



Business Plan 2016/19 (refreshed Feb 2018)

Introduction

Adopted by the Council in October 2015, West Bletchley Council's Business Plan 2016/19 sets out the vision, aims and agreed actions for responding to the needs and aspirations of its community over the current 4 year period.

The Council has, in producing the plan, considered the changing profile of its community and identified and analysed key factors that it will need to take account of in order to continue to improve the way in which it serves local residents.

In addition to details of the Council's overarching aims and objectives this document contains service plans for each area of the Council's work. These plans contain performance indicators which will enable the Council to measure its success. It is intended that these plans will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

Lastly, the plan contains financial forecasts for both its revenue and capital spending in respect of each of its service areas demonstrating how the Council will allocate its resources to meet local priorities as determined through ongoing community engagement.

The Council

West Bletchley is one of the largest of some 48 parish and town councils within the borough of Milton Keynes. It is comprised of some 9,000+ households and in excess of 22,200 residents. Predominantly residential, there is little in the way of commerce or industry within the parish boundary. The Council is currently made up of 28 Members, representing 10 parish wards.

7 full time staff operate from the Council's freehold offices with a further **2 full time and 1 part time staff member** operating from a community resource centre, the Frank Moran Centre, which is also a Council owned, freehold property.

Current Position

West Bletchley Council is acutely aware that current central government policy is restricting the ability of principal authorities requiring parishes to do more. The many changes in local government and particularly the current financial pressures being exerted on principal authorities opens the door to opportunities which explore the possibilities provided by "local engagement". West Bletchley Council regularly reviews its internal composition and processes to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and capable of fulfilling both current and future responsibilities, on behalf of

residents. The Council reviews its medium term financial plan on a regular basis and in light of altered/revised commitments, to ensure that it remains viable.

As well as Full Council meetings, the Council has three additional committees with relevant delegated responsibilities:

Finance and General Purposes Committee

Planning and Environment Committee

Community Committee

All committees, as well as Full Council, meet at bi-monthly frequencies, with “sub-committee” meetings on interim months for Finance and General purposes to deal with payments to suppliers.

West Bletchley Council has continued to actively pursue the transfer of assets from Milton Keynes Council under terms of the Community Asset Transfer programme. It now owns, on behalf of residents, the Frank Moran Centre and Rickley Park and continues to negotiate for the transfer of other assets including play areas and open space.

The premises at the Frank Moran Centre have been extended and improved in the short time that West Bletchley Council has had ownership, now accommodating the Melrose Avenue Resource Centre alongside a range of activities and facilities for local residents and groups.

Following extensive consultations with local residents, plans are progressing which will see the range of activities and facilities in Rickley Park increase considerably over the next few years, for the benefit of existing and new users of the park.

In June 2014, the Council took over responsibility, from Milton Keynes Council, for general landscape maintenance within the parish, to include grass cutting and hedge and shrub bed maintenance in all areas of public open space. It was encouraging to understand, from a random sample survey of residents undertaken in February 2015, that 43% of those who responded indicated that standards of landscape maintenance had got better over the last 12 months.

Other results from the same survey concluded that 52% of those who responded indicated that the quality of life of West Bletchley residents had got better; 59% indicated that the range of activities and services available to them had got better; 43% indicated that the way in which the Council represents residents had got better and similarly 43% indicated that the way in which the Council communicates with residents had got better. Whilst not complacent, the Council considers that responses received indicate that it has made good progress against the objectives of the Business Plan 2014/15

Community Profile (Milton Keynes Social Atlas 2013)

Being one of the older established parts of Milton Keynes, it is perhaps not a surprise that 24% of the population are aged 60 or over and that the number of residents over the age of 70 is some 50% higher than the Milton Keynes average.

11.8% of households have one person aged 65+ living alone, compared to the MK average of 6.8%.

Educational attainment is below the MK average and in particular attainment is falling at KS2 (7-11 years).

24.8% of the population have no qualifications, compared to Milton Keynes average of 18%.

The Social Atlas data is compiled in “sub-areas” across the borough, of which West Bletchley is comprised of three. Data for the area which incorporates Abbeys, Church Green, Counties and Scots wards records both the number of teenage conceptions and the number of clients of disabled services as higher than 50% above the Milton Keynes average. In addition, the number of clients of older people’s services, within this “sub-area” is within the top 20% of areas across MK.

Summary of Analysis

The Council has undertaken extensive analysis in developing this business plan, taking account of all internal and external influences, as well as accepting feedback from residents through postal surveys undertaken in the recent past.

It has considered the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of the Council, political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental (PESTLE) agendas, both local and national, and the influences/needs of all of the Council’s “stakeholders”.

The SWOT analysis evidences a lack of detailed succession planning within the Council as well as some shortcomings in levels/methods of communication, both internally and externally. The Council is still not reaching all residents and there is a lack of corporate identification.

The PESTLE evaluation highlights reductions in both public sector spending and availability of support services, whilst at the same time there is a high level of support required by those older or more vulnerable residents. The “green” agenda must remain in focus and the Council will need to fully embrace social media and the opportunities it provides.

When assessing the influence of stakeholders the Council must obviously consider the needs of its electorate and other residents as well as the capabilities and functions of Members and Officers. The Council must also develop a better understanding of and synergy with its various partner agencies as well as Milton Keynes Council.

The analysis has identified a number of key areas that this business plan will address:

- That this Council has, and needs to continue to have a strong influence within the sector and remains a lead parish Council within Milton Keynes.
- That this Council should take a leading role in the Neighbourhood Planning process, locally, as well as other local forums and networks.
- That the need remains for enhanced levels of community engagement, enabling improved communication with all sectors of the community.

- That there is a need to continue to review and develop local networks.
- The relevance of environmental sustainability.

Mission Statement

Having reviewed the Council's mission statement, it confirms that the intent remains:

“West Bletchley Council undertakes to provide democratic representation on behalf of the residents of West Bletchley and to deliver or facilitate delivery of projects and/or services that make a positive difference to the community.”

Vision

Within the life of this business plan, West Bletchley Council will:

- Extend the reach of its engagement with local residents in order to better understand what the community wants.
- Strengthen its influence on and take the lead in a range of local networks and forums, to include Neighbourhood Planning.
- Challenge the performance of other service providers.
- Continue to address areas of need, monitoring changes in the profile of the community as well as services delivered by others, establishing priorities through consultation.
- Monitor and maintain the capacity of the Council to deliver improvements in services to local residents.
- Develop and deliver an environmental strategy, with relevant action plan.

Actions

The attached table of key actions in respect of the Council's main service areas will be reviewed annually during the life of the plan.