



# Princes Risborough Town Council

## Business Plan 2018-2021



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**Welcome to Princes Risborough Town Council's Business Plan.**  
**The plan describes the Council's vision, what we are trying to achieve, our objectives and key priorities until 2021.**  
**We are an ambitious Council often described by others as punching above its weight but we are all committed to help make Princes Risborough a better place.**  
**I believe that this document will ensure that the Council continues to focus on delivering excellent value for money services for everyone.**

***Councillor Matthew Walsh – Chairman & Town Mayor***

# Introduction

## *What is a Town Council Business Plan?*

A Business Plan is the Town Council's blueprint for how it will work in a co-ordinated way in the best interests of all who live or work in the town or who use the Council's services. The Plan sets out the Council's values, vision and key objectives.

A Business Plan sets out the mission, objectives and key priorities of what an organisation wants to achieve, either directly or by trying to increase its influence on the relevant delivery body, such as the District or County Council. It is a Council's action plan for a set number of years. The Plan will help drive and determine the direction and content of all other internal strategies and resources of the Council.

This Business Plan sets out for Members, staff, and the community we serve, our mission, purpose and priorities for the next three years.

## *Why has Princes Risborough Town Council decided to produce a Business Plan?*

This Business Plan will help ensure that Princes Risborough Town Council can take a planned and consistent approach to:

- The design and delivery of services
- The prioritisation and allocation of resources
- The achievement of real value for money

Having an agreed strategy provides a framework for the Town Council to work within, enabling it to operate in a more consistent and co-ordinated way. The Business Plan will allow the Council to become more confident and proactive in its decision making.

Later in the Plan we have identified:

- The core objectives of the Council over the next three years.
- The key processes and actions associated with each of the Council's priorities

How we ensure Community Involvement

In determining the aims of the Council the Business Plan has:

Recognised national and local priorities

Taken account of the views of local communities

Princes Risborough Town Council is working closely with Wycombe District Council to develop a comprehensive Local Plan which involves a series of public consultation periods and events allowing residents to provide their input. The issues and public opinions highlighted during these consultation events will be used to help form and prioritise the Council's key aims and strategic points.

## ***Monitoring the Business Plan***

As mentioned above, the Plan will help drive and determine the direction and content of all other internal strategies and resources of the Council. The detailed content of the Plan will be strongly influenced by other work and will need to be regularly reviewed and updated accordingly. Internal pressure may arise from plans to improve service quality and the availability of resources, while external pressure may come from partnership work, other strategic plans, and Government legislation.

It is important that the Council measures its progress and creates an avenue to adapt its workings to ensure the plan is a success. The Finance Committee will review the Council's progress on a regular basis, decide if and where changes are needed and make a recommendation in a report to the full Council every 6 months. This will ensure the Council is actively pursuing its objectives, adapting and acting to meet its targets when necessary.

# PRINCES RISBOROUGH

## The Local Picture

Princes Risborough is situated on the western side of Buckinghamshire. The civil parish comprises the small country town of Princes Risborough, the village of Monks Risborough, and the hamlets of Whiteleaf (with its notable Cross cut in the chalk hillside), Alscot, Askett, Cadsden and part of Horsenden. In area it measures approximately four square miles. Princes Risborough is splendidly situated between the steep westward escarpment of the Chiltern Hills and the fertile Vale of Aylesbury. The town stands about 400 feet above sea level but the higher parts of the parish above Whiteleaf attain an elevation of nearly 800 feet.

The Chiltern Hills here command some of the finest panoramic views obtainable in the Home Counties, extending over the Thames into Berkshire, westwards to Oxford and to the northwest across the Midland shires. It is also a fantastic place to spot Red Kites that are flourishing in this part of the Chilterns. Princes Risborough lies below the western slopes of the Chiltern Hills in a broad gap to which, in all probability, it owes its existence. This provided travellers with a link between the River Thames and the Icknield Way, both of which were routes of prime importance from earliest times.

Also, the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which we protect today for our leisure would have had much greater practical significance for those travellers. The chalk downland of Saunderton Lee and clear springs, such as Pyrtle Spring, are cited by J.F. Head as making the area particularly favourable to early settlement, when much of the region was either wooded or marshy. Local names such as Slough and Ilmire (Ilmer) and even Summerleys (the summer fields) point to a generally higher water table than that of today.

There is ample evidence of those first inhabitants. The block of pebble conglomerate, commonly known as a ‘Pudding Stone’, which sits prominently at the roundabout in Horns Lane, is one of several in the Chilterns thought to have been way-markers for prehistoric man. For many years only its tip was visible, at the foot of a post in Back Lane, and the decision to use it to mark the New Road reflects a growing awareness of our heritage.

More familiar human traces lay in the recently re-excavated Neolithic barrow, some 5,500 years old, near Whiteleaf Cross and in a Beaker burial found in 1983 in Clifford Road, close to where an old track known as Barrow Way crossed the hill to Culverton. A Bronze Age axe was found on the site of the British Legion Hall, and the Iron Age is represented by earthworks on Pulpit Hill and Lodge Hill. Whiteleaf Cross itself, which dominates the landscape, remains a mystery, but probably dates from the 17th century. It is not mentioned in writing before 1738 and the earliest known drawing of it, dated 1742, is in the Bodleian library and entitled ‘Crux Saxonica’. It is cut into the face of a promontory of the Chilterns above Whiteleaf and can be seen clearly across the Vale of Aylesbury.

Kop Hill is a long climbing road that leads from the town up towards Whiteleaf Cross. This steep hill was a very famous venue for Motor Racing in the early 20th C when the Kop Hill Climb was a popular and regular event in the racing calendar. It was abandoned after two accidents in 1925, but has recently been revived with great success. On the left as you climb Kop Hill, you will find the Brush Hill Local Nature Reserve. An Area of Special Scientific Interest, Brush Hill was awarded a grant from The Heritage Lottery Fund to help with its management and maintenance, as it is an important site for rare and endangered plants and wildlife.

## The Council's Vision, Aims and Long-Term Objectives

The Town Council's vision is to make Princes Risborough a safe, healthy, prosperous and sustainable community. The Town Council's aim is to continuously improve the quality of life for all residents, whilst conserving our heritage and environment and retaining financial security.

A working group consisting of Council Members and the Clerk addressed how the Council will achieve this and as such Members agreed Princes Risborough Town Council needs to work towards achieving eight **Core Objectives** over the next three years;

- 1) The completion of a successful Local Plan and ensuring that the plan is being used appropriately to judge planning permissions within the town. The proposed expansion of the town will deliver hundreds of new homes during 2018-2021
- 2) Improve Community Spirit
- 3) Establish greater active engagement with local Partners and Public
- 4) Promote and improve economic activity within the Town and maintain lower than average council tax increases.
- 5) Maintain, improve and expand our green and open spaces (to include Phase 2 of Stratton Memorial Garden). Work with developers to negotiate the use of the Town Council Maintenance Team to maintain their green spaces precluding excessive residents' maintenance fees.
- 6) Achieve Gold Quality Award Status by 2019.
- 7) Develop an effective resources plan (to include an income generation plan, adequate staffing to achieve our ambitions and good value council processes). Prioritise investment of CIL funds to provide future income by investing in property.
- 8) Make Princes Risborough an even more attractive Town (including improved infrastructure) for residents and visitors.

Each of these objectives contains specific projects and activities that the Council is already doing, or must begin, to achieve the set objective.

## ***Key Processes***

The successful achievement of the Council's core objectives is dependent on the Council and its Officers performing certain key projects, process and activities exceptionally well, in order for us to be confident that we are well placed to be achieving the objectives set out above.

The Council has highlighted the below seven processes as being crucially important;

- Developing Capability of Council Staff
- Investment in Vehicles and Equipment.
- Liaising with, and influencing, other key bodies
- Long term and tactical planning
- Knowledge Management
- Developing Policy
- Community Engagement

The Council has reviewed threats and opportunities for each of the Key Processes and has developed action points for each. This includes consideration during the setting of precept.

### **STRENGTHS**

Majority of committed enthusiastic councillors  
Determination for PRTC to progress  
Dedicated and skilled staff  
Sound financial position/ access to CIL funding  
PRTC assets- Market House, Play areas, Stratton Memorial Garden  
Committed to engagement  
Volunteers in the community

### **WEAKNESSES**

Lack of public understanding of how a council works  
Office accommodation limited.

### **OPPORTUNITIES**

General Power of Competence  
Devolution of services from other authorities  
Skills possessed by Councillors and Staff  
Increase in community engagement

### **THREATS**

Resourcing of devolved services  
Not building relationships with other authorities in particular the new principle authority  
Increasing population – infrastructure and expectation  
Projects not living up to expectation – delivery taking too long  
Rising costs



# An Overview of Princes Risborough Town Council

Princes Risborough has three tiers of local government, each with differing areas of responsibilities. Princes Risborough Town Council is the first and most local tier of government for residents of Princes Risborough Parish.

Wycombe District Council is the second tier and is responsible for services within Princes Risborough including, parking, housing and street cleaning. The third tier of local government is Buckinghamshire County Council, its responsibilities include education, highways, libraries, rights of way, health and social services.

As of September 2018, Princes Risborough Town Council has 13 elected Councillors who are elected every four years. The Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor are elected by Councillors at the Annual Statutory Meeting in May.

The Council has 6 standing committees, each with its own remit;

## **Admin & HR**

The administration of the Council is managed by the Town Clerk. As Head of the Administration the Clerk advises the Council on new developments in procedures, law, and local council work and covers all areas such as Employment, Health & Safety, Legal and all other matters relating to employment and council work.

The Town Clerk is also responsible for day to day line management and performance management and appraisal of any staff employed by the Town Council. This will be reported on to the Committee.

The Administration/Human Resources Committee's role is to make recommendations to Full Council on:-

All aspects of the Council's policies and strategy relating to its staff.

All staff recruitment, appointments, training and disciplinary matters.

The training and qualification policy of the Council

The provision of office accommodation .

Establishing the health, safety and welfare policies of the Council and oversee implementation and compliance

The staffing levels necessary to efficiently discharge the work required by the Council

The Committee has the delegated authority to manage issues including: -

To provide support and assistance to the Town Clerk with staffing and staff conduct matters

To review and engage with schemes for the employment of people under job creation and youth training programmes .

To ensure that all disciplinary and grievance policies are dealt with in line with the Council's procedures .

To recommend, authorise and oversee all training for employees and Councillors .

To deal with matters regarding Councillor /Staff conduct.

To approve job descriptions and review workloads periodically

## **Town**

The Town Committee is responsible for the organisation and running of the street market and general maintenance of the Town, Parks and Stratton Memorial Garden. This includes lighting, litter & glass picking, dog waste collections in the parks, grass cutting, trees and flowerbeds, playground equipment maintenance, war memorials, CCTV maintenance, Market House maintenance.

## **Finance**

The Finance Committee is the financial link between the full Town Council and the 'spending' committees, ie Administration/HR, Town, Events and Public Relations committees. The Town Council requires that those committees whose activities necessitate spending and the production of tenders should be held responsible for the development and



the management of their individual budgets. This devolution of financial responsibility is intended to engender a greater feeling of ownership within the individual committees and lead to better value for money for the town.

At the start of each financial year, a council meeting is held to agree the estimated expenditure of all committees for the coming year and, from this, to establish the town's precept (the amount of money the council asks for in the council tax under 'parish'). This goes to the Finance Committee for a final check, before being passed by them to the full Town Council for formal endorsement.

The Finance Committee's membership comprises the chairmen of each of the spending committees. The Chairman of the Town Council is an ex officio member. The Chairman and Vice-chairman of the Finance Committee are council members with no other chair responsibilities. Throughout the year the Finance committee monitors expenditure to ensure probity and value for money, and to check that the rate of spend is acceptable. The composition of the committee allows free and open discussion on all financial matters and the means to respond rapidly to any unforeseen problems.

### **Planning**

This committee has three key roles: it reviews every planning application, considers tree applications, and takes part in various district and regional consultations where they may impact on Princes Risborough.

The Town Council is a statutory consultee, and reviews all planning applications and advises WDC should they not meet local requirements and aspirations. However, it should be noted that Wycombe District Council makes the final decision on all planning applications, and does not always agree with the Town Council's comments.

### **Events**

The Town Centre & Events Committee remit is to make the town centre a pleasant place to come to, and to put on events for residents and visitors. All events are aimed to strengthen our community, young and old; and contribute to making Princes Risborough an especially vibrant town. Many events are run in partnership with local groups and organisations. The Committee also takes responsibility for the running of Risborough in Bloom, youth projects and the promotion of the town through appropriate media.

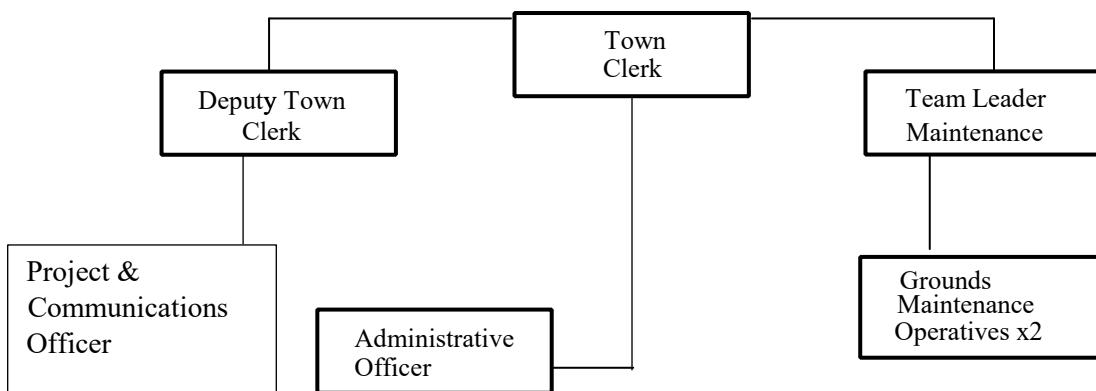
### **Public Relations**

The Public Relations are responsible for the production and distribution of Crosstalk newsletter, website management, and public meetings.

# The Town Council Management Structure

The administration of the Town Council is carried out by the qualified Town Clerk who is appointed by the Town Council. The Town Clerk is required to carry out all the functions required by law as the Town Council's proper officer and to issue all statutory notifications. The Town Clerk is also the Responsible Financial Officer.

The Town Council is supported by a team of 8 members of staff as detailed in the below management structure diagram.



## Council Assets and Areas of Responsibility

### Assets

- Wades Park
- King George V Park
- Crescent Park
- Earle Mitchell Park
- St Dunstan's Park
- Stratton Memorial Garden
- Market House
- Dovecote
- Rag Pit

### Grounds Maintenance - Areas of Responsibility

- Planters and Hanging Baskets
- Provision of Litter & Dog Bins in the Parks.
- Bus Shelters
- Footway Lighting
- Play Equipment in Parks



## ***Your Views Matter - Reviewing Our Business Plan***

The Business Plan will be a regular item on the agenda for the Finance Committee to ensure the Council formally reviews its progress and objectives.

The Business Plan will be reviewed annually in September to enable any changes to be considered during the Precept planning for the following year.

### ***We want to know what you think about this plan and its contents***

Our Business Plan shall form one of the main ways the Council will inform the public about what we are doing to meet the needs of the community. We welcome any comments on our Business Plan and would appreciate views on its content and format. If you require any further information that would help you understand what we are trying to achieve, please let us know.

More information about the Council, including an electronic version of this Plan, is available on our website  
[www.princesrisboroughtowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.princesrisboroughtowncouncil.gov.uk)

### **How to Contact us:**

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[www.princesrisboroughtowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.princesrisboroughtowncouncil.gov.uk)



Budget	Current Year 2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021
Personnel Costs	£ 203,512.00	£222,582.00	£228,034.00
Devolved Services income	-£ 24,199.00	£104,683.00	£25,673.00
Total	£ 179, 313.00	£117,899.00	£202,361.00
Office & Administration	£ 15,641.00	£16,110.00	£16,594.00
Councillor & Mayoral Costs	£ 4,050.00	£4,171.00	£4,300.00
Audit Fee	£ 1,500.00	£2,000.00	£2,000.00
Insurance	£ 4,700.00	£4,700.00	£4,700.00
Community Grants	£ 8,910.00	£9,000.00	£9,000.00
Parks including loan	£15,908.00	£20,000.00	£20,000.00
Sport Pitches Income	-£ 1,600.00	-£ 2,000.00	-£ 2,000.00
Total	£14,308.00	£18,000.00	£18,000.00
Maintenance of Town & Open Spaces including CCTV	£ 94,323.00	£80,000.00	£80,000.00
Stratton Memorial Garden including Loan	£ 21,070.00	£21,600.00	£22,140.00
Burial Income	-£ 10,000.00	-£ 10,323.00	-£ 10,500.00
Total	£ 11,070.00	£ 11,277.00	£ 11,559.00
Market House	£ 2,020.00	£5,000.00	£2,500.00
Market House Income	-£ 2,200.00	-£2,200.00	-£2,200.00
Total	-£ 180.00	£2,800.00	£300.00
Market Stalls	£ 3,060.00	£3,137.00	£3,215.00
Market Stalls rental income	-£ 10,000.00	-£10,250.00	-£10,506.00
Total	-£ 6,940.00	-£7,113.00	-£7,291.00
Public Relations	£ 12,861.00	£11,300.00	£11,583.00
Events	£ 27,520.00	£27,520.00	£27,520.00
Events Income	-£ 2,500.00	-£2,500.00	-£2,500.00
Total	£ 25,020.00	£25,020.00	£25,020.00
Subscriptions	£ 1,620.00	£2,000.00	£ 2,200.00

Capital Projects	<b>£ 187,232.00</b>	<b>£57,000.00</b>	<b>£12,000.00</b>
<u>Description</u>	<u>Sum</u>		
Local Plan	<b>£1,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Storage Facilities	<b>£5,000</b>	<b>£5,000.00</b>	<b>0</b>
Market House	<b>£6,732.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
LED lighting	<b>£150,000.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Town Regeneration Project	<b>£10,000.00</b>	<b>£10,000.00</b>	<b>£10,000.00</b>
Town Heritage Trail	<b>£5,000.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Office furniture	<b>£1,000.00</b>	<b>£5,000.00</b>	<b>0</b>
Youth Shelter KGV	<b>£6,500.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Legal/Planning costs	<b>£2,000.00</b>	<b>£3,000.00</b>	<b>0</b>
Earl Mitchell Changing Rooms	<b>0</b>	<b>£30,000.00</b>	<b>0</b>
Election Expenses (Earmarked Reserves)	<b>£ 4,000.00</b>	<b>£4,000.00</b>	<b>£ 2,000.00</b>
Ground Rent/Wayleaves	<b>-£ 1,350.00</b>	<b>-£ 1,350.00</b>	<b>-£ 1,350.00</b>
Interest Received	<b>-£ 600.00</b>	<b>-£ 2,500.00</b>	<b>-£ 2,500.00</b>