



*Okehampton Town Council*

# **Strategic Plan**

## **2019-2023**

## Introduction

This Strategic Plan sets out Okehampton Town Councils aims and objectives and provides the policy framework within which the elected Members (Councillors) make decisions and the Officers (staff) conduct their day-to-day work.

Okehampton Town Council has 14 elected members and elections take place every four years, the next being in May 2023. The Council is non-political and operates through Committees of which there are 4; Policy and Resources, Parks and Open Spaces, Property and Planning, all of which are decision making and report to the Full Council. In 2018 the Council adopted the Power of Competence.

There are 8 members of staff. The Town Clerk, an Assistant Town Clerk, Administration Assistant and Mayors PA, 2 Caretakers (Senior and Assistant), a Park-Keeper, Groundsperson and Horticultural Apprentice. The Town Clerk, Park-Keeper and Apprentice being full-time employees.

## Mission Statement

The primary role of Okehampton Town Council is to provide a democratic and representative voice for the community. It will support, and contribute towards, the sustainable environmental, economic and social well-being of the town, having regard to the needs and wishes of the town residents. Okehampton Town Council recognises its obligations to deliver cost-effective quality services and will work with other councils to ensure that the town remains at the heart of the local community.

## Priorities

Democracy (D) – Okehampton Town Council consists of an elected body of local people to provide a strong voice on decisions and services that affect the everyday life of local people including:

- D1 Representation – the council will act as democratically elected leader of, and advocate for, the interests of the community. Councillors will receive support in their roles as representatives, leaders and the delivery of participation and engagement in public life.
- D2 General Power of Competence (GPC) – the council will seek to maintain the GPC in order that it has the fullest opportunity to act for, and in the interests of, the residents of the town.
- D3 Engagement – the council will seek to engage with electors before making changes that affect the populace or relevant stakeholder groups. This will take place through Councillor Surgeries, the Annual Council Meeting and Town Assembly, Council and Committee Meetings, the Council website, social media and the press.
- D4 Civic/Ceremonial – the council will seek to sustain civic and ceremonial traditions

Climate Change and Biodiversity (Cc) – Okehampton Town Council has signed up to the Devon Climate Declaration which was prepared by a consortium of public, private and voluntary organisations collaborating through a Devon Climate Emergency Response Group and will review its practices with a view to reducing its carbon footprint, encouraging other to do the same

- Cc1 Reduction - the council will review its plans to reduce its carbon emissions to meet or exceed the targets within the Devon Climate declaration

- Cc2 Working Together – the council will work with town residents, businesses and visitors to assist in the development and implementation of a plan to facilitate the reduction of Okehampton's production and consumption emissions to meet IPCC recommendations at the latest.
- Cc3 Risk - the council will work to understand the near-term and future risks of climate change for Devon to plan for how our infrastructure, public services and communities will have to adapt for a 1.5-degree warmer world
- Cc4 Encouragement - the council will encourage local organisations, businesses, communities and individuals to do the same

Community (C) – Okehampton Town Council seeks to be at the heart of the community and its activities. It will work closely with local voluntary, business, community groups and third/public sector partners within Okehampton that are key to vibrant and successful community life.

- C1 Working Together – the council will work with the Borough and County Councils and other representative bodies, partners and public authorities to promote a vibrant and healthy community life and wellbeing.
- C2 Communications – the council will develop communications to meet statutory and other requirements to communicate key messages
- C3 Financial Assistance – the council will maintain a Grants Scheme to support eligible organisations providing benefits to the residents of Okehampton town
- C4 Outside Bodies – the council will appoint representatives to, and work with, community and other groups supporting residents of the town
- C5 Community Assets – the council will manage the community assets in its ownership and that it is responsible for to support the development and delivery of community services, benefits and community wellbeing
- C6 Allotments/Burial Grounds – the council will support other bodies to maintain allotments and burial grounds to service the Parish, including making provision for replacement/additional burial facilities, as necessary
- C7 Events – the council will seek to deliver events marking significant occasions whether on an annual or occasional basis

Environment (En) – Okehampton has a strong identity and character due to its rich natural heritage. The Town Council will work to ensure this heritage is protected and enhanced for present and future generations, including those buildings and areas of land which it owns or is responsible for.

- En1 Environment (general) – the council will actively contribute to and promote policies and initiatives that support, protect and sensitively and sustainably develop the unique historic, build and natural environments of the town
- En2 Environment (council ownership) – the council will maintain and protect the heritage and natural assets in its ownership, and that it is responsible for, including through the maintenance of appropriate records, maintenance plans, inspections and works

- En3 Trees – the council will manage and maintain shrubs and trees on land which it owns or is responsible for, including the maintenance of inspection, arboricultural and planting schemes
- En4 Recreation – the council will maintain, on land that it owns or is responsible for, existing areas of leisure and recreation purposes
- En5 New Development – the council will seek to inform and shape new development in the town to ensure sustainable and managed growth supported by the appropriate infrastructure, including working closely with the joint Okehampton Hamlets and Town Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Economy (Ec) – Okehampton Town Council will work to support the business community and other stakeholders within the local economy and promote footfall as well as embedding good practice in its roles as an employer, landlord, steward of community assets and service provider

- Ec1 Economic Development – the council will seek to support and/or deliver initiatives to promote, develop and maintain a healthy local economy and commercial sector
- Ec2 Working Together – the council will work with representative bodies, partners and public authorities to promote a vibrant and healthy local economy
- Ec3 Best Value – the council will work to minimise council costs and provide value for money services which are relevant, efficient economic and effective. In doing so it will reflect good employment and business practices
- Ec5 Income Generation – the council will manage its commercial assets to provide income streams on a commercial basis to support the development and delivery of community services and benefits. The council will also seek to develop new income streams which contribute to the local economy

Workforce (W) – Okehampton Town Council employs 8 members of staff and has 14 elected members all of whom play an important part in the efficient delivery of council services

- W1 Support – the council will support employees and members to undertake their respective roles efficiently, and safely by providing them with training relevant to their requirements
- W2 Policy – the council will follow legislation and guidance ensuring that they are a good supportive employer
- W3 Health & Safety - the council will ensure that it has, and keeps regularly reviewed, the necessary policies ensure the health, safety and welfare of its employees and members, and provide the necessary personal protective equipment

## **Delivery**

Policies for each section of the Strategic Plan will be developed during the course of the plan.