **Introduction**

Adopted by the Council in October 2015, West Bletchley Council's Business Plan **2016/20** sets out the vision, aims and agreed actions for responding to the needs and aspirations of its community over the current **5 year** period.

The Council has, in producing the plan, considered the changing profile of its community and identified and analysed key factors that it will need to take account of in order to continue to improve the way in which it serves local residents.

In addition to details of the Council's overarching aims and objectives this document contains service plans for each area of the Council's work. These plans contain performance indicators which will enable the Council to measure its success. It is intended that these plans will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

Lastly, the plan contains financial forecasts for both its revenue and capital spending in respect of each of its service areas demonstrating how the Council will allocate its resources to meet local priorities as determined through ongoing community engagement.

### **The Council**

West Bletchley is one of the largest of some 48 parish and town councils within the borough of Milton Keynes. It is comprised of some 9,000+ households and in excess of 22,200 residents. Predominantly residential, there is little in the way of commerce or industry within the parish boundary. The Council is currently made up of 28 Members, representing 10 parish wards.

7 full time staff operate from the Council's freehold offices with a further **2 full time and 1 part time staff member** operating from a community resource centre, the Frank Moran Centre, which is also a Council owned, freehold property.

### **Current Position**

West Bletchley Council is acutely aware that current central government policy is restricting the ability of principal authorities requiring parishes to do more. The many changes in local government and particularly the current financial pressures being exerted on principal authorities opens the door to opportunities which explore the possibilities provided by "local engagement". West Bletchley Council regularly reviews its internal composition and processes to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and capable of fulfilling both current and future responsibilities, on behalf of residents. The Council reviews its medium term financial plan on a regular basis and in light of altered/revised commitments, to ensure that it remains viable.

As well as Full Council meetings, the Council has **four** additional committees with relevant delegated responsibilities:

Finance and General Purposes Committee

Planning and Environment Committee

Community Committee

### ***Parking Sub Committee***

All committees, as well as Full Council, meet at bi-monthly frequencies.

West Bletchley Council has continued to actively pursue the transfer of assets from Milton Keynes Council under terms of the Community Asset Transfer programme. It now owns, on behalf of residents, the Frank Moran Centre and Rickley Park and continues to negotiate for the transfer of other assets including play areas and open space.

The premises at the Frank Moran Centre have been extended and improved in the short time that West Bletchley Council has had ownership, now accommodating the Melrose Avenue Resource Centre alongside a range of activities and facilities for local residents and groups.

Following extensive consultations with local residents, plans are progressing which will see the range of activities and facilities in Rickley Park increase considerably over the next few years, for the benefit of existing and new users of the park.

In June 2014, the Council took over responsibility, from Milton Keynes Council, for general landscape maintenance within the parish, to include grass cutting and hedge and shrub bed maintenance in all areas of public open space. It was encouraging to understand, from a random sample survey of residents undertaken in February 2015, that 43% of those who responded indicated that standards of landscape maintenance had got better over the last 12 months.

Other results from the same survey concluded that 52% of those who responded indicated that the quality of life of West Bletchley residents had got better; 59% indicated that the range of activities and services available to them had got better; 43% indicated that the way in which the Council represents residents had got better and similarly 43% indicated that the way in which the Council communicates with residents had got better.

### **Community Profile (Milton Keynes Social Atlas 2013)**

Being one of the older established parts of Milton Keynes, it is perhaps not a surprise that 24% of the population are aged 60 or over and that the number of residents over the age of 70 is some 50% higher than the Milton Keynes average.

11.8% of households have one person aged 65+ living alone, compared to the MK average of 6.8%.

Educational attainment is below the MK average and in particular attainment is falling at KS2 (7-11 years).

24.8% of the population have no qualifications, compared to Milton Keynes average of 18%.

The Social Atlas data is compiled in "sub-areas" across the borough, of which West Bletchley is comprised of three. Data for the area which incorporates Abbeys, Church Green, Counties and Scots wards records both the number of teenage conceptions and the

number of clients of disabled services as higher than 50% above the Milton Keynes average. In addition, the number of clients of older people's services, within this "sub-area" is within the top 20% of areas across MK.

## **Summary of Analysis**

The Council has undertaken extensive analysis in developing this business plan, taking account of all internal and external influences, as well as accepting feedback from residents through postal surveys undertaken in the recent past.

It has considered the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of the Council, political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental (PESTLE) agendas, both local and national, and the influences/needs of all of the Council's "stakeholders".

The SWOT analysis evidences a lack of detailed succession planning within the Council as well as some shortcomings in levels/methods of communication, both internally and externally. The Council is still not reaching all residents and there is a lack of corporate identification.

The PESTLE evaluation highlights reductions in both public sector spending and availability of support services, whilst at the same time there is a high level of support required by those older or more vulnerable residents. The "green" agenda must remain in focus and the Council will need to fully embrace social media and the opportunities it provides.

When assessing the influence of stakeholders the Council must obviously consider the needs of its electorate and other residents as well as the capabilities and functions of Members and Officers. The Council must also develop a better understanding of and synergy with its various partner agencies as well as Milton Keynes Council.

The analysis has identified a number of key areas that this business plan will address:

- That this Council has, and needs to continue to have a strong influence within the sector and remains a lead parish Council within Milton Keynes.
- That this Council should take a leading role in the Neighbourhood Planning process, locally, as well as other local forums and networks.
- That the need remains for enhanced levels of community engagement, enabling improved communication with all sectors of the community.
- That there is a need to continue to review and develop local networks.
- The relevance of environmental sustainability.

## **Mission Statement**

Having reviewed the Council's mission statement, it confirms that the intent remains:

"West Bletchley Council undertakes to provide democratic representation on behalf of the residents of West Bletchley and to deliver or facilitate delivery of projects and/or services that make a positive difference to the community."

## **Vision**

Within the life of this business plan, West Bletchley Council will:

- Extend the reach of its engagement with local residents in order to better understand what the community wants.

- Strengthen its influence on and take the lead in a range of local networks and forums, to include Neighbourhood Planning.
- Challenge the performance of other service providers.
- Continue to address areas of need, monitoring changes in the profile of the community as well as services delivered by others, establishing priorities through consultation.
- Monitor and maintain the capacity of the Council to deliver improvements in services to local residents.
- Develop and deliver an environmental strategy, with relevant action plan.

### **Actions**

The attached table of key actions in respect of the Council's main service areas will be reviewed annually during the life of the plan.

## 1. Council Administration

### Lead Officer – Clerk

#### Statement of Service

- A core function, satisfying legal requirements for a statutory body and including committee administration, finance and personnel.

#### Current provision

- The Council has a qualified **staff**, and consistently achieves a satisfactory audit.

#### Evidence from engagement

- Continued positive comments made by both internal and external auditors.

#### Areas for Improvement

- **Enhancing knowledge within the team, including legal requirements and knowledge of Council admin**
- **More effective implementation of policies**

#### Key actions

- **Training and qualifications for the Corporate Management Team**
- Continue to reinforce staff awareness of Council policies and procedures.
- Retain influence within the sector:

#### Measures

- Continued satisfactory audits.
- Retain levels of influence within the sector with evidence of positive participation in local and national forums.
- **Increased qualification levels of staff**

## 2. Council Offices

### Lead Officer – Deputy Clerk

#### Statement of Service

- A centrally located, community owned asset providing an information and service gateway, facilitating communication with residents.
- Provision of information by Council staff.
- A free counselling service is available to MK3 residents.

#### Current provision

- Administration office and Committee meeting room, with limited availability for use by local groups.

#### Evidence from engagement

- A majority of residents know “where we are and what we do”.
- There remains some confusion over responsibilities – MKC and WBC
- **Most visitors surveyed had MK3 7 postcodes**

#### Areas for improvement

- Extended use of available facilities.
- Levels of support and information provided.
- **Increase the demographic spread of visitors**

#### Key actions

- Increased levels of activities in support of Council objectives.
- Continue to extend the reach of the service.

#### Measures

- Increase in visitor satisfaction levels.
- Increased demographic spread of visitors.
- Increased presence of partner agencies and groups.

### 3. Democratic representation

#### Lead Officer - Clerk

##### Statement of Service

- Making a positive difference for MK3 residents, creating opportunities for change.
- Being accessible, understanding need and representing residents in an equal and fair manner.

##### Current provision

- Regular random sample surveys undertaken, across a range of topics and issues.
- Responses submitted to planning applications and other local consultations.
- Challenging plans for development on land adjacent to the Parish

##### Evidence from engagement

- **91%** of those who responded to a postal survey, **in 2018**, indicated that the way in which the Council represented them had either got better or stayed the same.
- Residents rate Public Realm services as very important and are concerned about the future delivery of these services.

##### Areas for improvement

- Our communication network has become more effective but could be improved further.

##### Key actions

- Continue to update and implement the action plan.
- Reach more people.
- Production of Neighbourhood Plan.
- Ensure effective future communication with residents on the Public Realm Agenda.

##### Measures

- Resident satisfaction ratings.
- Who are we reaching?

### 4. Allotments

#### Lead Officer – Parks & Environment Manager

##### Statement of Service

- Provision of allotment plots for those MK3 residents who apply.

##### Current provision

- 92 allotment plots, over 4 sites across the parish

##### Evidence from engagement

- ***The demand for allotment plots remains at a manageable level. Current waiting list: 17.***
- ***The average time to let vacant plots has reduced from 68 to 13 days over the past two years.***

##### Areas for improvement

- Self sufficiency of plot holders and sites.

##### Key actions

- Maintain a plot holder support network on each allotment site.
- Maintain an efficient administration process, ensuring that all plots are fully utilised on a permanent basis.

##### Measures

- Average length of time taken to let vacant plots.
- Change in numbers (+ or -) on the waiting list over the year.

## 5. Environmental Projects

### Lead Officer – Parks & Environment Manager

#### Statement of Service

- Supporting residents to value, improve, protect and enjoy the local environment.
- Delivering, where appropriate, environmental improvement projects.

#### Current provision

- Community projects with local groups and schools.
- Provision of litter and dog waste bins.
- Environmental improvements.

#### Evidence from engagement

- Project delivery in partnership with local residents and groups **continues to** receive positive interest from the community (evidenced by reach and likes on social media)

#### Areas for improvement.

- Increase partners involvement in planned projects that actively encourage resident participation.

#### Key actions

- Produce a Green Infrastructure Strategy.
- Plan and implement partnership projects.
- Implement agreed environmental improvements.

#### Measures

- Residents' perception as measured by surveys.
- Feedback from social media.
- Accreditation.

## 6. Rickley Park

### Lead Officer – Parks & Environment Manager

#### Statement of Service

- To create a social hub within West Bletchley.
- To provide greater opportunity for the park to be used more frequently by more local people of all ages and abilities, for an extended range of leisure, social, play and sports activities.

#### Current provision

- Large area of open space, laid to grass, with one football pitch.

#### Evidence from engagement

- Extensive local consultation has helped develop improvement proposals for the park.

#### Areas for improvement

- There is demand for a greater variety in the range of activities/facilities available.

#### Key actions

- Increase use of the park by provision of additional facilities and "zoning".
- Work with Play Association and local schools to increase children and young people's use of the park.

#### Measures

- Number of visitors – who and for what purpose?
- Levels of participation in activities.
- Satisfaction ratings of users.

## 7. Landscape maintenance

### Lead Officer – Parks & Environment Manager

#### Statement of Service

- To maintain and improve standards of landscape maintenance within the parish.

#### Current provision

- Landscape maintenance contract in place with preferred contractor.
- Medium term development/improvement plan for areas of public open space approved and currently being implemented.

#### Evidence from engagement

- 94% of residents surveyed agreed that WBC should ensure that Landscape Maintenance continues to be provided.
- **76% of those who responded to a postal survey, in 2018**, indicated that standards of landscape maintenance had **either** got better **or stayed the same**.

#### Areas for improvement

- WBC does not own the majority of land that we are working on.
- There is no long term agreement regarding devolved arrangements.

#### Key actions

- Press for additional asset transfers.
- Seek to secure longer term devolution agreement.
- Press for tree survey and relevant actions.

#### Measures

- Increased levels of residents' satisfaction.
- Amount of land/number of assets owned by WBC.
- Progress with proposed tree survey.

## 8. Community projects

### Lead Officer – Community Services Manager

#### Statement of Service

- Provision of opportunities to enhance the quality of life for residents, particularly those vulnerable and hard to reach groups, through facilitation and by providing support funding for activities and through grants.

#### Current provision

- Established activities and initiatives that address health, social exclusion and community safety issues.
- The Council has a grant funding programme.

#### Evidence from engagement

- Random sample survey undertaken in **2018** – of those replying, **88%** indicated that, in general, life had improved or stayed the same over the last 12 months.

#### Areas for improvement

- Target initiatives to reach those in most need.

#### Key actions

- We will continue to make more connections and partnerships to achieve better links with what happens now and develop existing and new services.
- We will work with partners to identify hard to reach groups and evaluate benefits.

#### Measures

- Details of projects delivered – highlight case studies.
- Levels of participation and numbers benefitting.

## 9. Resource Centres

### Lead Officer – Community Services Manager

#### Statement of Service

- Contributing to social and economic regeneration, being a focal point of reference for local people, providing independent, impartial information, guidance and support.
- Addressing social isolation, helping to tackle deprivation, encouraging community cohesion and participation in activities and events.

#### Current provision

- The Frank Moran centre provides a “drop in” facility and range of community activities and initiatives in partnership with local agencies and groups.

#### Evidence from engagement

- Over 90% of Centre users **continue** to rate services provided as “good” or “excellent”.
- **65% of regular Centre users are aged 60 or over**
- **16% of users identified are non MK3 residents**

#### Areas for improvement

- Continue to extending the reach of the service, geographically and demographically.
- **Closer monitoring of service data to ensure reduced usage for non MK3 residents**

#### Key actions

- Regular, consistent evidence gathering/recording.
- Expand the service – who we reach – what we can offer – develop partnerships.
- Promote the Centre by developing use of social media and networks.

#### Measures

- Data relating to Centre users.
- Records of successful outcomes.
- User satisfaction ratings.

## 10. Culture and Events

### Lead Officer – Events & Engagement Officer

#### Statement of Service

- To develop a sense of community and promote community cohesion.
- To use a diverse range of cultural events and activities to develop engagement with and participation from local residents and groups.
- To highlight WBC's involvement with the local community.

#### Current position

- Annual carnival is the key event offering inclusive participation and opportunities.
- A range of lower key events are being delivered in response to identified community interest.
- Provision of Christmas Lights.

#### Evidence from engagement

- The Council obtains feedback from a range of participants at most events, with a majority of positive feedback being received.
- Evaluation of **2017 play sessions continue to highlight** the importance of Open Access Play.

#### Areas for improvement

- More evidence needed of levels of involvement of local residents.

#### Key actions

- Continue to maintain effective lines of communication with local residents and groups.
- Develop Play Offer by delivering in partnership with other agencies and venues.

#### Measures

- Who is participating?
- Levels of participation – Spectator/Participant/Organiser?

## 11. Community engagement

### Lead Officer – Events & Engagement Officer

#### Statement of Service

- Interaction with all stakeholders, creating dialogue that enables the Council to determine need, secure ownership and participation and to share strategy.
- To build social capital.

#### Current position

- The Council leads, within Milton Keynes, in the use of social media.
- **Community Engagement Strategy and Action Plan approved.**

#### Evidence from engagement

- Random sample survey undertaken in **2018** – of those replying, **93%** indicated that the way in which the Council communicated with residents had improved or stayed the same over the last 12 months (**Increased from 91%**)

#### Areas for improvement

- Continue to reinforce West Bletchley Council's identity – "MK3 voice"
- Encourage increased use of social media by partner agencies and local residents.

#### Key actions

- Implementation of Community Engagement Action Plan.

#### Measures

- Who are we reaching?
- What tools are we using?
- Stakeholder satisfaction ratings.

**WEST BLETCHLEY COUNCIL BUSINESS PLAN 2016-20**  
**MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN Updated June 19**

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
<b>(Net Revenue Expenditure)</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Estimate</b>	<b>Estimate</b>
<b>Council Administration</b>	58,037	60,715	62,257	65,097	76,777	80,047
<b>Council Offices</b>	87,218	86,965	86,724	90,156	97,820	97,640
<b>Democratic Representation</b>	64,344	67,073	70,108	68,050	85,262	87,728
<b>Allotments</b>	11,066	14,058	15,399	14,342	18,278	18,633
<b>Environmental Projects</b>	62,739	68,480	72,452	70,684	105,751	104,061
<b>Council Parks</b>	23,730	18,685	25,715	25,908	54,590	51,662
<b>Landscape Maintenance</b>	26,478	30,079	26,775	89,218	120,706	139,445
<b>Community Projects</b>	58,909	68,166	48,365	75,734	85,538	86,244
<b>Resource Centres</b>	85,284	89,369	78,336	80,077	96,948	116,851
<b>Culture &amp; Events</b>	88,825	101,873	94,364	102,998	123,115	121,285
<b>Community Engagement</b>	56,971	63,116	64,434	67,005	78,176	80,848
<b>Total Net Expenditure</b>	<b>623,602</b>	<b>668,578</b>	<b>644,930</b>	<b>749,269</b>	<b>942,962</b>	<b>984,444</b>

**CAPITAL PROJECTS & SPECIAL ITEMS**

Description	Financial years	
Parking projects	155,118	2019-2021
Rickley Park Redevelopment	500,000	2019 onwards
Protection of services for older people	14,196	2019 onwards
New play area improvement fund	250,000	2019 onwards
Protection of Open Space - Salden Chase	15,989	2019-2021
Production of Neighbourhood Plan	4,939	2019/2020
Community Asset Transfer	14,919	2019-2021
Resource Centre Improvements	9,704	2019/2020
IT Infrastructure	3,863	2019/2020
Capital improvements to Council properties	300,000	2019-2024
New Signage	50,000	2019 onwards