



**REPORT TO NORTH MONMOUTHSHIRE AREA COMMITTEE
ON WEDNESDAY 30TH JANUARY 2018**

**ABERGAVENNY TOWN COUNCIL TOWN STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN – FOR
INFORMATION ONLY**

1. Background

- 1.0 The North Monmouthshire Area Committee received a report in July 2018, setting out the Town Council's timetable for the preparation of a strategy.
- 1.1 In September 2018, Councillors took part in a Strategy Day to discuss their priorities, and the outcomes of these discussions resulted in the preparation of a draft strategy and action plan. The consultation draft was approved at the Council meeting on 9th January and is attached to this report.

2. Town Council Strategy

- 2.1 The Town Council acknowledges that this strategy is the first step for the Council in setting out its future priorities under the Monmouthshire PSB Well-being Objectives. Due to various limitations at the Strategy Day, discussions focused on three of the four well-being objectives resulting in the statements below. However, priorities and actions are listed for all four well-being objectives as the Council is already engaged in activities that contribute to having a thriving local economy:

Children & Young People

The young people in the town are our future. We need to understand whether the Town Council, working in partnership with other organisations, can do more to improve the opportunities for young people. We have already made a start by talking to schools and agencies working with young people to understand the issues.

Challenges of Demographic Change

Good relationships between older and younger groups creates a stronger more together town. The population of Abergavenny is an ageing population and a priority for the Town Council is to ensure there is provision and support

for the older generation as well as seeking innovative ways to bring different generations together.

Natural Environment and Climate Change

Abergavenny is fortunate to have some fantastic greenspaces within the town and more could be done to enhance these spaces for nature and for people. The Town Council considers it has a role to bring people together to promote greater partnership working and support.

- 2.2 The Town Council continues to reflect on the Monmouthshire Wellbeing Assessment of Need produced in 2016 with special reference to the section on North Monmouthshire. This assessment of need informs the current Monmouthshire PSB Well-being Strategy.
- 2.3 The list of priorities is by no means exhaustive and this strategy should be considered as a first step by the Council to identify where resources should be targeted. In addition, the Town Council has provided more detail on the actions to be taken forward in an action plan.
- 2.4 The priorities are:
 - Ensure young people have access to and are offered appropriate counselling services
 - Increase opportunities for young people to have a say in what happens in their town
 - Understand whether youth provision in the town is appropriate and sufficient
 - To provide engaging and stimulating play opportunities during the summer holidays and free healthy meals
 - Public service provision accommodates the needs of older people
 - Community based organisations provide activities that seek to reduce social isolation
 - Improve intergenerational interaction
 - Reduce the use of single-use plastic
 - To provide voluntary environmental groups with a more sustainable future
 - To encourage the use of pollinator friendly planting in Council funded planting schemes
 - To improve the maintenance and enhancement of Bailey Park and Linda Vista Gardens
 - Contribute to the MCC Green Infrastructure Strategy and resulting projects
 - To reduce the incidences of dog fouling in the town
 - To have cleaner streets

- To have public toilets which meet the needs of users
- To continue to work with town centre businesses and others to promote the town and what it has to offer
- To organise and support a programme of events in the town for residents and visitors to enjoy

2.5 The Town Council has also taken the opportunity to look at how it operates and has identified some actions to make it a more effective, efficient and responsive Town Council. Initiatives such as redesigning the website, creating a social media presence and overhauling the Committee structure are set out in the action plan.

2.6 The Town Council is a small organisation and this is often a limiting factor in what it can achieve. The Town Council needs to be more creative in how it works in partnership with the different organisations to achieve its aims.

3.0 Timescale

3.1 A period of consultation will run until 22nd February and North Monmouthshire Area Committee members are invited to comment. Please send responses to the Town Clerk on email clerk@abergavennytowncouncil.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1

Abergavenny Town Council Strategy & Action Plan

Abergavenny Town Council is committed to improving the town for all residents in the five wards in the town yet understands that Abergavenny and its facilities serves a much wider catchment area. Abergavenny is also a tourism destination with thousands of visitors a year coming to the town. It is in this context that the Council has considered its priorities for the future.

The Town Council has a very clear mission which is “Working for and with the people and communities of Abergavenny”

The Council is required by law to prepare an annual report showing how the Council is contributing to the objectives in the Monmouthshire Public Services Board Well-being Plan. These are:

- Give Children and Young People the Best Possible Start in Life from birth through to early adulthood. This would cover schooling, finding a job or training, having a healthy and active lifestyle and having places to play.
- Address the Challenges of Demographic Change. The area has an increasing proportion of the population classed as older people which means that the services that the Council provides must cater for this age group. Older people have a lot to offer the town and often play a vital role in their communities and have a wealth of skills, knowledge and experience.
- Communities and Business to be part of an economically thriving and well connected county. Connecting people and businesses digitally or through a good transport network is crucial to a thriving economy.
- Protect and Enhance Our Natural Environment and Minimise the Impact of Climate Change. This objective is about looking after and improving our natural environment which also contributes to the economy through tourism, agriculture, forestry and much more. Natural resources are vital to our everyday lives.

Identifying Our Priorities

This strategy is the first step for the Council in setting out its future priorities. The list of priorities is by no means exhaustive and readers should consider this a first attempt by the Council to identify where resources should be targeted. Further refinement of the Council’s thinking will continue.

This document sets out immediate priorities and actions for the Council which will include some existing activities as well as some new ones. There will also be some activities which the Town Council will not continue. The Council has also taken the opportunity to look at how it operates and has identified some actions to make it a more effective, efficient and responsive Town Council.

What do we want to do over the coming years?

Below are the priorities areas identified by the Town Council to explore and take forward over the coming years. This does not mean the Council will stop doing all the things it does now and the list of activities is shown in the action plan.

Children & Young People

The young people in the town are our future. We need to understand whether the Town Council, working in partnership with other organisations, can do more to improve the opportunities for young people. We have already made a start by talking to schools and agencies working with young people to understand the issues but we need to take this area of work forward in a more co-ordinated way.

Challenges of Demographic Change

Good relationships between older and younger groups creates a stronger more together town. The population of Abergavenny is an ageing population and a priority for the Town Council is to ensure there is provision and support for the older generation as well as seeking innovative ways to bring different generations together.

Natural Environment and Climate Change

Abergavenny is fortunate to have some fantastic greenspaces within the town and more could be done to enhance these spaces for nature and for people. The Town Council considers it has a role to bring people together to promote greater partnership working and support.

How should the Council change?

The Town Council has different roles. The Town Council can directly pay for something to happen, it can assist others to make things happen, it can promote different activities and it can act as the voice for the town in discussions with other organisations. All of these roles are important and are not mutually exclusive.

The Town Council already makes a big difference in the town but could be better at letting people know what it does and why and importantly asking how we can improve. In 2017/18, the Town Council prepared an Annual Report for the first time and this was delivered to all households and this set out what the Town Council achieved in 2017/18.

The Town Council is a small organisation and this is often a limiting factor in what it can achieve. The Town Council needs to be more creative in how it works in partnership with the different organisations to achieve its aims.

How we make decisions should be reviewed. Sometimes an issue has to be considered by three different Committees before a decision is made, this makes for slow decision making. As a public organisation that is making decisions on how to spend public funds, we need to ensure that decisions are made in an appropriate manner but we believe we can improve. The public can attend Town Council meetings but rarely do so we would like to understand what we can do to change this.

The Town Council offers small grants to a range of community organisations. In support of the Council's strategic priorities to increase opportunities for young people, reduce social isolation and improve the environment, the Council will refine the eligibility criteria to target its resources in these key areas. This will commence in 2019/20.

Town Council's Civic Role

In addition to providing services in the Town, the Council has a Civic role. The Mayor attends many functions throughout the year representing the Town Council and hosts a number of functions in the Town Hall. The Mayor and the Town Council play a major role in commemorations' such as Mons Day in May and Remembrance Sunday. At these ceremonies the Mayor is accompanied by the Mace Bearer.

Abergavenny is twinned with the towns of Beaupreau in France and Ostringen in Germany and the Town Council is involved in twinning visits arranged between these towns which occur on a yearly or bi-yearly basis.

ACTION PLAN

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE						
Priorities	Action	Partners	Lead Councillor	Timescale	Cost	Comments
Ensure young people have access to and are offered appropriate counselling services	To find out what is currently provided and identify any gaps	Schools, MCC Youth Services, ACE	Chair of People & Communities Committee	2018 - 2019	TBC	
Increase opportunities for young people to have a say in what happens in their town?	Arrange regular meetings with schools	Schools, MCC Youth Service GAVO	Chair of People & Communities Committee			
Understand whether youth provision in the town is appropriate & sufficient	Have further discussions with MCC Youth Service and other agencies	MCC Youth Service, ACE, Aber Community Centre, 7 Corners GAVO	Chair of People & Communities Committee			
To provide engaging and stimulating play opportunities during the summer holidays and free healthy meals	To fund MCC to provide the summer playscheme To investigate how to provide free healthy meals during the playscheme	MCC	Chair of People & Communities Committee	Summer 2019	£12,000 plus cost of providing meals to be determined	

CHALLENGES OF DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE						
Priority	Action	Partners	Lead Councillor	Timescale	Cost	Comments
Public service provision accommodates the needs of older people	To consider older people in service delivery options such as improvements to the toilets	MCC Older people groups	Chair of People & Communities Committee	Ongoing		
Community based organisations provide activities that seek to reduce social isolation	To understand current provision and identify any gaps	MCC Mardy Park Resource Centre Abergavenny Community Centre ACE Bridges Community Centre Community Groups	Chair of People & Communities Committee	Ongoing		
Improve intergenerational interaction	To pilot an 'adopt a garden' scheme	MCC Allotment Society	Chair of People & Communities Committee			

PROTECT & ENHANCE THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT						
Priority	Action	Partners	Lead Councillor	Timescale	Cost	Comments
Reduce the use of single-use plastic	Launch a Refill Scheme To review Town Council's use of single use plastic and reduce	Refill Cymru Plastic Free Abergavenny Town centre businesses	Chair of Environment Committee	Ongoing	Minimal	Launch 1 st December 2018
To provide voluntary environmental groups with a more sustainable future	To work with MCC to increase the number of volunteers active in Friends of groups	Voluntary Groups MCC KWT GAVO	Chair of Environment Committee	Ongoing	£5000 a year	
To encourage the use of pollinator planting in Council funded planting schemes	To direct council contractors to increase pollinator friendly planting	Bee friendly Monmouthshire	Chair of Environment Committee	In time for Spring 2019 planting	No additional costs	
To improve the maintenance and enhancement of Bailey Park and Linda Vista Gardens	To investigate the feasibility of establishing a team to maintain these	MCC, voluntary organisations	Chair of Policy & Resources	Discussions with MCC early 2019/20		

	greenspaces together with undertaking other town based work					
Contribute to the MCC Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy and resulting projects	To engage with MCC on the GI strategy	MCC NRW	Cllr Konieczny	Ongoing	Minimal	
To reduce the incidences of dog fouling in the town	To provide dog waste bins throughout the town	MCC	Cllr T Davies			
	To promote the 'give dog fouling the red card' campaign	MCC	Cllr T Davies			
	To lobby MCC to bring in Public Space Protection Orders in particular areas where dog fouling is a particular issue	MCC	Cllr T Davies			

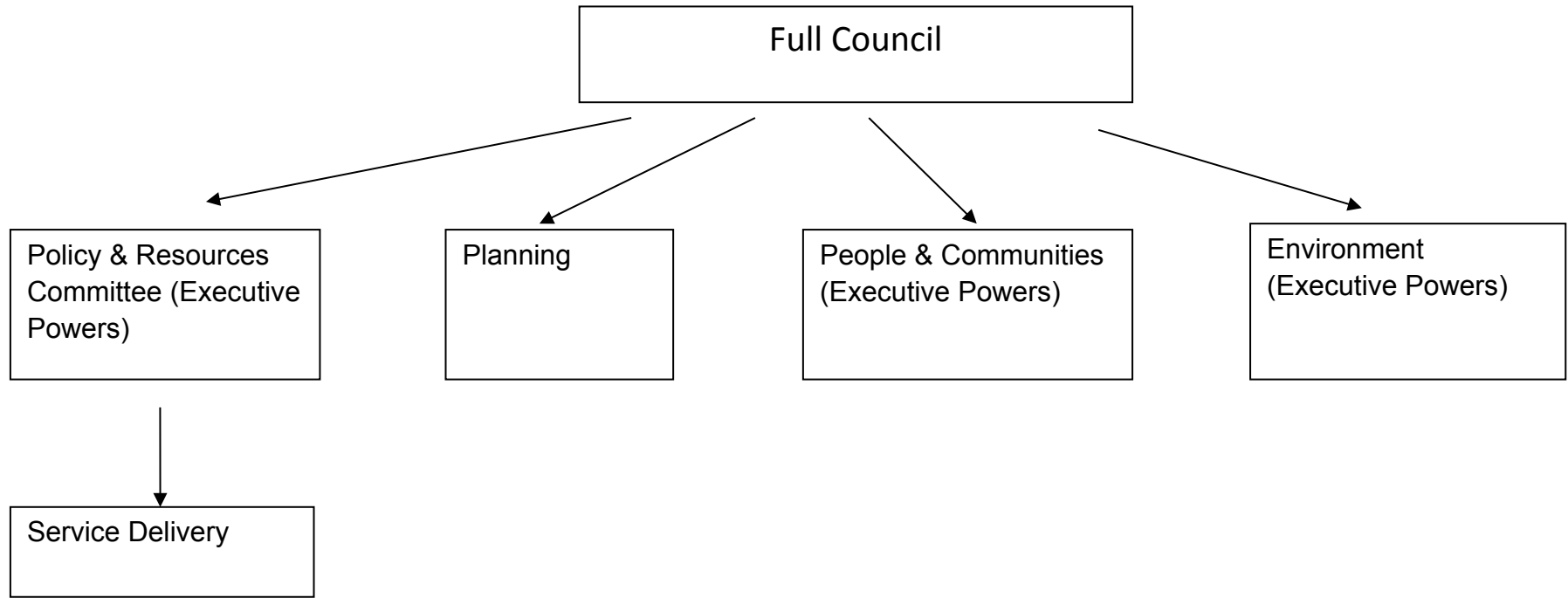
ECONOMICALLY THRIVING TOWN						
Priority	Action	Partners	Lead Councillor	Timescale	Cost	Comments
To have cleaner streets	To review current arrangements which pays MCC to clean the streets		Chair of Policy & Resources	Ongoing		
To have public toilets which meet the needs of users.	To agree a modernisation programme for three blocks of public toilets in the town	MCC Disability groups Baby/Toddler groups	Chair of Policy & Resources	Ongoing	TBC	
To continue to work with town centre businesses and others to promote the town and what it has to offer	Set up a Town Centre Forum Support the continuation of the TIC Support Abergavenny & District Tourism Association	MCC, Y Fenni Business Community, Tourist Information Centre, ADTA,	Chair of Environment Committee	2019/20	TBC	
To organise and support a programme of events in the town for residents and visitors to enjoy.		MCC Y Fenni Business Community Round Table	Chair of People & Communities Committee	2019/20	£2000	

		Community Groups				
--	--	---------------------	--	--	--	--

A MORE RESPONSIVE TOWN COUNCIL						
Issue	Action	Partners	Lead Councillor	Timescale	Cost	Comments
To improve communication	<p>To set up a Facebook page and Twitter account</p> <p>To redesign the website to be more user friendly and informative</p> <p>To issue regular press releases on Council activity</p>	MCC	Mayor	Ongoing	£3000 for website redesign	<p>Social Media Policy required</p> <p>Include in 2019/20 budget</p> <p>Training for Town Clerk</p>
To improve decision making	To change the committee structure and powers of the committees. See annex 1		Mayor All councillors			
To encourage wider community engagement on Town Council activities	To identify methods to capture community views		Mayor All Councillors			

<p>To be more visible in the Town</p>	<p>To improve visibility of the office</p> <p>To publicise Council activity through the placing of a crest or notice.</p> <p>To hold a number of Committee meetings in town venues rather than in the Town Hall.</p>		<p>Mayor All Councillors</p>			<p>Town Clerk office refurbishment will provide direct access to the Council</p>
---------------------------------------	--	--	----------------------------------	--	--	--

Proposed Committee Structure



Responsibilities

Eg Finance (inc grant scheme)

Policy

HR

Responsibilities

eg Intergenerational activities

Youth provision

Playscheme

Responsibilities

Natural environment

Town Centre

Climate change

Partnership/Sponsorship Opps

Events

Abergavenny in Bloom

Service Delivery Sub Committee

Liaison with schools

To oversee/change arrangements

Re Toilets/Dog Waste Collection/

Street Cleaning/Christmas Lights/

CCTV

NB:Executive Powers will enable Committees to take decisions in their own right rather than making recommendations requiring ratification by Full Council. Each Committee will be set a budget for the year by Full Council and Full Council will determine the scope of responsibilities for each Committee. If a Committee has a reason to want to amend the terms of operation, ie requires additional funding/change to responsibilities this request is to be considered by Full Council.