

Bishop's Stortford  
Town Council



# STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2027



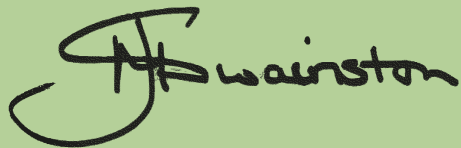




# FOREWORD

Welcome to our Strategic Plan for 2023-2027. This document sets out what your Town Council aims to do over its term of office to make Bishop's Stortford an even better place to live, work and visit. The plan has a new format with greater detail than previously and two new or enhanced key areas. Firstly, there is a special focus on fighting climate change, making our buildings and operations as sustainable as we can and encouraging others to do the same. Secondly, we want to improve our communications so that you know what's happening, why it's happening and how you can get involved.

Thank you for picking up this document. I do hope you will read it and that it meets with your approval. If you have any questions or thoughts, please don't hesitate to get in touch. The next four years are going to be a significant time for Bishop's Stortford with the changes to Castle Park, the provision of Arts (especially in connection with Old River Lane) and sports facilities, the economy and local employment and the important issues of housing and planning.



CLLR MIRIAM SWAINSTON  
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL



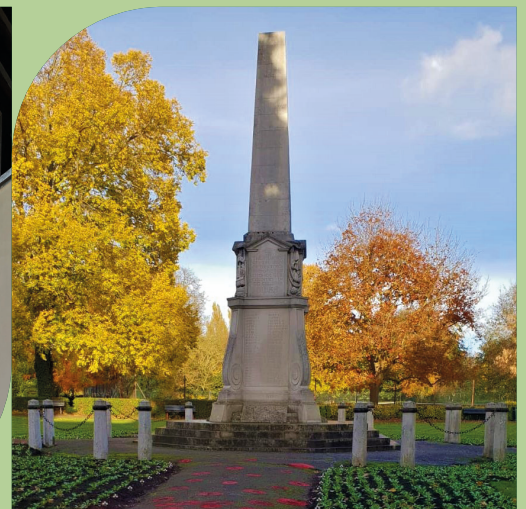
# INTRODUCTION

This document has been prepared to clearly identify the work priorities of Bishop's Stortford Town Council. The document includes ongoing items from the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan, as well as additional items for the new administration following the Local Government Elections in May 2023.

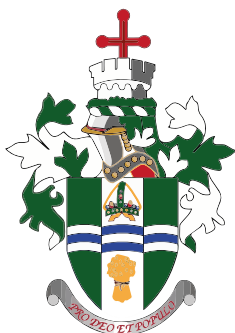
This document will be an evolving process, subject to review on a periodic basis by the Council's Finance and Policy Committee. It sets out what the Council intends to focus on over the next four years. In doing this, it also defines what the Council will not necessarily focus on as it may be that other public-sector bodies are better placed to undertake these tasks. However, we have included where the Council can influence these in some way.

The adoption of this new strategic plan will help to ensure the tracked continuation of achievement and improvement in the town as well as service delivery that contributes towards making Bishop's Stortford a better place for all residents, businesses and visitors to the town. It will also be a mechanism through which the Council can ensure that it is "on track" in delivering the services that it promises and those which residents expect and deserve from this Authority.

The Plan is made in the context of the East Herts District Plan and the two Bishop's Stortford Neighbourhood Plans. Set out on the next page is a table showing the areas of service for each of the Councils covering Bishop's Stortford.







## BISHOP'S STORTFORD TOWN COUNCIL

ALLOTMENTS  
CARNIVAL  
CEMETERIES  
CHRISTMAS FAYRE AND LIGHTS  
COMMUNITY CENTRES  
MARKET SQUARE TOILETS  
MARKETS  
MARKWELL PAVILION  
MINIBUSES  
REMEMBRANCE SERVICE  
SWORDERS FIELD  
SWORDERS FIELD PLAY AREAS AND SPLASH  
POOL  
TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE  
TOWN CENTRE EVENTS  
TOWN COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS



## EAST HERTS DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR  
BENEFITS  
BUILDING REGULATIONS  
COMMUNITY SAFETY (SHARED)  
COUNCIL TAX COLLECTION  
DEVELOPMENT (MANAGEMENT)  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
ELECTIONS  
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH  
FLY TIPPING  
HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS  
KERBSIDE WASTE COLLECTION  
(BUT NOT DISPOSAL)  
LICENCING (ALCOHOL, TAXIS ETC)  
PUBLIC CAR PARKS  
STREET CLEANING



## HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

ADOPTION AND FOSTERING  
CHILDREN'S SERVICES  
CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL  
DISABLED PARKING PERMITS  
EDUCATION  
EMERGENCY PLANNING  
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES  
LIBRARIES  
PUBLIC TRANSPORT  
REGISTRATION SERVICE  
ROADS AND FOOTPATHS  
SOCIAL CARE  
TRADING STANDARDS  
WASTE DISPOSAL AND RECYCLING  
(BUT NOT COLLECTION)





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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS:

BID - Business Improvement District

BSTC - Bishop's Stortford Town Council

EHDC - East Herts District Council

HCC - Hertfordshire County Council

LCWIP - Local Cycle and Walking Infrastructure Plan

NALC - National Association of Local Councils

ORL - Old River Lane

SLCC - Society of Local Council Clerks

SMA - South Mill Arts







# ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES: KEY PRIORITY

Subject	Objective	Parties	Timescale
Cycling Network	To facilitate completion of North Cycle Route (The Meads) - Sustainable Transport Sub-Committee and to increase number of cycle routes  Other routes to be investigated going forwards  Influence implementation of LCWIP	EHDC (land owner)  Herts County Council (Designer)  Local landowners	2024  With £150k ringfenced for purpose
Walking Routes	Other routes to be investigated going forwards	Work with walking groups to improve the safety and attractiveness of walking within the town  To press for the early implementation of the LCWIP's walking route improvements	2025
Cycle Parking	To seek to install cycle parking at key areas in town	Landowners and possibly s.106	2027
Building Heating Systems	To upgrade all Community Centres and Council premises to air systems	Internal	2024 Environmental budget designated
Single Use Plastics	To reduce throughout Council operations	Internal	Ongoing
Electric Vehicles	To upgrade Council vehicles and purchase new electric rather than petrol/ diesel vehicles where possible	Work to budget for new vehicles on a staggered basis	Ongoing
Air Quality	Influence EHDC on installation of Air Quality Monitors	EHDC	2023
Assessment of Carbon Footprint	Yearly monitoring and reduction of Town Council's carbon emissions	Internal	Ongoing with yearly reports to Environment and Ongoing with yearly reports to Environment and Public Amenities Committee
Bus Services	To introduce more "Realtime" information displays at busier stops  To introduce more bus shelters and/or benches at stops	Influencing HCC	Ongoing

KEY TO SHADING



BSTC SOLELY RESPONSIBLE



DELIVERING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHER PARTIES OR AUTHORITIES



BSTC HAS AN INFLUENTIAL ROLE AND/OR SUPPORTS FINANCIALLY

# COMMUNICATIONS: KEY PRIORITY

Subject	Objective	Parties	Timescale
Public Consultation	To carry out meaningful consultation with Bishop's Stortford residents on key decisions	Key partners and the wider community	Ongoing
Communications Network	To set up a seamless network for communications in the Town Council	To include remote access to meetings and microphones in Chamber	Ongoing
Press Releases	To issue press releases on all key projects in a timely fashion	Local and national press (and other Media outlets including social media)	Ongoing
Advertisements	To ensure all events and Council services are advertised as broadly as possible	Council branding and marketing initiative	2024 and Ongoing
Comms. Strategy	To appoint a designated Officer within the Town Council with overall job description responsibilities for communications	Internal	Ongoing
Member Surgeries	Facilitate Councillor surgeries with constituents	Council Premises	Ongoing (Chamber & Meeting Room)

# THE ARTS AND EDUCATION

South Mill Arts	To complete negotiations on capital funding	South Mill Arts Council Consultant	Ongoing
South Mill Arts	To develop ongoing Service Level Agreement	South Mill Arts	Ongoing
South Mill Arts	Liaise with EHDC on potential Arts Strategy resulting from ORL development	EHDC	Ongoing
Further Education	To consider supporting other bodies to improve transport links to further education providers	HCC	Ongoing





# ALLOTMENTS

Subject	Objective	Parties	Timescale
Thorley Road Allotments	To open new site with c.40 new plots	Internal Contractors	February 2024 opening of site
All Sites	To upgrade entrances/ paths and tracks	Internal Contractors	Ongoing - target 2 sites per year (11 sites in total)
Water Supplies	To review and install more environmental water supply to all sites	Internal Contractors	Completed by 2026
All Ability Service	To review disabled facilities on all sites (currently Hallingbury Road East only site)	Internal Contractors	Ongoing
Site Agents	Re-establish bi-annual Site Agent meetings	Internal and Plot Holders / Allotment Groups	2023 and every year (October and April)
Community Allotments	Promote groups growing for the community or food bank and for mental health support, investigating other land (including Wendy Gordon Well Bean Gardening) - including disabled use sites	Internal and Plot Holders / Allotment Groups And Health Care Providers / Social Services	2026
Allotments Sub-Committee	Establish Sub-Committee of Environment and Public Amenities (Full Council to approve) with oversight of Allotment Improvement Plan	Internal (suggested 3 Councillors)	Establish in February 2024

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# CEMETERY SERVICES

Cemetery Bill	To enact Bill to extinguish Exclusive Rights of Burial	EHDC (Bill Promoter)	2024 Subject to smooth passage through House of Commons
Paths of Old Cemetery	Continue relaying major paths	To be contracted	Completion 2023
Paths of New Cemetery	Start relaying paths	To be contracted	2024-2025
Wall Old Cemetery	Requires review and work to make good Wall requires renovation (c.£50k)	To be put out to tender	2024-2027
Cemetery Policies	Update post enactment of Bill	Internal - to include updated recording	Prior to 31 March 2024
Staffing	To train and complement Cemetery Administrator	Consult with Land Owners and investigate owned sites	November 2023 - ongoing
Cemetery Chapels	To consider other uses (e.g. photographs and small services) and re-opening of Chapel used for SMA storage	Internal	2024
Alternative Burials	Consider woodland burial possibilities	Consult with Land Owners and investigate owned sites	2024
Trees	Ongoing tree maintenance and inspection work programmed	To be contracted	Ongoing
Friends of BS Cemetery	Establish a group of volunteers modelled on Friends of The Firs and Friends of Castle Park	Involving volunteers and existing volunteer networks	2025





# AMENITY SPACES AND SPORTS

Sanctuary Gardens: Newtown Road	To open site with reinstated pathway and new planting (5 new benches)	Internal and contracted	October 2023
Community Orchards	To seek to create sites for Community Orchards	Bishop's Stortford Climate Group	Ongoing
Jenkins Lane	To determine use for site in light of environmental reports	Internal Bishop's Stortford Climate Group	2024
Land at Dane O'Coys	To purchase site (subject to agreement) for use as sports facility	Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust Bishop's Stortford Cricket Club	2024
Sports Facilities	Work with EHDC on updating playing fields evidence and explore other sports for public spaces, including multi-use courts in localities  Press for improved and enlarged children's play areas in local neighbourhoods	Together with EHDC and local Sports providers (e.g. Sports Trust and local clubs)	Ongoing
River Stort	Working with Waterside Stortford to make a feature of the river within the Town and to improve the canal towpath	Waterside Stortford and Partners involved (including Canal and River Trust)	Ongoing
Green Spaces	Enhance Green Spaces by initiating improvements to areas owned by BSTC and others	In consultation, where appropriate, with EHDC, HCC and private owners	Ongoing

# CASTLE PARK

Markwell Studio	Let to hirers and fit out with high quality furnishings	Internal	Sep 2023 Opening
Café in the Park	Lease Café to operator	Café operator	2024 Opening
Play Equipment	Upgrade	Consultation and Contractor	Ongoing
BMX Track	Proceed with installation (on obtaining planning approval and reconsider tender)	Contractor	2026

# TOWN COUNCIL

Council Chamber	Modernise IT infrastructure for hybrid meetings and accessibility (microphones)	Contractors	2025-2027
Website	Upgrade the Council's website, separating the work of the Town Council from information about the town. Making the website more user friendly and informative	Sharing links with partner organisations e.g. SMA	2024
Old Monastery	Progress with planning permission to modernise offices and decorate internally and externally (or if not to redecorate only)	Consultants	2023 and staggered Budget 2024-2027
Local Council Awards Scheme	Obtain Gold Standard accreditation	Internal	2025
Safety and Safeguarding	Improve site and personnel safety and establish a Safeguarding Officer	Internal	2023
Staffing	Ensure a fair and cost effective and realistic level of staffing cover for all areas of service delivery	Internal Assessment of staffing budget in January each year	Ongoing
Town Council Branding	To modernise Council's graphic identity (to be more recognisable than the coat of arms)  Consider strapline e.g. 'An historic market town'	Internal	2024



# COUNCIL EVENTS

Carnival	Enhance overall visitor experience and increase local involvement in parade	Working with community groups and associations to build on its current success	Each Year
Remembrance	Commemorate with increased audience participation resulting from the Castle Park improvements	In consultation with Royal British Legion.	Each Year
Christmas Market	Improved festive lighting displays and improve electricity supply for further lights and trader use (if possible)	Requires support of HCC and more positive involvement from shop keepers (BID Businesses)	2025
Special Events	To organise or facilitate special events to celebrate key milestones in the Town's history or National Celebrations	All relevant stakeholders depending on type of event	Ongoing

# MARKET

Market Stalls	To increase the size of the current market where physically possible and improve facilities (more electrical points)	Market Stall Holders - with review of whole layout  Explore the possibility of a bespoke Council set up Market Square (similar to indoor market)	Ongoing  Before end of 2023
New locations	To seek to utilise historical pitch locations and potential new pitch locations for market traders	With the assistance from BID and new and existing Stall Holders	Ongoing

KEY TO SHADING



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# TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE

TIC Building	Update facility and modernise display infrastructure and installation of secondary glazing where possible	Internal	2026
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# SERVICES FOR HIRE

Room Hire (various)	To increase revenue and maximise underutilised letting options (also improving facilities for hirers)	Internal at fee setting yearly and with Community Centres Charity	Ongoing
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# GRANT AWARDS

Brazier Grants	To increase availability and to seek out harder to reach groups within the Community (to include religious, disability and low-income)	Brazier Trust Meetings	Ongoing
S.106	To be proactive in identifying use for developer contributions to Town Centre and wider improvements (and to supplement the funding of capital projects)	Internal	Monitored at each Environment and Public Amenities Committee
Major Capital Grants	To complete programme of Tranche 1 & 2 Major Capital Grants	Ongoing with successful applicants	2024

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Thriving Local Economy	To work with Partners (especially BID) to promote Town as a place of business and a destination for visitors	With Partners	Ongoing
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# COMMUNITY SAFETY

Improve Security and Safeguarding Measures	Implementation of security measures on site (CCTV) Engage with PCSO's and Constabulary (2 Council Meetings per Year)	Working with Partners (especially Police and BID) especially in the evenings	Ongoing
Christmas Taxi Rank Marshalls	Roll over each year and include in budget	Contractor Required for Purple Flag	Ongoing
Purple Flag	Joint Application with BID	BID & EHDC	2024
CCTV	Work with Partners in delivering Town Centre CCTV service	Partnership with Neighbouring Authorities	Ongoing

# INCLUSIVITY AND DIVERSITY

Disabled Access	Supporting resident led street surveys to identify mobility, access and safety improvements	With Key Partners and Residents	Ongoing
Recruitment of Staff	Ensure that the application procedures and advertisements for vacancies reach all sectors of society and that Council facilities accommodate those with specific needs	e.g. wheelchair access for staff	Ongoing
Sports and Leisure Inclusivity	To support and promote the use of facilities in Bishop's Stortford for all abilities and categories	e.g. support of mixed changing room facilities at Bishop's Stortford Rugby Club	Ongoing
Teenage Facilities	To promote more activities in this specific age group	In consultation with Youth Groups and Schools	2025
Equality and Diversity Sub-Committee	BSTC serves a diverse community and the Council will ensure that it reflects that diversity Sub-Committee to develop and implement an action plan	Co-opting members of the community with specific experience of diversity issues on to the Sub-Committee	2024 - 2027
Stort Pride	Support and promote year-round Stort Pride activities	In partnership with SMA	Ongoing

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# TOWN CENTRE

Benches	Standardise bench styles (where possible) to be consistent and promote BSTC branding	Internal utilising preferred best value contractors	Staggered budget each year
Notice Boards	To reinstate physical notice boards at key locations in Town (not relying on social media only)	To allow partner organisations to advertise on these (especially SMA)	2024 - 2027 (budgeting on a staggered basis)
Planting	Continue planting programme at all sites	In Partnership with Volunteer Groups (including new groups)	Each Year
Stortford in Bloom	Refresh and Enhance Stortford in Bloom	With Volunteer Groups	Ongoing
Public Lavatories	To continue use of site for this purpose in Market Square	Internal and closing Charity previously formed to be responsible	2023 and Ongoing
Pedestrianisation of Town Centre	To further consider options for pedestrianisation (or partial pedestrianisation e.g., Saturdays only)	Consultation with interested parties, especially HCC but also local residents	2024-25
Street Cleaning	To encourage relevant Authorities to take more proactive and thorough street and pavement cleaning service	Influencing HCC and EHDC	Ongoing

# DEVOLUTION AND EXPANSION OF TOWN COUNCIL SERVICES

Land	Consider acquiring and/or purchasing further land in and around Castle Park	EHDC	2025
Buildings	Investigate potential buildings for use	Landowners	2024
Services	To consider devolved services (Births, Deaths and Marriages register)  Licencing (taxi, private hire and street licences)	With Relevant Service Providers (EHDC and HCC)	2026











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historic market town