

# Strategic Plan

2022 - 2026







# FOREWORD

It is a truism, but worth saying: What we do now shapes the future.

This new Strategic Plan is for the period to 2026, but in everything we do we should be thinking much further ahead than that. The most significant global target for the future is achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. We have a responsibility to the youngest members of our community to shape that future.

One of the realisations from the pandemic was that young people in our community were severely affected in all sorts of ways, from social skills to their education and mental health. We have already started supporting initiatives that are aimed at helping them and will continue that focus within our overall objective of improving wellbeing in our community.

We continue to place strong emphasis on maintaining a thriving town – not just the town centre but also the public areas and facilities in our area. Not all of these are in our immediate control, but we work in partnership with many organisations, including local businesses, to achieve the overall objective.

We believe we need to improve engagement with people and groups in our community. We plan to open up new ways of getting a clearer understanding of the concerns and priorities of those who live and work here, so that we improve our decision-making and our allocation of resources. We are always open to approaches from individuals or groups who have something to say.

Overall, I would summarise our Strategic Plan as a plan for continuous improvement and renewal, with a focus on shaping the future.

**Councillor Steve Abbott**  
Chairman, Corsham Town Council  
14 November 2022



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# INTRODUCTION



Corsham Town Council is one of around 10,000 local councils in England and serves a population of approximately 14,000. Our 20 Councillors and 17 staff manage an annual budget of £1.25m on local facilities and services. It is an active local council, in the top 50 largest by budget.

Like all market towns in Wiltshire, Corsham continues to grow and change. These changes bring new challenges, or at least increase the intensity of existing issues, concerns and pressures, not least the global issues of climate change and loss of biodiversity. In October 2021, Corsham Town Council declared a climate and ecological emergency stating:

‘Corsham Town Council fully accepts the need for urgent action in response to the climate and ecological emergencies that we face. We are committed to reducing the carbon footprint of our community in support of central government and Wiltshire Council targets to reduce carbon emissions. We are implementing a Carbon Reduction Plan for our own operations which will enable us to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030. From 2022, we will implement a Biodiversity Action Plan to protect and enhance our green and blue infrastructure.’

The impact of more housing has traditionally concerned Corsham’s residents due to more traffic, less green space and increased demands on services. In recent times, these priorities have been compounded by the Covid-19 pandemic, which has affected not just health, but jobs, education, the environment and general wellbeing.

Major changes in central government policy often affect town councils. The Levelling Up white paper published in February 2022 sets out a new moral, social and economic programme and aims to boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector; spread opportunities and improve public services; restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging, and empower local leaders and communities. Whilst there is still little detail on what legislation may follow, there will be opportunities for the Town Council when it comes to bidding for funding, especially around place shaping and public realm.

This Strategic Plan for 2022-2026 sets out many of the current and emerging issues and the ways they might be addressed, directly or indirectly. As a public body, we recognise that the decisions we make have an impact on people’s lives. We are accountable to residents and are committed to using our assets and resources responsibly. This includes recognition that we use residents’ money raised through the precept to spend on local facilities and services.

We are keen, therefore, to create an engaged community to help shape our services and influence the decisions we make.

We are dedicated to making sure this Strategic Plan reflects community aspirations and addresses local issues. The objectives within this Plan are based on research and discussion from various sources including a public survey.

Our priorities for 2022-26 are centred around the environment and climate change, transport and highways, business and the economy, and community wellbeing.

# THE PURPOSE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CORSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

The Town Council exists to improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of Corsham and to manage its facilities and services in an efficient, effective and responsive way, at an affordable cost. Our aim is to make life in Corsham better through equality, accessibility and inclusivity.

Where facilities and services are provided by others, the Town Council seeks to influence how they are managed in accordance with the desires and ambitions of the community (See Fig. 1 – Summary of Town Council Activity).

The Town Council has responsibility for several community assets including parks, play areas, allotments, cemeteries, closed churchyards, amenity sites, mobile CCTV, public conveniences, events and more besides. The Council manages this through three main workstreams - Property and Amenities, Community Services, and Finance and Administration.

Service areas which have continued to expand in recent years include neighbourhood planning, environmental projects, creative industries, tourism, business support, community wellbeing and improvements to the public realm.

# SUMMARY OF TOWN COUNCIL ACTIVITY



INFLUENCE & RESPOND	PLACE SHAPING	COMMUNITY ACTIVATION	SERVICE/ASSET DELIVERY & ACCOUNTABILITY
<p>Responding to planning and development consultations</p> <p>Respond to Wiltshire Council consultations</p> <p>Representing the Town Council at Area Board meetings</p> <p>Actively participate in Local Highway and Footway Improvement Group (LHFIG) meetings</p> <p>Influencing service levels of Wiltshire Council and its contracts</p> <p>Making representations to central government to influence policy</p>	<p>Climate Change Action Plan</p> <p>Neighbourhood Planning</p> <p>Biodiversity Action Plan</p> <p>Public realm improvements</p> <p>Running local events</p> <p>Tourism and promotion</p> <p>Supporting and encouraging business/commercial activities</p>	<p>Community Wellbeing Group</p> <p>Environment Task Group</p> <p>Grants and fundraising</p> <p>Youth projects and activities</p> <p>Community Awards</p> <p>Corsham in Bloom</p> <p>Community preparedness for emergencies</p>	<p>Play areas, recreation grounds and amenity sites</p> <p>Cemeteries and closed churchyards</p> <p>Two-hours' free parking</p> <p>Litter and street cleaning top-up service</p> <p>Public conveniences</p> <p>Allotments</p> <p>CCTV</p> <p>Street furniture</p>

Fig. 1

## A VISION FOR CORSHAM

In producing this Strategic Plan, we reviewed the overall vision from the previous Strategic Plan (2018-2022). It was agreed that the vision should be revised and updated.

Our vision for Corsham for 2022-2026 is **'An engaged community - making life better in Corsham through equality, accessibility and inclusivity'**.

A guiding principle of delivering our vision is the strong desire to create an engaged, sustainable community which balances environmental, social, cultural and economic needs.

The next stage was to review and update the previous themes. Workshops were held for all Councillors and staff to discuss priorities, and residents were consulted via the Town Council's newsletter and an online survey. This resulted in four new overall strategic themes:

- Environment and Climate Change – Minimising the town's impact on climate change and protecting our natural environment.
- Transport and Highways – Implementing a sustainable transport plan.
- Business and the Economy – Ensuring a thriving and successful town centre and supporting local businesses.
- Community Wellbeing – Supporting local interest groups and delivering targeted activities to improve health and wellbeing.



# OBJECTIVES



Each theme has a set of objectives which form the basis of the Town Council's Plan for 2022-2026 (See Appendix – Outline Action Plan):

## 1. Environment and Climate Change

- Produce and deliver a Climate Change Action Plan for a more sustainable environment.
- Be on target to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030.
- Produce and implement a Biodiversity Action Plan.
- Enhance our public realm and conserve the historic environment of Corsham.
- Undertake a review of the Corsham Neighbourhood Plan.

## 2. Transport and Highways

- Develop a new Transport Plan for Corsham to include public transport, highway maintenance and walking and cycling routes.
- Contribute towards road and pavement improvements and maintenance where appropriate.
- Identify where transport infrastructure needs to be improved.

## 3. Business and the Economy

- Prioritise the vitality of the town centre in decision-making, making it more attractive, active and accessible.
- Conduct regular business surveys and act on the outcomes.
- Support local businesses through engagement and advice where needed.
- Grow Corsham as a visitor destination.

## 4. Community Wellbeing

- Improve the range of youth activities and facilities.
- Support measures to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Reduce traffic speed to improve road safety.
- Increase support for health and wellbeing initiatives which target those most in need, across all age groups.
- Work to ensure we have the range and quality of community facilities that people want and need.
- Continue to enhance the Arts, events and culture in Corsham through our own projects and working with, and supporting, others.
- Develop existing relationships with key stakeholders including Bath Spa University and our local schools, Corsham Area Board, MOD Corsham and Pound Arts.

# ASSET MANAGEMENT AND OVERVIEW OF RESOURCES

The effective management of Town Council assets, resources and commitments are essential in delivering the Strategic Plan. Assets and resources include land and buildings, people (staff, Councillors and volunteers) and skills and knowledge.

The following priorities are being addressed through our Strategic Plan:

- Asset Transfer and Delegation of Services – Agreeing and transferring certain assets and services from Wiltshire Council. These are primarily amenity land and services.
- Asset Management Plan – Producing a new Asset Management Plan. This will include new workshop facilities followed by agreeing the future of Arnold House.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement is at the heart of our Strategic Plan for 2022-2026. While the key objectives focus on Environment and Climate Change, Transport and Highways, Business and the Economy, and Community Wellbeing, the central theme linking every element is: 'An engaged community – making life in Corsham better through equality, accessibility and inclusivity'.

The Town Council wants to ensure that local people feel well informed about local issues, have opportunities to get involved, can influence local decision making and are able to tell the Council what they think about its policies, procedures, service delivery and work with partner organisations. It is vital that the work of the Town Council is shaped and prioritised by the people who live and work in the parish of Corsham.

We also understand that a 'community' can be many things. It can be a community of place or neighbourhood, from a whole town to a housing estate or street. It can be a community of interest, linking groups who have a shared interest or experience. And it can be a community of identity, defined by how people identify themselves or how they are identified by society, usually by demographic characteristics (for example: young people, older people, those with disabilities or special needs, faith groups, black and minority ethnic people, LGBTQ+ people).

It is especially important for us to understand different views within the community, ensuring that the needs of groups or areas that are under-represented or do not traditionally engage with us are not overlooked. By identifying how and where there is a lack of engagement, the Town



Council can start to understand the barriers that might be stopping certain voices being heard and understand how best to communicate so that we meet the needs of the whole community more effectively.

By undertaking that meaningful engagement and encouraging community involvement, the Town Council and the Corsham community can work together to make life in Corsham better through equality, accessibility, and inclusivity.

In addition to the services currently provided by the Town Council, there are many ways in which other service providers and individuals are influenced. Our methods of influencing others include:

- Encouraging (Such as financial incentives through grants and concessions and bringing groups together to help their development)
- Enabling (Making it easy for people to get the support they need through having clear and simple policies and processes)
- Engaging (Building strong relationships, partnerships and collaborative working)
- Exemplifying (Leading by example, demonstrating shared responsibility and having a positive attitude)

## ACTION PLAN

An Action Plan (Appendix – Outline Action Plan, page 16) to accompany this Strategic Plan defines the overall priorities and sets out which areas and themes are a priority in any given period. The Action Plan will be used to define what the Town Council is seeking to achieve and assist in the monitoring, review and evaluation within each priority area. As we work through the Plan we will engage with a broad range of the community through social media and more traditional methods, including print, where appropriate.

## BUDGETING AND FINANCIAL PLANNING

The Town Council has robust governance processes in place to manage its finances and has built up sufficient reserves to cope with the rapidly changing environment and respond to opportunities and threats. Councillors considered their attitude to risk and ambition when preparing this Strategic Plan. Whilst their overall ambition rated 7.8/10, the approach to risk was more cautious at 6.1/10. This is a fairly balanced approach with no extremes, making decision-making more straightforward.

The Town Council has an annual budget and a three-year forward spending plan to account for its income and expenditure and is not constrained by a 'use it or lose it' annual spending plan (where money cannot be rolled forward into a new financial year).

The Town Council has a financial risk management strategy, and an investment policy with the priorities of security, liquidity and yield set through the audit regimes. We also consider ethical and environmental factors when investing money.

## MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Strategic Plan progress will be monitored and reviewed by the Town Council at least quarterly. Reports and updates will be considered by Councillors and staff.



## SUMMARY

This Strategic Plan sets out Corsham Town Council's vision and explains how it aims to achieve its objectives for 2022-2026.

Implementation of this Strategic Plan will help achieve the Town Council's vision for Corsham for 2022-2026: **'An engaged community - making life better in Corsham through equality, accessibility and inclusivity'**.

# Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026



# MAKING LIFE BETTER IN CORSHAM



## Environment and Climate Change

- Produce and deliver a Climate Change Action Plan for a more sustainable environment
- Be on target to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030
- Produce and implement a Biodiversity Action Plan
- Enhance our public realm and conserve the historic environment of Corsham
- Undertake a review of the Corsham Neighbourhood Plan

## Transport and Highways

- Develop a new Transport Plan for Corsham to include public transport, highway maintenance and walking and cycling routes
- Contribute towards road and pavement improvements and maintenance where appropriate
- Identify where transport infrastructure needs to be improved

## Business and the Economy

- Prioritise the vitality of the town centre in decision-making, making it more attractive, active and accessible
- Carry out regular business surveys and act on the outcomes
- Support local businesses through engagement and advice where needed
- Grow Corsham as a visitor destination

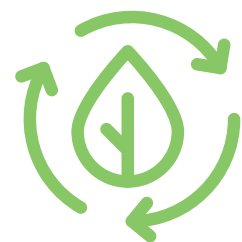
## Community Wellbeing

- Improve the range of youth activities and facilities
- Support measures to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour
- Reduce traffic speed to improve road safety
- Increase support for health and wellbeing initiatives which target those most in need, across all age groups
- Work to ensure we have the range and quality of community facilities that people want and need
- Continue to enhance the Arts, events and culture in Corsham through our own projects and working with, and supporting, others
- Develop existing relationships with key stakeholders including Bath Spa University and our local schools, Corsham Area Board, MOD Corsham and Pound Arts

# APPENDIX – OUTLINE ACTION PLAN

## ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

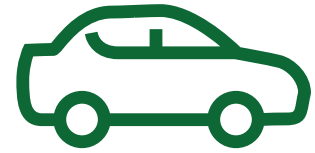
- **Produce and deliver a Climate Change Action Plan for a more sustainable environment** – Approve plan and agree delivery and monitoring process (Approved – June 2022)
- **Be on target to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030** – Commission annual independent carbon assessments (On target to reach net zero by 2030 as of June 2022)
- **Produce and implement a Biodiversity Action Plan** – Complete Biodiversity Action Plan by December 2022 (Study commissioned June 2022)
- **Enhance our public realm and conserve the historic environment of Corsham** – Public Realm Strategy continues to be implemented (RIBA Stage 2 fee proposal being reviewed by Wiltshire Council as of November 2022). Neighbourhood Plan Delivery and Monitoring Group to oversee heritage aspects of the Plan (Delivery and Monitoring Group action plan ongoing; meeting regularly)
- **Undertake a review of the Corsham Neighbourhood Plan** – Neighbourhood Plan runs to 2026. Full review to be commenced by 2024 at the latest (Background work underway – constraints map and masterplanning key sites from March 2022)







## TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS



- **Develop a new Transport Plan for Corsham to include public transport, highway maintenance and walking and cycling routes** – Commission Transport Plan by end of 2023
- **Contribute towards road and pavement improvements and maintenance where appropriate** – Ensure sufficient budget to meet identified priorities. Priority list reviewed by Property and Amenities Committee at least annually (New list to be produced once TP approved in 2023/24)
- **Identify where transport infrastructure needs to be improved** – Include in the Transport Plan brief (2023) and feed into the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan review (by 2024)

## BUSINESS AND THE ECONOMY



- **Prioritise the vitality of the town centre in decision-making, making it more attractive, active and accessible** – Produce policy and plan on the town centre, bringing together public realm, Covid recovery, Neighbourhood Plan review, business support, free parking and Retail Forum (or its successor) actions (Draft by March 2023)
- **Conduct regular business surveys and act on the outcomes** – Decide scope of survey/s, including methods and frequency, data required etc to establish business needs (Scope out by December 2022)
- **Support local businesses through engagement and advice where needed** – Review role of the Retail Forum and relationship with Chamber of Commerce, Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership and others, to see how we can best support businesses locally (Review started June 2022)
- **Grow Corsham as a visitor destination** – Review Destination Marketing Plan and Destination Management Plan (Complete by summer 2023 -signage audit completed June 2022; new Visit Corsham website launched autumn 2022)

## COMMUNITY WELLBEING



- **Improve the range of youth activities and facilities** – Hold stakeholder meeting and review Wiltshire Council’s youth survey results to clarify what has already been done, or is already happening, and identify gaps in provision (Hold stakeholder meeting in 2022/23)
- **Support measures to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour** – Work with Community Policing Team and Corsham Area Board. Look at data. Use place shaping to design-out crime. Use contextual safeguarding approach to support young people (Review data in 2022/23)
- **Reduce traffic speed to improve road safety** – Introduce 20mph and other reduced speed limits where assessments support their implementation. Use physical measures to reduce speed where suitable (20mph assessments under consideration autumn 2022. Town Transport Plan to look at all areas when speeding traffic is a concern by end of 2023)
- **Increase support for health and wellbeing initiatives which target those most in need, across all age groups** – Extend remit of the Community Wellbeing Group to support all ages and vulnerable people. Plan to be put in place in 2023 (Considered by Council July 2022)
- **Work to ensure we have the range and quality of community facilities that people want and need** – Review of existing research and survey responses and seek to identify and fill gaps by 2024. Include questions in Neighbourhood Plan consultation (Not started)
- **Continue to enhance the Arts, events and culture in Corsham through our own projects and working with, and supporting, others** – Produce new Creative Corsham Strategy in 2022/23 and new Public Art Strategy in 2024/25
- **Develop existing relationships with key stakeholders including Bath Spa University and our local schools, Corsham Area Board, MOD Corsham and Pound Arts** – Ensure the liaison panels continue to develop with MOD, BSU and The Corsham School. Offer same to other schools, Corsham Area Board and Pound Arts with a view to meeting at least twice per year from 2023.



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