

West Bedlington Town Council



Strategic Plan 2022 – 2026

Bedlington is a town of about 15,000 people in south east Northumberland, 10 miles north of Newcastle upon Tyne. Its earliest historical mention was in the 12th century as a possession of the Bishops of Durham, but there is thought to have been a church on the site of the present St Cuthbert's since the 10th century. In later years it was an industrial town with extensive coal mines and important iron works. Front Street, the main town centre street is a conservation area and Bedlington has more than 20 listed buildings including St Cuthbert's Church.

West Bedlington Town Council was created in April 2009. The Council was created to provide local services to residents upon the creation of the newly formed unitary authority Northumberland County Council, which had replaced the previous Northumberland County Council and six district councils within the county, one of which was Wansbeck District Council.

The Council has the same Powers and Duties as a Parish Council but can by virtue of its geographic location including the town center of Bedlington it can be known as a Town Council. The Council provides services within its parish boundary.

For electoral purposes The West Bedlington parish area is divided into 3 wards: Central, West and Park Road.

The Town Council has 9 Councillors who represent the community and make decisions which in their opinion are for the benefit of the community whom they serve.

This Strategic Plan is the Town Councils first and was adopted by the Town Council in October 2022.

The Strategic Plan is a compilation of:

- Actions identified initially by Councillors (but also by residents as the plan progresses).
- Any outstanding actions from previous Town Council resolutions.
- The on-going requirements to support the maintenance of the Councils infrastructure and assets within the town.

This Strategic Plan assists the Council to make key decisions which will help it to achieve its aims and objectives, which are intended to improve the quality of life for the people it serves.

This plan is created to start and end "midterm between elections". This then provides a framework for any newly elected Council to work within and thus provide an immediate guide to the Councils current objectives and priorities ahead of the new Council determining their own.

Introduction

Purpose of this Strategic Plan

This Strategic Plan sets out the Town Council's aims and objectives, the actions required to achieve them, the timescale, and estimates of budgets required over a four-year period. These planned activities form the basis for setting future budgets.

Reason for this Strategic Plan

This Plan is a strategic guideline for the Council to work within to deliver the aspirations of the local community within a planned budget and timeframe. It provides and demonstrates a focus to the Council, residents, and visitors of the services the Council is able provide and also acts as a limitation reminder of the things it cannot do, thereby ensuring the council does not over promise (or create unachievable expectations) on services that are beyond its legal, expenditure and resource levels.

As mentioned previously this plan is created to start and end "midterm between elections" to provide a framework for any newly elected Council to work within and thus provide some continuity of services before any new Council determining their own.

This Plan is a 'live' document that will evolve through community engagement and will assist Councillors to make decisions in the best interests of those they serve.

Community Involvement in the Strategic Plan Process

To ensure that this Strategic Plan adequately represents the best interests of the town, members of the local community are invited to participate in its development. This Plan is the Council's main source of communicating its actions and welcomes comments from community members to help shape how the Plan evolves.

Monitoring the Strategic Plan

This Strategic Plan will be reviewed by the Town Council on a regular basis, at least annually, so that progress can be monitored. It will be updated as actions are completed and where progress is impeded the council will consider what actions are necessary and whether further work is required.

As a 'living' document this Plan will be regularly reviewed to show progress and ensure it is up to date.