

Press release from Shepton Mallet Town Council 12 October 2020
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Shepton Mallet Town Council adopts its first ‘town plan’; ‘Investing in Shepton’s Future’

The Town Plan has been written by Councillors based on input from residents of the town and sets out the strategic plans the Council has for the next 4 years

Shepton Mallet Town Council today publishes its first ‘town plan’; a document that sets out the strategic vision for the Council for the next 4 years. Based on input from hundreds of community members over the past 12 months, the plan explains what the Council will be focussing on and investing in.

Project lead for developing the plan, Town Councillor Matt Harrison explained “there’s a famous business adage “if you fail to plan, you plan to fail” and over the past few years, Shepton Mallet Town Council has failed to clearly set out it’s strategic priorities and communicated them with the community. This plan is based on feedback from hundreds of community members who completed our survey to express what they liked about the town but also what they wanted to see change. Today we are publishing the document that clearly communicates what we intend to do.”

The plan, written by most Councillors in a series of informal workshops, is based on 5 pillars; People, Place Making, Protected Environment, Play, Promotion. Each has a series of priorities that individual Council committees will focus on between now and 2024. “Given the huge changes going on in the world around us right now, now more than ever before, it’s important the Council is clear on how it organises itself to ensure the town faces into the challenges certainly coming our way but also maximises on opportunities” Councillor Harrison said.

Some of the specific aims include; resurfacing of the market place and town street, renewing all signage within the town, celebrating volunteering networks in the town, developing a tourism plan to pick up where the Tourist Information Centre left off, investing in new play equipment and better facilities in Collett Park and sponsoring projects to improve bio-diversity and ecological protection in the town.

The Council recognises that to achieve its goals, it can't do everything itself. Another reason of having the plan is to communicate it with other stakeholders in the town and work collaboratively with businesses, voluntary groups as well as individuals to improve Shepton Mallet.

"The changes we've recently made within the Council don't stop there" said Councillor Harrison. "Not only have we written and adopted our plan but we have re-organised our committee structure to reflect the town plan pillars. This will make it easier for members of the public to understand what each bit of the Council does and what it is responsible for. Another famous saying in business is "if you can't measure it, you can't manage it" so from now on, within each Council meeting, we will reflect upon relevant elements of the plan and make sure everything we do reflects our aspirations".

Town Clerk Charlotte Starkie has been instrumental in pulling together the plan and brings with her a wealth of experience working in other Councils. "It's great to see the plan finally come to fruition. The galvanising effect this will have on Shepton Mallet over the next few years will be clear to see" Ms. Starkie said. "We can't wait for people to see what we plan to achieve. But most importantly, we want people to continue to be able to contribute to some of the exciting plans we have in place. Please contact us via our website, or via your local Councillor to see how you can get involved".

To have a read of the 'Investing in Shepton's Future' town plan, please visit www.sheptonmallet-tc.gov.uk

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