



BEDFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Bedford Borough
2020

Bedford Borough *the place to grow*

Bedford Borough Council Corporate Plan 2017–2021



Executive Summary

Bedford Borough, the place to grow. This is what we want people to say about Bedford Borough in the future. This ambition will guide our actions as a Council and focus our work on helping to realise the potential of the Borough.

Four goals guide our approach, each focussed on enhancing Bedford Borough as a place where people, communities, businesses can grow and realise their potential. Getting this right will require distinctive council services tailored to the needs of local people and businesses, but these must be delivered alongside the things that every local council has to do. What is different is that we will minimise the time and resources spent on activities that others could do better or for less than us, or where the activity is no longer needed, so that we can focus on our priorities and shape the future of a thriving Bedford Borough.

This Corporate Plan sets out how we will do that. We recognise that while we have a good record of delivering Council services while making significant savings we cannot continue as we are. We have less resource and face growing demand and changing expectations. This will continue through to 2021 and beyond but we will continue to be expected to deliver good public services and strong local leadership. If we are to meet those challenges we must build a council fit for purpose both for today and tomorrow. That is why alongside the Corporate Plan focussing on what we will do, we are working through our transformation programme, Bedford Borough 2020, to change how we do it.

We need to operate in a way that is much simpler, and more standardised across our services and functions. Each function will need to be clear about the non-essential activities it will not do any more, as well as the things it needs to do to fulfil its responsibilities, and identify those areas where focussed effort will add the most value to achieving our ambitions for Bedford Borough residents and businesses.

If we do this, our leaders will be able to make clear choices about how to effectively direct resources and effort on those activities that will make the biggest difference for our residents and businesses. Likewise, our managers and frontline staff will have a clear framework and focus for the work they do, with defined objectives and the ability to change how we work. This will mean we will need to be more flexible – not just doing things differently, but also doing different things and potentially new things instead of what we have done in the past.

We need to make it easier to get things done. We will improve how we share information and support people to make the right choices. We focus on realising the potential of individuals, communities and the Borough. We will track key measures in delivering our ambition for Bedford Borough.

By being clear on our strategic direction, we will grow our capability to deliver programmes in partnership with our communities and our partners, operating as one council and cutting across organisational boundaries.

We will regularly review our approach, shifting our focus to where we can make the biggest difference. We will address the root causes of our local challenges by focusing on prevention and early intervention, and by promoting self-care and independence. We will make the most of opportunities to improve the long term wellbeing and prosperity of our people and our place.

These changes will be underpinned by technology which will allow us to automate more of what we do, support new ways of working and measure how effective we are being. Data will provide not just information but intelligence and insight. Our understanding will be based on supporting residents and businesses to achieve positive outcomes, rather than the volume of services delivered, helping us understand what is needed and the impact of different services as a whole rather than as individual silos. This will help us become more responsive, with a structure and governance that supports agile decision making.

We have recognised the need for change. And we have identified the need for a clear framework for development of services and support in line with our overall strategy. We need to make change easier to agree and achieve. We have to provide the mandate to make wide ranging changes if we are to achieve our goals. We can do that by harnessing the capacity for our committed staff and giving them the permission to see it through. Throughout this organisation people are committed to the success of the Borough and do not want to see a decline in our role. By implementing these plans we will have the ability to truly make Bedford Borough, the place to grow.



Introduction

Bedford Borough, the place to grow is our plan for growth. It builds on our Corporate Plan 2016-20 to reflect changes during the year that mean we now face greater uncertainty than ever before as a Council, a Borough and as a country requiring an even sharper focus on how we use our resources.

Over the course of the next four years councils face growing demand for services and acute cost pressures, while at the same time needing to deliver good local services, increased value for money and strong leadership. At a national level we also face uncertainty surrounding Brexit, with potential consequences for the role of the Council.

Over the next four years Bedford Borough Council must adopt a strategy to adapt to this new reality. This will require enabling clear choices about how we:

- Increasingly focus on strategic priorities related to our goals;
- Continue to deliver on our obligations and requirements as a local authority;
- Stop doing things if others can do them just as well without the need for Council funding;
- Minimise the resources, in the wider sense, required to operate the Council;
- Maximise the resources, in the wider sense, available to the Borough; and
- Build an operating model – a way of organising and working across the Council – that is fit for the future.

As a delivery framework, this plan is not intended to be a list of everything we do. Nor is it full of detail on our achievements. We need this Corporate Plan to be a living document, establishing a delivery framework that retains flexibility to respond to different challenges and opportunities within an overall direction of travel. This means Members will still be able to choose how we deliver the ambitions this plan seeks to achieve over the next four years. As a living document there is an expectation of regular updates on progress and development of detailed service proposals within the framework set here.



Ambition

Bedford Borough, the place to grow is our plan for growth. By 2021, by following the delivery framework set out in this plan we want to the Council to be able to look back and say the decisions we took helped to ensure that:

- **Bedford Borough is seen as the place to grow.** This will be a perception of residents, business and partners, including those we are seeking to attract here.
- **Businesses are coming and expanding.** This will be indicated by economic activity, with more start-ups, scaling up and business investment for the future.
- **Schools and colleges are realising potential and enhancing skills.** This will be evidenced by the value added for students, their achievements and enhanced skills across the Borough.
- **People are coming and staying, choosing to live, work and enjoy life here.** People will be able to tell us why they love the Borough, helping us to understand what attracts people to come or cause them to leave.
- **Our diverse communities have strong social interactions.** We will be able to see activity within and between communities, and the absence of tensions.
- **The most vulnerable people of all ages are supported as we ourselves would want to be treated.** This will be evidenced in the feedback from vulnerable people, their families and carers.
- **The quality of the local environment and ease of getting around is highly valued.** Perceptions about Bedford Borough and mobility will be positive.
- **People contribute and engage in building the positive changes that they want to see for their community.** Indicators will show that people are getting involved in decisions, community life and actions that support each other.



This ambition is articulated in this plan under four strategic goals and twelve strategic priorities helping to focus on what we will do. The intention is that this provides a framework that sets out what we are trying to achieve with the resources available to us. This will help guide Members in making difficult choices about where to allocate resources, while supporting officers and partners to develop proposals, policies and projects to bring the ambition to life. Residents and business will understand the rationale for the decisions we have to make, and the role they have to play as responsible citizens.

What we will do

What is set out in the next section is what we will focus on during the next four years in order to get the best for the people of Bedford Borough with the resources we have.

Our Goals

If Bedford Borough is to be the place to grow we need to take action on four connected and mutually reinforcing goals. These goals are to:

- Support people
- Enhance places
- Create wealth
- Empower communities

Support People

We believe that vulnerable people of all ages should be treated as we would expect to be treated ourselves, and that means with respect and dignity. Our role is to reduce risks, support those in crisis, safeguard where necessary and help to maintain independence wherever possible. The actions we take under this goal will relate to three strategic priorities where:

- We ensure timely and appropriate assessment and enable respectful support for the most vulnerable, those in crisis and safeguard where necessary;
- We promote choices that encourage resilient and independent lives where possible; and
- We and our partners advocate and plan for services designed around users not organisations.

Enhance places

We believe that the quality of place matters to how people feel about Bedford Borough in their daily lives. Our role is to enhance the local areas we are responsible for, ensure others manage their spaces and places properly and to encourage positive activities. The actions we take under this goal will relate to three strategic priorities where:

- We manage and maintain the local environment well;
- We co-ordinate action to keep people safe, secure and protected from harm; and
- We encourage cultural and leisure activities.

Create wealth

We believe that economic growth depends on a thriving local economy that benefits everyone. We will actively contribute by facilitating the development of the environment, infrastructure and skills that enable people to benefit from local and regional business growth. The actions we take under this goal will relate to three strategic priorities where:

- We facilitate businesses to start up and scale up;
- We support people to develop the skills they need for employment and enterprise; and
- We support the infrastructure that enables business growth.

Empower communities

We recognise that social growth requires individuals, communities and associations to come together to identify the assets that they have and work together to generate solutions to common problems. The actions we take under this goal will relate to three strategic priorities where:

- We encourage self-help and community action;
- We support people to learn and realise their potential in life; and
- We enable people to engage in decisions and participate in community life.

Connected goals

Each of these goals is fundamental to achieving our ambition but the goals are interlinked, and none can be achieved in isolation. We need to balance good growth and public sector reform. We cannot succeed if we create wealth but fail to support people, and vice versa. The interdependency of our goals should be reflected in how we use our resources, ensuring that they are deployed to achieve multiple objectives and further improve value for money. In the next section we have set out a summary of the process through which we will build greater coherence between our actions so that we can best harness the available resources to deliver our ambition.

How we will do it

Our strategy is to provide greater clarity on the direction of travel for the Council, and the implications for our services, so that Members can agree the choices through which we will put our plan into practice. Residents and business will understand the rationale for the decisions we have to make, and the role they have to play as responsible citizens.

Our culture

We have a positive culture in the Council. Staff work hard and are committed to delivering the best they can for residents and the Borough. We will build on this culture and the commitment of our staff developing mutual accountability for delivery.

Our aim is to build positive engagement in the priorities of the Council, devolving authority and trusting staff to get on with the work within the framework set out in this plan as relevant to their role. We want staff to feel trusted and empowered to deliver on these priorities.



Our capabilities

As we adapt through this period we are fundamentally changing how we operate. To support delivery of our priorities we will focus in our future operating model on the support functions that make a real difference to achieving our ambition.

These will be built into and embedded across our operations, making best use of the opportunities offered by digital interactions that works for the specific needs of Bedford Borough Council and its priorities with appropriate support for people who are not able to use digital means. While benchmarking our functions against other councils is helpful, we will focus on building expertise and excellence in the supporting functions we need in Bedford Borough to deliver good services.

In other areas of Council business we will still need to have a capability, but we will explore how we might access those capabilities for lower cost and better performance. This may result in internal provision, shared services or outsourcing provision to specialist organisations that can deliver supporting capabilities at lower cost than we could ourselves.

We have neither the resources nor the expertise to be expert at everything. We will ensure that resources are directed to those capabilities that support our ambition. This will ensure that we have the right tools for the job, including the insight into our residents' and businesses' needs, and the agility to support their wellbeing and prosperity. Through effective governance mechanisms we will track progress against these plans and the overall ambition.

Aligning our organisation and our priorities

As part of our transformation programme, Bedford Borough 2020, we are creating a sustainable operating model for the authority to adapt to increased demand with reduced central government funding, whilst protecting as far as possible front line services. Our future organisation needs to be sustainable and agile enabling it to respond to the challenges of reducing central Government funding to 2021 and beyond.

By updating the delivery framework for our Corporate Plan in parallel we are taking the opportunity to align our structure, processes, people and resources to our priorities. The key design principles shaping the future of a digitally enabled organisation are:

Customer contact and assessment activity

- We will consolidate assessment activity where we are collecting the same information and/or duplicating assessments;
- We will promote self-assessments and automation where appropriate;
- We will grow our capability to deliver programmes in partnership with our communities and our partners, operating as one Council and cutting across organisational boundaries.

Bedford Borough Council Services

- Minimise the time and resources spent on services where there may be others who could do it better or for less than us, or where they no longer need to be done by anyone.

Support and Enabling Services Activity

- There will be a mixed economy of in-house and external provision of support services with more external provision where others could do it better or for less;
- We will continue to trade our services where there is a need or financial benefit;
- Support service activity will be consolidated, bringing together common processes / activities from across the business;
- The services offered by support functions will be reviewed and re-prioritised in line with our ambition;
- We will drive automation and self-service in back office processes at every opportunity;
- We will adopt standard, simplified processes that are consistently applied across services, with clear process ownership and fewer handoffs;
- Support services will be able to flex and scale up/down at minimal additional cost, to support our growth ambitions;
- Support services will use consistent standards and service level agreements when contracting with service users to manage expectations and focus activity.

Strategic Core Activity

- The strategic core will operate as a corporate service;
- We will have one clearly defined vision, strategy and set of values which guides everything we do for the Borough and is promoted and understood by all of us;
- Corporate strategy will be determined at the corporate level and services will set business strategies within this;
- Business intelligence and management information will be produced from the strategic core. We will have a single consistent version of the truth;
- Organisational silos will be broken down and service plans will be aligned to corporate outcomes. Services will be held to account to achieve these outcomes;
- Processes will be simplified, standardised and shared across the Council.



How we will measure progress

Bedford Borough Council, like any council, delivers hundreds of services across a wide range of functions. In each area we have a number of ways of measuring and tracking performance, including hundreds of indicators and data sets that are required by Government and other regulators. We must continue to fulfil our duties and reporting responsibilities, and each service will continue to have operational measures. We must also continue to operate within our financial limits and deliver a balanced budget each year.

But we will also be reporting measures that are directly relevant to the delivery of this plan and which are unique to the agenda of Bedford Borough. These will provide an overview of how we are performing, and do so in a way that resonates with and build trust amongst residents and businesses, in addition to our day to day operational management measures. We call these the ‘key measures’. Over the course of this plan

we aim to work toward more real time information on what is happening each day and understanding of the underlying trends. It will take time to get there.

Each key measure will be incorporated into a strategic dashboard to enable active management of this plan, with an aim for no more than twenty key measures. Our initial indicators have taken into account the following factors around what makes a good indicator:

- Clearly linked to the strategy enabling an assessment about whether it is likely to succeed;
- Clear definition and articulation so what is being measured and what is good performance is easily understandable;
- Clarity on why the measure matters in terms of progress toward a specific strategic objective;
- Recognition that perception is important as it tracks how people feel regardless of the underlying performance;
- Trends are as valuable as absolutes indicating the direction of travel as an indication of the progress being made and assessment of the forward look;
- Measures may evolve over time - as a living plan we should expect the key measures to change as we progress; and
- Measures may be outside the control of the Council - for example relating to the performance of an overall system where we are dependent on working with others.

Based on these factors the key measures as at the start of the plan are included in Appendix 1.



How we communicate with residents

The delivery framework set out in this approach requires engagement with our residents and local businesses. Our success in delivering the ambition we have set out will ultimately be judged by those who live in the Borough. By engaging communities in shaping how we deliver the ambition for Bedford Borough, and raising awareness and understanding of the choices we face will be better placed to succeed together.

Our future is dependent on an open and honest two-way conversation about what we are trying to achieve and why. To support our communications we have developed a 'Resident Promise' to guide how we interact with residents and businesses, both now and in the future as our relationship rapidly evolves.

Financial pressures are forcing us to transform how we operate and the needs and habits of our residents are changing. Our own research and analysis has shown that increasingly many of our residents want to be able to find information, request services, and carry out more activity online.

Our aim

With this in mind, we are aiming to develop the way we interact with residents and the way we work in order to better meet their needs. This will be underpinned by some core principles:

- We want to use the potential of digital technology to make residents and businesses' lives easier, with the online channel acting as a single front door to our services;
- We want to give residents and businesses a personalised experience;
- We want to harness data analytics to continuously improve the services we (and our partners) provide.

Our Promise

As a foundation for this relationship, we have developed a 'Resident Promise' that sets out what our residents and communities can expect when interacting with the Council and what we expect in return as we work together for a better Bedford Borough (see Appendix 2). In addition and in response to the Equality Act 2010, we have adopted five equality objectives which still remain relevant (see Appendix 3).

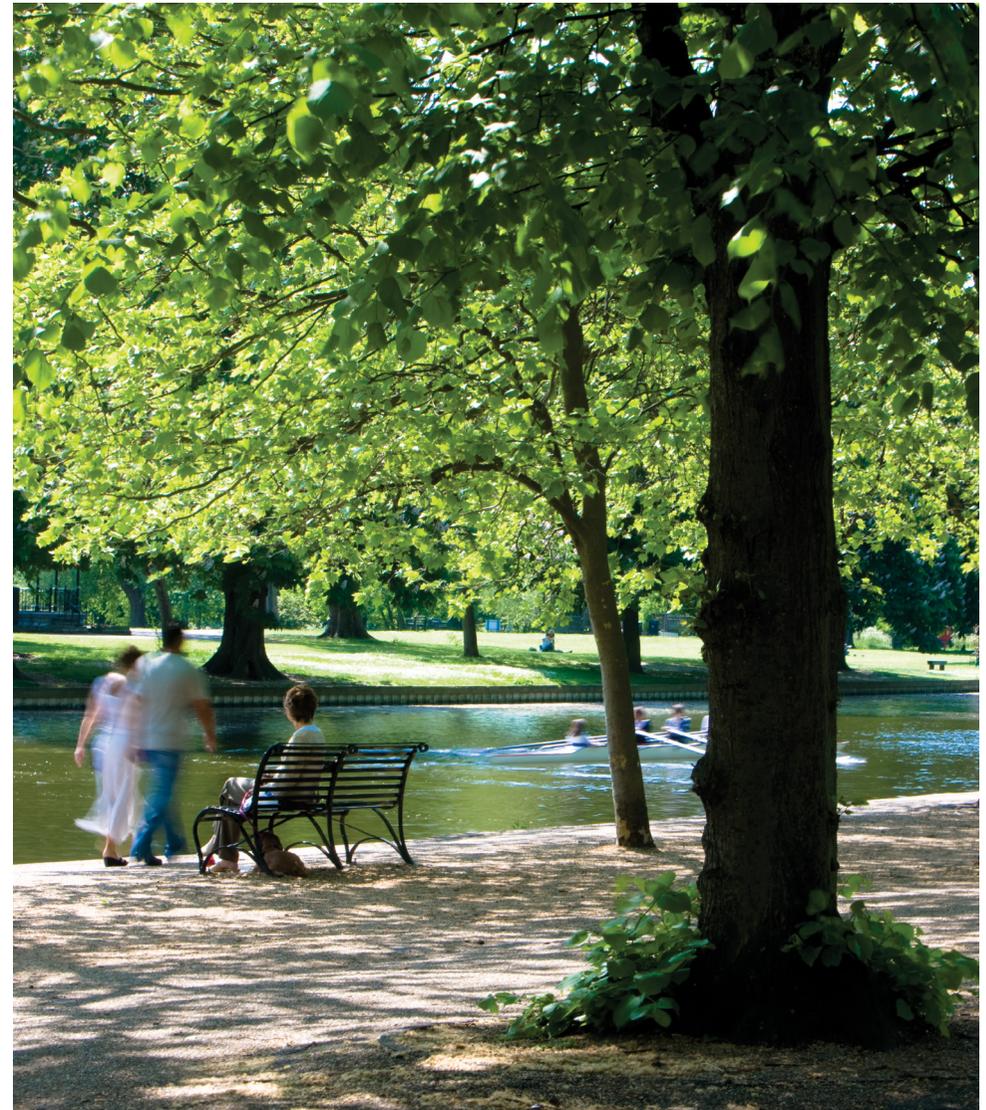


Conclusion

Bedford Borough, the place to grow will be used to evaluate progress on our journey to self-sufficiency while delivering better services, increased value for money and strong local leadership. There will be growing pains as we adapt to this new reality. It is recognised this will be challenging for everyone.

This plan is a living document as a delivery framework that will influence everyday actions inside the organisation. Every member of staff should be able to link individual objectives to the impact we want to make. Team performance will be measured in how well services are focussing on this agenda. But it will also influence our communications and interactions with others. Partners will be able to anticipate where we want to focus collaboration. Residents should notice the impact in the services they receive, but crucially also understand why we have made these choices.

If we can do all of this and embed this plan in our everyday then we will have come a long way on our journey to self-sufficiency and established a clear identity for the Council in making Bedford Borough, the place to grow.



Appendix 1: Goals and Strategic Priorities

Draft goals and strategic priorities for Bedford Borough Council between 2017 and 2021 are set out in the table below. For each priority a key measure will be developed which will provide a strategic view on progress, complementing our financial measures to deliver within a balanced budget. These will evolve as we continue to develop our tracking capability. Fourteen indicators in total are currently proposed.

For each indicator a technical group will work to define the measure, balancing the ability to capture data proportionate to the cost involved with the value to inform decision making. We will also be transparent about what is being measured and how, including any changes.

Support people	Enhance Places	Create Wealth	Empower Communities
SP1 We ensure timely and appropriate assessment to enable respectful support for the most vulnerable and those in crisis	EP1 We manage and maintain the local environment well	CW1 We facilitate businesses to start up and scale up	EC1 We encourage self-help and community action
SP2 We promote choices that encourage resilient and independent lives where possible	EP2 We co-ordinate action to keep people safe, secure and protected from harm	CW2 We support people to achieve and develop the skills they need for employment and enterprise	EC2 We support people to learn and realise their potential in life
SP3 We and our partners advocate services designed around users not organisations	EP3 We encourage cultural and leisure activities	CW3 We support the infrastructure that enables business growth	EC3 We enable people to engage in decisions and participate in community life

Support People (SP)

SP1 We ensure timely and appropriate assessment to enable respectful support for the most vulnerable and those in crisis

This priority will be tracked in two parts.

What is being measured?	PART A: Responsiveness of assessment of need of the vulnerable people and those in crisis
Why is it being measured?	It is an indication of how we respond once we become aware of potential need.
How is this indicator actually defined?	Total time between first contact and confirmation of eligibility using an index of assessment processes.
What does it measure?	Responsiveness of our assessment processes from point of first contact.
When does it measure it?	To develop automated case management data from key processes.
Will the measure absolute numbers or proportions?	Responsiveness - absolute time tracking.
Where does the data actually come from?	Case management data.
Are there any caveats / cautions?	The overall measures will be a composite index of vulnerable and at risk groups influenced by choices of relevant assessments. This will need agreement in development of the technical indicator. Measures will be specific to Bedford Borough and we will be assessing against our performance over time rather than benchmarking.
Rationale	Once we are aware of vulnerable people or those in crisis we should be responsive and complete timely and appropriate assessment of need.

What is being measured?	PART B: Satisfaction of the vulnerable people and those in crisis with resulting support
Why is it being measured?	It is an indication of satisfaction with the resulting support.
How is this indicator actually defined?	Those receiving support not satisfied with the support received.
What does it measure?	Satisfaction of service users.
When does it measure it?	To develop (automated) user satisfaction feedback.
Will the measure absolute numbers or proportions?	Proportion of service users not satisfied (to focus on reducing issues).
Where does the data actually come from?	User feedback from contact responses (to develop low cost collection).
Are there any caveats / cautions?	The overall measures will be a composite index of vulnerable and at risk groups influenced by choices of relevant services. This will need agreement in development of the technical indicator. Measures will be specific to Bedford Borough and we will be assessing against our performance over time rather than benchmarking.
Rationale	Where support is being provided we need to understand user perception of service quality.

SP2 We promote choices that encourage resilient and independent lives where possible

What is being measured?	Whether people we advise return with the same or more serious issues to gauge the impact of our information, advice and guidance services
Why is it being measured?	It is an indication of the impact of our advice to understand what works in influencing behaviour and subsequent choices.
How is this indicator actually defined?	Unique user measure and use of advice services.
What does it measure?	The proportion of those receiving advice who re-present with continuing or more serious issues.
When does it measure it?	Recorded levels and volumes of advice provided, and return customers within 3 months and 1 year.
Will the measure absolute numbers or proportions?	Proportions: share of advice services where customers return for further advice or need more intensive support.
Where does the data actually come from?	Service data for the volume of advice provided, and case management to track whether they are new or repeat customers.
Are there any caveats / cautions?	Effectiveness overall will need an understanding of total interactions with the Council and supported advice services (through an effective Customer Relationship Management system). Effectiveness of the advice will be affected by factors external to the Council (i.e. state of the job market). An absence of re-presenting may not capture whether the underlying issues have been addressed. It will be a composite measure across an index of advice services and their effectiveness.
Rationale	Advice services are seeking to encourage changes in behaviour and follow up action by those receiving the advice. As follow up surveys may include biases and low response rates the intention is to capture those provided advice early who do not go on to need further and more intensive support.

SP3 We and our partners advocate services designed around users not organisations

What is being measured?	Change in resident perceptions about the quality of local public services
Why is it being measured?	It is an indication of whether local public services, irrespective of the organisation responsible, are meeting user expectations.
How is this indicator actually defined?	From a resident survey.
What does it measure?	Perceptions of local public services covering Council, health, transport services.
When does it measure it?	Resident survey.
Will the measure absolute numbers or proportions?	Proportion: Percentage of respondents who are fairly or very satisfied with the quality of the following local services: local health services, local schools and public transport.
Where does the data actually come from?	Bedford Borough Resident Survey - the format of which to be developed to assess the best balance of cost and timely performance measures.
Are there any caveats / cautions?	This statement has been used previously in national and local reporting. A Bedford Borough Resident Survey would require additional resource but could utilise new technologies to complete a more regular resident sample, although it would need to be of sufficient scale to be statistically robust.
Rationale	Public services have the potential to help or to hinder individuals' potential. Understanding perceptions will help to target improvements and service improvement. Tracking this measure will encourage consideration of how user feedback can improve service design and delivery across a wide range of providers.

Enhance Places (EP)

EP1 We manage and maintain the local environment well

What is being measured?	Change in people’s perception of their neighbourhood
Why is it being measured?	It is an indication of whether the local environment is being well managed and maintained.
How is this indicator actually defined?	From a resident survey.
What does it measure?	Percentage of residents who rate their neighbourhood as a very good place to live.
When does it measure it?	Resident survey.
Will the measure absolute numbers or proportions?	Proportion: Percentage of residents who rate their neighbourhood as a very good place to live.
Where does the data actually come from?	Bedford Borough Resident Survey.
Are there any caveats / cautions?	This statement has been used previously in national and local reporting. A Bedford Borough Resident Survey would require additional resource but could utilise new technologies to complete a more regular resident sample, although it would need to be of sufficient scale to be statistically robust.
Rationale	<p>Satisfaction with local neighbourhoods has an important influence on the overall quality of life. In general, a high proportion of adults rate their neighbourhood as either very good or fairly good. However, the neighbourhood rating is significantly lower in more deprived areas.</p> <p>Understanding the variation between neighbourhoods will help to increase satisfaction with the Borough as a whole and inform service planning and delivery.</p>

EP2 We co-ordinate action to keep people safe, secure and protected from harm

What is being measured?	Reduction in avoidable incidents which are regulated by the Council
Why is it being measured?	An absence of incidents indicates successful risk mitigation and management through our protective and regulatory services.
How is this indicator actually defined?	Service reporting on incidents requiring action, such as complaints and enforcement action.
What does it measure?	Volume of reactive service activity.
When does it measure it?	Weekly tracking.
Will the measure absolute numbers or proportions?	Absolute: Number of avoidable 'events' as a result of incidents requiring relevant services to respond.
Where does the data actually come from?	Bedford Borough Council services [and potentially other enforcement agencies / Blue Light services].
Are there any caveats / cautions?	The diversity of services under this objective requires agreement of qualifying service 'events' to make up the indicator. Data sharing costs should be reduced through automation of reporting and data capture.
Rationale	<p>The Council has a key role in keeping people safe, secure and protected from harm. This role includes oversight, regulation and inspection of a wide range of private sector providers.</p> <p>Through a risk based approach to enforcement and proactive preventative action the aim is to avoid reactive service action that could have otherwise been avoided.</p>

EP3 We encourage cultural and leisure activities

What is being measured?	Availability of cultural and leisure events for Bedford Borough residents
Why is it being measured?	It is an indication of the supply of cultural and leisure events, where a reduction would indicate lack of demand.
How is this indicator actually defined?	From events registered with the Council.
What does it measure?	Number of cultural and leisure events available to residents each week.
When does it measure it?	Tracking of registered events to supporting understanding of underlying trends of qualifying events.
Will the measure absolute numbers or proportions?	Absolute: The number of events registered with Bedford Borough for promotion.
Where does the data actually come from?	Cultural and leisure event providers.
Are there any caveats / cautions?	This indicator captures opportunities rather than participation, and would require registration of events. The aim would be to link registration of events with a benefit to providers, through increased communication and promotion of their events. The measure will depend on registration of events so is a proxy of potential availability.
Rationale	<p>By tracking the cultural events and offering registered through the Council the aim is to encourage promotion and awareness of ‘what’s on’ utilising the Council infrastructure / digital platform as it develops.</p> <p>An alternative would be to track participation over the last twelve months but this tends to be background looking and depend on additional surveying / provider feedback. Being able to demonstrate availability, and supporting promotion, will help encourage additional activity.</p>

Create Wealth (CW)

CW1 We facilitate businesses to start up and scale up

What is being measured?	Change in levels of active registered businesses above the VAT/PAYE threshold
Why is it being measured?	It is an indication of the potential strength of the local economy and entrepreneurship of local residents.
How is this indicator actually defined?	Business population at the end of the year (Mar 30) in terms of registered businesses (for VAT and/or PAYE).
What does it measure?	The total number of registered businesses in the Borough above the VAT and PAYE threshold, covering change due to understanding of new business registrations and business closures.
When does it measure it?	Office for National Statistics UK Business: Activity, size and location measured annually and reported in Sept/Oct at end of year.
Will the measure absolute numbers or proportions?	Proportion: The total number of VAT/PAYE registered businesses in Bedford Borough per 10,000 adults.
Where does the data actually come from?	Government Inter-departmental business register.
Are there any caveats / cautions?	Does not capture nascent businesses and early stage enterprises prior to reaching the VAT and/or PAYE threshold.
Rationale	<p>Any increase in businesses is a good indicator of active entrepreneurial culture in the local economy. The number of businesses reflects both the number of start-ups (new businesses) and business survival rates.</p> <p>Small businesses make up the majority of all enterprises and are vital for economic growth and wealth creation. By reaching the VAT and PAYE threshold they are more likely to transition into employing others.</p>

CW2 We support people to achieve and develop the skills they need for employment and enterprise

What is being measured?	Change in the skill profile of the local population
Why is it being measured?	It is an indication of the skills profile of local people and alignment with the skills requirements of local businesses.
How is this indicator actually defined?	Adult skills profile.
What does it measure?	Adult (16-64) attainment in recognised qualifications gained in a variety of settings, including in work.
When does it measure it?	Annual Office for National Statistics survey. Intermediate updates and indications from awarding bodies.
Will the measure absolute numbers or proportions?	Proportion: The proportion of adults 16-64 with low or no qualifications (NVQ Level 4 or below)
Where does the data actually come from?	Office for National Statistics data.
Are there any caveats / cautions?	To be forward looking an assessment of likely performance and attainment would be helpful. The lag in the Office for National Statistics data and reporting level may need supplementary data at a local level.
Rationale	<p>Bedford Borough the place to grow includes developing the potential of our greatest asset - our people. Increasing their capacity to develop the skills that will help create wealth and prosperity. Continuing to develop work ready skills of a higher level, whether in school, college university or in work, will contribute to improved productivity and economic performance.</p> <p>A low level of skills reduces an individual's opportunity to access jobs and opportunities in the labour market. Improving skills is an effective way of increasing opportunities and choices, while strengthening the economic performance of the Borough. Being in work is known to reduce the risk of high cost factors for the Council, such as issues around mental health, homelessness and inequality.</p>

CW3 We support the infrastructure that enables business growth.

This priority will be measured through two indicators

What is being measured?	PART A: Reduction in residential and non-residential addresses where next generation broadband is not available
Why is it being measured?	It is an indication of the digital readiness of the residential and business community, which is considered vital for economic growth and public reform.
How is this indicator actually defined?	Proportion of residential and non-residential addresses where next generation broadband is available.
What does it measure?	Broadband connectivity and availability.
When does it measure it?	Annual The Office of Communications (Ofcom) data.
Will the measure absolute numbers or proportions?	Proportion of households and registered businesses with next generation broadband access.
Where does the data actually come from?	Ofcom undertake this survey.
Are there any caveats / cautions?	Ofcom data availability at Bedford Borough level.
Rationale	Broadband connectivity is vital to the development of a digital economy, which is relevant both for good growth and public sector reform. Increased availability of broadband connectivity will enable the delivery of digital public services and support local businesses to access opportunities for growth and competitiveness. Access from all of the Borough including rural areas will be fundamental to success.

What is being measured?	PART B: Bus service punctuality on key routes
Why is it being measured?	It is an indication of the performance of public transport and punctuality is passengers' number one concern.
How is this indicator actually defined?	Proportion of buses on key routes meeting punctuality standards (the tolerance being up to five minutes late).
What does it measure?	Bus punctuality and reliability of selected key routes in the Borough as a composite index.
When does it measure it?	Needs development and discussion to utilise technology based surveying.
Will the measure absolute numbers or proportions?	Proportion of buses meeting punctuality targets.
Where does the data actually come from?	To be developed - either from automated tracking or travel diaries.
Are there any caveats / cautions?	Availability of existing survey data and need for additional reporting.
Rationale	We want to ensure Bedford Borough is easy to get around for everyone, including public transport users. We also want to encourage a shift in travel choices to encourage sustainable travel.

Empower Communities (EC)

EC1 We encourage self-help and community action

What is being measured?	Change in levels of community action not dependent on Council funding tracked through requests for permission to act
Why is it being measured?	It is an indication of the development of community resilience and willingness to take action without the expectation of Council funding.
How is this indicator actually defined?	Community action that requires Council approval but not funding.
What does it measure?	Requests for permission for community events without associated funding requests.
When does it measure it?	Monthly tracking.
Will the measure absolute numbers or proportions?	Absolute: Number of requests for approval / permission for community action, and the proportion of which are not seeking funding in support of that action.
Where does the data actually come from?	Bedford Borough Council services.
Are there any caveats / cautions?	This requires agreement of the qualifying service 'requests' to make up the indicator. Data sharing costs should be reduced through automation of reporting and data capture. The Council has a key role in approving some types of community action, but this will only be a proportion of the activity that may be taking place.
Rationale	Tracking the community action that requires Council agreement and approval provides an indication of whether those activities are increasing or declining. Understanding the proportion of those requests which are seeking funding as well as approval captures whether there is increasing self-financing of such activity or a continuing expectation the Council will support financially.

EC2 We support people to learn and realise their potential in life

What is being measured?	Change in levels of educational attainment measured through Progress 8
Why is it being measured?	It is an indication of progress made at KS4 across a broad ranging curriculum and overall levels of attainment.
How is this indicator actually defined?	National Department for Education (DfE) measure for each school.
What does it measure?	The Progress 8 measure is based on students' progress measured across eight subjects: English; mathematics; three other English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects (sciences, computer science, geography, history and languages); and three further subjects, which can be from the range of EBacc subjects, or can be any other approved, high-value arts, academic, or vocational qualification.
When does it measure it?	Annual measure based on exam results, with reporting at the end of the calendar year.
Will the measure absolute numbers or proportions?	Proportion: The progress made by students across 8 subjects.
Where does the data actually come from?	DfE.
Are there any caveats / cautions?	This is a new national measure, demonstrating schools role in student progress. The associated Attainment 8 measure will show achievement in the same subjects. Additional measures should be considered in relation to engagement in lifelong learning and wider life skills.
Rationale	Progress and attainment in education are fundamental to providing the opportunities for lifelong learning and progression. Progress at KS4 is a good indicator of the future skills entering the workforce.

EC3 We enable people to engage in decisions and participate in community life

What is being measured?	Improve the responsiveness of public services measured perception of being able to influence local decisions
Why is it being measured?	It is an indication of whether users feel that public services, irrespective of the organisation responsible, are meeting their needs.
How is this indicator actually defined?	From a Bedford Borough Resident Survey.
What does it measure?	Those who believe that they can influence decisions affecting their local area.
When does it measure it?	Bedford Borough Resident Survey.
Will the measure absolute numbers or proportions?	Proportion: Proportion of residents that agree with the statement 'I can influence decisions in my local area'.
Where does the data actually come from?	Bedford Borough Resident Survey.
Are there any caveats / cautions?	This statement has been used previously in national and local reporting. A Bedford Borough Resident Survey would require additional resource but could utilise new technologies to complete a more regular resident sample, although it would need to be of sufficient scale to be statistically robust.
Rationale	<p>Public services have the potential to help or to hinder individuals' potential. Increasing user involvement and designing around their needs should result in increased opportunities for engagement and influence. This should be reflected in an increase in those who believe that they can influence local decisions.</p> <p>Tracking this measure will encourage consideration of how users can engage with public services in a two-way dialogue about the services provided.</p>

Appendix 2: Resident Promise

Context

To help deliver the priorities of our Corporate Plan we need to work closely with our residents and businesses. We need to engage our communities to develop a shared ambition for Bedford Borough aligned to our corporate priorities. Indeed, our future is dependent on a positive and constructive two-way relationship between the Council and our communities. Fundamental to that relationship will be how the Council interacts with residents and businesses and it is a relationship that is rapidly evolving, both for the Council and our residents. Financial pressures are forcing us to transform how we operate and the needs and habits of our residents are changing. Our own research and analysis has shown that increasingly many of our residents want to be able to find information and services, and complete transactions online.

Our aim

With this in mind, we are aiming to develop the way we interact with residents and the way we work in order to better meet their needs.

This will be underpinned by some core principles:

- We want to use the potential of digital to make residents and businesses' lives easier, with the online channel acting as a single front door to our services;
- We want to give residents and businesses a personalised experience;
- We want to harness data analytics to continuously improve the services we (and our partners) provide.

Our promise

As a foundation for this relationship, we have launched a new Resident Promise that sets out what our residents and communities can expect when interacting with the Council and what we expect in return as we work together for a better Bedford Borough.

Our promises

- Accessible – you can get in touch with us regardless of your needs or the place that you live;
- Supportive – you can access the support you need, whether its provided by us, the wider community or our partners;
- Simple – finding and doing what you want is easy and avoids unnecessary confusion or duplication;
- Modern – your experience is enhanced by the thoughtful use of technology;
- Efficient – getting in touch with us and completing transactions is quick and cost effective.

How you can help us

- Provide us with all of the information we require to help you tell us how you think we're doing to help us understand how to improve our services;
- Embrace interacting with the Council online;
- Treat Council staff as you would expect to be treated;
- Take the opportunities you are provided with to support your community and your Borough.

Appendix 3: Equality Objectives

In 2012 and in response to the Equality Act, we adopted five equality objectives to meet the requirements of this important legislation. These objectives were developed in conjunction with our local community and we have continued to report our progress against these measures. The objectives are still relevant and we will continue to work towards them:

- Community Mapping - develop an improved level of understanding of Bedford Borough's diverse communities and their needs through research, data gathering and equality mapping;
- Community Engagement - improve community engagement and secure its role in the development and delivery of services;
- Serving Residents Effectively - delivery of accessible services that respond appropriately to different needs and customer feedback;
- Workforce Development - improve workforce data and address barriers to employment for equality groups underrepresented in the workforce;
- Organisational Values - to develop the culture of the Council so all employees are able to demonstrate commitment to the principles of equality in carrying out their roles, both in the workplace and in the delivery of services.

Finding out more



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