



HARPENDEN TOWN COUNCIL

CLOSER TO THE COMMUNITY

Business Plan 2020 - 2024

This Business Plan is the Town Council's blueprint for what it will focus on over the next 4 years. It aims to give a clear picture to residents, stakeholders and partners as to what the Council is trying to achieve and how it intends to go about it.

At the heart of the Business Plan is a focus on working in collaboration with local people to make Harpenden an even better place to live, work or visit.

This Plan sets out the Council's vision, objectives and key initiatives that it will deliver either directly or by trying to increase its influence on the relevant third party, such as St Albans City & District Council or Hertfordshire County Council.

The Plan will help drive and determine the direction and content of all other internal strategies and resources of the Council and will be used to plan activities and set the budget for each year.

Harpenden Town Council – an overview

There are three tiers of local government locally, each with different responsibilities. Harpenden Town Council is the first and most local tier, with an important role to play in promoting the town, representing its interests and supporting the work of different groups in the community.

Harpenden Town Council was created in 1974 following local government re-organisation. Harpenden is the largest parish in the St Albans District with a population of approximately 30,000.

St Albans City & District Council is the second tier and is responsible for services including car parking, waste management, housing and street cleaning.

Finally, Hertfordshire County Council's responsibilities include highways (relating to both roads and pavements), education, health and social services, public rights of way and libraries.

Councillors

There are sixteen Town Councillors, representing four Wards – North, South, East and West, who are elected to serve a four-year term. The new four-year term commenced in May 2019.

Each year, the Council elects from amongst its members the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor.

The Town Mayor is the first citizen of the town. In their Civic Role the Mayor meets with communities' groups that are working in the Town and represents the Town Council in Civic matters.

The Mayor also chairs meetings of the Full Council so that its business can be carried out efficiently, with regard to the rights of Councillors and the interests of the community.

Staffing

The Town Clerk, Carl Cheevers, is the Council's Chief Officer and is responsible for delivering the Town Council's services, implementing its policies and ensuring it complies with government legislation.

There are a further 17 officers employed by the Town Council, ten of whom are full-time and seven part-time. Town Council officers deliver a range of responsibilities including:

Harpenden Common and Greens	Town Hall Information Point
Batford Springs Local Nature Reserve	Park Hall Community Building
Allotments	Harpenden in Bloom
Lydekker Park and Car Park	Farmers' Market
Recreation and Play Areas	Large scale Community Events
Planning and Development Management	Christmas Lights
Land Assets	Public Toilets
Democratic and Civic Representation	Street Furniture
Town Twinning	Initiatives for Young People
Community Grants	Initiatives for vulnerable adults and older people

Vision for Harpenden

The Town Council's vision for Harpenden is:

'A vibrant and successful town where people want to live, to work, to invest in and to visit'

Our Strategic Objectives

A. Conserve and improve our parks, green spaces and other assets so they offer a natural haven for residents' use and enjoyment.

B. Lead the development of Harpenden as a sustainable Town where we promote sustainable transport and tread lightly on the environment with clean air, attractive public spaces and less waste.

C. Promote a wide range of public events and initiatives that help to create a vibrant Town where residents are involved in community life.

D. Run an effective, efficient, low-cost Council administration.

Each strategic objective includes a set of initiatives that will help us to deliver our strategic objectives These are set out below.

A. Conserve and improve our parks, green spaces and other assets so they offer a natural haven for residents' use and enjoyment.

1. Maintain and enhance our parks and green spaces to continue to balance environmental, leisure and sports objectives.
2. Acquire Rothamsted Park to improve its environmental footprint, improve play and sports facilities and make it more attractive and usable for residents.
3. Proactively manage our existing tree stock and promote tree and vegetation planting in both our green spaces and the Town generally.
4. Develop a programme of play area improvements at Council owned sites.
5. Improve and upgrade Park Hall Community building and the Town Hall so that they continue to be fit for purpose.
6. Identify land and assets that the Town Council wishes to devolve from other bodies.
7. Redevelop the former Westfield Allotment sites into affordable housing.

B. Lead the development of Harpenden as a sustainable Town where we promote sustainable transport and tread lightly on the environment with clean air, attractive public spaces and less waste.

8. Play a lead role in establishing Harpenden as plastic free Town by reducing plastic use in the Council, in Council owned property and in the Town generally.
9. Promote opportunities to improve the carbon balance in the Town.
10. Deliver improvements to public spaces, such as Harding Parade and the sensory garden, making them attractive and accessible to all.
11. Play a lead role in reducing littering across the Town
12. Produce a parking strategy for Harpenden and promote at the District and County Councils.
13. Support sustainable transport options in the Town, including rail, community buses, horse-riding, cycling and walking.
14. Develop and promote cycling facilities and infrastructure and walking networks.

C. Promote a wide range of public events and initiatives that help to create a vibrant Town where residents are involved in community life.

15. Deliver and promote a range of large and small-scale events, community initiatives and leisure opportunities for local people.
16. Identify and promote specific leisure, sports and social opportunities for groups at risk of social isolation (older people) or currently under provided for (young people aged 13-19).
17. Create a vibrant High Street and Local Centres that act as community social hubs.
18. Provide advice, guidance and grants to voluntary and community organisations.

D. Run an effective, efficient, low-cost Council administration.

19. Explore ways to modernise how we operate by utilising technology to help us deliver an effective and efficient Council.
20. Deliver commercial activities and projects that support the Business Plan vision and objectives.
21. Continually review our activities to ensure they are focussed on community benefit.
22. Deliver an effective planning function to consider local applications and implement the policies of the Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan.
23. Implement an effective Communications and Engagement Strategy to promote the work of the Council.
24. Build positive relationships with partner organisations and encourage collaboration across the Town.
25. Undertake an annual budget setting and risk management process and monitor finances/risks closely throughout the year.
26. Support partner organisations to deliver their priorities where they are of benefit to the local community.
27. Be a good employer with modern and supportive working practices and policies.