



LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL

5 YEAR PLAN

2019 - 2024



“A community to be proud of”



LEIGHTON-LINSLADE
TOWN COUNCIL

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If you would like to comment on the Town Council's Five Year Plan and Objectives for 2019-2024, please do not hesitate to contact us by one of the following means:

By telephone: 01525 631920

By email: info@leightonlinslade-tc.gov.uk

In person or by letter:

Mark Saccoccio, Town Clerk
Leighton-Linslade Town Council
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1.0 Foreword

It is with great pleasure that as Town Clerk, I am able to introduce the Town Council's five year plan for the period 2019-2024.

As the largest town in Central Bedfordshire, the Town Council considered it opportune to create a document that celebrates its most recent successes and looking forward, how we intend to plan, monitor and improve the services we deliver to the Parish, its businesses and visitors alike.

In the service of our community, we want to be able to demonstrate that we can continue to provide quality services be it our parks, events or markets in an efficient and cost effective manner.



The Council's previous three year plan, for the period 2015-2018, contained some 33 objectives as well as a number of aspirations taken forward from the previous Big Plan. On the next page you will be able to read about just a few of the successes from that plan. Having completed the majority of those goals, during 2018 the Council began to look ahead to the next few years. Part of this process included a survey done with residents in the Autumn of 2018, in which we sought to ask questions of residents about their views regarding the Town Council and their opinions on priorities for the next few years.

The Town Council is always aware that it can be difficult for people to know which Council is responsible for which services. It was not surprising that the majority of concerns raised by residents during the survey were in respect of matters which are not within the Town Council's control – including traffic, car parking, the mix of retailers in our town, concerns regarding antisocial behaviour and the future of the education system.

Whilst the Town Council has no statutory powers or budgets to deal with these matters, we will continue to work as closely as we can with partners including Central Bedfordshire Council and Bedfordshire Police, to raise awareness of issues in our town and where possible, to help in developing solutions.

The five year plan you see here is focussed on those matters for which the Town Council is able to have a direct influence and which we sincerely hope will improve the quality of life for our residents.

Town Council officers and councillors are always willing to listen to queries, suggestions or concerns. Please do not hesitate to contact us at the White House or through electronic media such as our website or social media channels.

Finally, if you do not already do so, please do sign up to follow our frequent updates on social media or download the Town Council's App.

Mark Saccoccio
Town Clerk
Leighton-Linslade Town Council

2.0 Town Council achievements 2015-2018

The Three Year Plan adopted by Council in 2015 contained a number of objectives.

Unlike the previous Big Plan (which contained many high-level aspirations requiring the participation of many different stakeholders), the intention of this document is to determine projects and objectives which the Town Council would be able to deliver within its own statutory powers and budgets.

This approach was driven through the Town Council's standing committees and was supported by the development of a five year financial plan.

Just a few of the successful outcomes from the 2015-2018 plan were:

- Securing Town Council accommodation for the next 20 years
- Achieving Gold standard Quality status under the Local Council Award scheme
- Progress with computerisation of cemetery records
- Expanding the reach of the Teenage Advice and Information Centre with sessions in Linslade and southern Leighton Buzzard, as well as from the town centre
- Securing a three year Christmas lights contract
- Successfully bidding for grant funding of £113,000 from Central Bedfordshire Council as part of its Market Towns Regeneration Fund. This grant part-funded three schemes: the relaunch of the street market, the installation of electronic signage and the installation of architectural lighting to enhance the town centre
- Establishing a thriving and successful Best Bar None scheme for licensed premises
- Implementing a range of enhancements to the cemetery service including a fully self-funded mausoleum
- Provision of outdoor gym equipment in Astral Park, Pages Park and Linslade Recreation Ground
- Achieving four Green Flag awards (three parks and Vandyke Road cemetery)
- Refurbishing the public conveniences in Parsons Close Recreation Ground
- Continuing to support and build on the success of the annual Anglia in Bloom campaign, leading the town to win several Gold and Silver accolades

Helping to fund vital community work and projects remains a priority for the Town Council and annual grants in excess of £60,000 are paid to a number of organisations including the Leighton-Linslade Music Centre and Leighton-Linslade Citizens Advice.

In addition to the existing grants, the Council decided during 2017 to make available a grant fund of £150,000 for the purpose of supporting the expansion of services and facilities for young people in the town. The Youth Promise grant scheme was hugely successful with a number of organisations receiving funding for projects as diverse as funding a junior tennis court, enhancing the provision of hockey, youth counselling services, youth training, purchase of equipment and training/recruitment of leaders and coaches for youth groups. The Town Council will continue to monitor the expenditure of these grants, which it is hoped will allow all the groups involved to enhance their services and encourage greater attendance from the town's young people.



THE LAST THREE YEARS



"A community to be proud of"



3.0 Executive Summary

The new Five Year Plan has been developed to provide a clear understanding of what the Council is working towards and how it intends to deliver its key objectives. The Town Council's vision is: "a community to be proud of".

Leighton-Linslade Town Council is committed to improving and enhancing Leighton Buzzard and Linslade in an environmentally sustainable manner, having regard to the identified needs and wishes of all sections of the community. The Town Council will examine in detail its responsibilities, review them and set a viable and achievable development plan for the future.

The Town Council continues to make significant improvements within the local community by working closely and in partnership with other organisations. These organisations are key contributors to the quality of life in our town and represent the diversity of the local community and include voluntary, business and public sectors.

The document sets out the Town Council's vision and its corporate priorities for the next five years, which are:

- To ensure value for money, operational efficiency and a structure which will underpin current and future service delivery by the Town Council.
- To recognise and embrace the growth of our community and to seek to influence the local authority and partners to ensure adequate infrastructure provision.
- To continue to support a vibrant town through partnership working and initiatives including management of the street market, support for local businesses, town and community promotions and town centre enhancements.
- To provide great public open spaces with varied opportunities for sport and leisure and to exceed expectations in delivering cemetery and allotment services.

The focus of the Five Year Plan is primarily the projects and objectives which the Town Council can achieve independently.

Through the Leighton-Linslade Partnership Committee (joint committee with Central Bedfordshire Council) and any other relevant forums, the Town Council will continue to work towards the improvement and enhancement of local services, facilities and infrastructure, for the benefit of the parish.

The document will be reviewed, revised and updated periodically. Achievements will be reported through the Council's annual reporting process.

4.0 Overview of Leighton Buzzard and Linslade

Leighton-Linslade is the largest town in the administrative area of Central Bedfordshire Council. Historically, Leighton Buzzard has always been within Bedfordshire, with the area of Linslade transferring from Buckinghamshire in 1965. The parish has an estimated population of just under 40,000 (37,470 according to the 2011 census with 16,410 dwellings). The population continues to grow as further housing development takes place to the south and east of the town.

The unemployment rate in Leighton-Linslade is on a par with the rate in Central Bedfordshire and lower than the England average. Ideally placed within an hour of London, the town is an ideal location for commuters and a significant proportion of those living in the parish work outside it.

The parish contains a number of ancient buildings including All Saints Church and the Market Cross monument. Surrounded by quarries, the town is famous for its high quality sand. The Narrow Gauge Railway and the Grand Union Canal remain reminders of the industrial links of the past and the key strategic location of the town. Leighton Buzzard has held a market for many hundreds of years and this continues to be held today, every Tuesday and Saturday now under the management of the Town Council.



5.0 Overview of Leighton-Linslade Town Council

Leighton-Linslade Town Council came into existence on 1 April 1974 with the powers of a parish council and is responsible for the following areas:

- Parks, play areas, pavilions and open spaces
- Markets
- Allotments at Weston Avenue and Alwins Field
- Cemeteries at Vandyke Road and Old Linslade Road
- Community events and Christmas illuminations
- Teenage Advice and Information Centre (TACTIC)
- Public conveniences (West Street car park)
- Publications e.g. About Town bi-monthly newsletter, annual What's On leaflet
- Providing grants to local charitable and voluntary groups

The Council comprises 21 elected Councillors who each serve a four-year term of office.

There are eight electoral wards in the Parish:

Barnabas	(3 Councillors)	Brooklands	(2 Councillors)
Grovebury	(4 Councillors)	Leston	(1 Councillor)
Planets	(2 Councillors)	Plantation	(3 Councillors)
Southcott	(4 Councillors)	St Georges	(2 Councillors).

Town Councillors are not paid any expenses or allowances, apart from the Town Mayor, who receives a relatively small allowance, and who attends many events throughout the region to represent the town. The Town Mayor also organises a number of events throughout the year to raise funds for charity.

The Town Council has four Standing Committees:

Cultural and Economic Services
 Grounds and Environmental Services
 Planning and Transport
 Policy and Finance

In addition, there is a joint committee with Central Bedfordshire Council: the Leighton-Linslade Partnership Committee.

Council, Committees and Sub-Committee meetings are open to the public, unless there is a special reason for exclusion. Up to a total of fifteen minutes is allowed for representations from members of the public, who may ask questions or make statements relating to items on the meeting agenda.

The Town Council currently employs a team of approximately 45 staff led by the Town Clerk, Mark Saccoccio. The Council is entirely funded by the residents of Leighton-Linslade through what is known as a precept on the council tax charge, and by generating income through services delivered.

6.0 Corporate Objectives 2019-2024

OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY	
To ensure value for money, operational efficiency and a structure which will underpin current and future service delivery by the Town Council.	
This work will be primarily within the remit of the Policy and Finance Committee.	
1	To regularly review how we communicate and seek to embrace new technologies.
2	To continue to aim towards a paperless office.
3	To review our financial systems and develop more financial analysis/reporting.
4	To develop a customer service strategy.
5	To review waste and recycling operations
6	To revisit the Volunteer Strategy.
7	To increase environmental awareness and incorporate the Town Council's environmental ambitions across all facilities and service areas.
8	To work with the local authority to review and where appropriate, upgrade existing CCTV provision.
9	To consider imaginative uses of Community Safety budgets for the benefit of our community.
10	To renew the Council's Quality Gold accreditation in 2021.

TOWN COUNCIL FIVE YEAR PLAN & OBJECTIVES 2019 – 2024

GROWTH, COMMUNITY COHESION & INFRASTRUCTURE	
To recognise and embrace the growth of our community and to seek to influence the local authority and partners to ensure adequate infrastructure provision.	
This work will be within the remit of all Committees.	
11	To work collaboratively with neighbouring parishes, particularly in respect of planned housing growth.
12	To embrace the eastern urban extension and seek to integrate this into the existing community.
13	To continue to lobby Central Bedfordshire Council for improved and timely infrastructure.
14	To review the parish boundary and ward arrangements.
15	To continue to seek ways in which to help support community safety, community cohesion and help address isolation and loneliness.
16	To continue to liaise with the local authority on matters for which it is responsible and which affect residents of the parish.

TOWN COUNCIL FIVE YEAR PLAN & OBJECTIVES 2019 – 2024

VIBRANCY AND VITALITY OF TOWN AND TOWN CENTRE	
To continue to support a vibrant town through partnership working and initiatives including management of the street market, support for local businesses, town and community promotions and town centre enhancements.	
This work will be primarily within the remit of the Cultural & Economic Services Committee.	
17	To consider delivery of a Town Ranger service.
18	To promote the creation of a soft play facility within the town.
19	To identify, promote and celebrate the unique features and heritage of the Parish to both residents and visitors.
20	To consider taking on additional services, where practicable and where considered beneficial to the town.
21	To promote the town centre as a safe and vibrant place to visit in the evening.
22	Consider the provision of town centre Wi-Fi (including footfall monitoring facility).
23	To continue to manage, promote and develop the street market.
24	To continue to deliver quality community events and regularly review their scope and delivery.
25	To consider ways to work with town centre businesses to achieve digital/ on-line commerce options and promote the town's shopping/ leisure offer.
26	To consider ways to support the increase in leisure and personal development opportunities for youth, incorporating ongoing feedback from young people and considering suitability of delivery locations for youth work.
27	To consider ways to support the increase in leisure opportunities for older people.
27a	To consider the potential for a cultural and community facility in the town centre.

TOWN COUNCIL FIVE YEAR PLAN & OBJECTIVES 2019 – 2024

GREAT PUBLIC OPEN SPACES	
To provide great public open spaces with varied opportunities for sport and leisure and to exceed expectations in delivering cemetery and allotment services.	
This work will primarily be within the remit of the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee.	
28	To refurbish Pages Park pavilion to ensure it is safe and suitable for continued community and sporting use.
29	To create a plan for the management, maintenance and use of all pavilion buildings.
30	To continue to provide excellent play equipment across the parish and to expand the range of accessible play equipment available.
31	To expand memorial services available at Town Council run cemeteries.
32	To continue to actively seek additional cemetery land or where this is not possible, to consider other ways in which to expand burial capacity.
33	To continue to computerise historic cemetery records.
34	To create a ten year planned maintenance programme for buildings and assets.
35	To continue to seek freehold depot premises.
36	To continue to aim towards the creation of localised Friends groups.
37	To consider options for restoration of historic features and monuments, where practicable and viable.
38	To seek to maintain and enhance sporting provision.
39	To continue to build on the success of the annual Anglia in Bloom campaign.

TOWN COUNCIL FIVE YEAR PLAN & OBJECTIVES 2019 – 2024

40	To install interpretation panels in the parks and open spaces.
41	To install drinking water fountains in the larger parks.
42	To install a Changing Pod facility in Parson's Close Recreation Ground to meet requirements of additional needs.
43	To consider the development of the playground in Parson's Close Recreation Ground to incorporate an adventure play area.
44	To consider car parking arrangements and capacity at town council owned facilities.
45	To continue to invest in facilities for young people.
46	To work with key partners on the development of the Leighton-Linslade Green Wheel.
47	To assess likely future demand for allotments.
48	To consider possibilities for the restoration of the Henry Finch Memorial Fountain in Linslade Recreation Ground.



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