



RAMSGATE TOWN COUNCIL

BUSINESS PLAN MAY 2023 TO APRIL 2027

(Adopted December 2022, updated October 2024, Reviewed April 2026)

INTRODUCTION

What is the Town Council Business Plan?

It is a statement of the Town Council's vision for the town, its purpose, values, objectives and key priorities. It sets out what Ramsgate Town Council itself can achieve, either directly or by trying to increase its influence on the relevant delivery body, such as Thanet District Council.

The aim of the Business Plan is to give Ramsgate's residents a clear understanding of what the Town Council is trying to achieve and how it intends to deliver this. It details what the Town Council intends to focus on over the next four years. The Business Plan will be used each year to plan activities and set the budget for the coming year.

Why should the town council have a Business Plan?

Having an agreed strategy will provide a framework for the Town Council to work within, enabling it to operate in a more consistent and co-ordinated way.

The Plan helps the Council to minimise risks, and clearly justifies the budget and the Council's actions to all parties. It provides a benchmark for reviewing the Council's performance and shows that the Council has planned its activities with care. The Plan provides a basis for additional decision making and provides clear guidance to your Town Councillors and officers.

At the same time, the Business Plan will help the local community to have a better understanding of what the Town Council does and what it doesn't do, by explaining what issues fall under the responsibility of other delivery bodies such as Thanet District Council and other statutory organisations.

It is a 'live' document which the Town Council will update regularly, enabling us to track and monitor its progress against the key priorities. Because the Business Plan will be publicly available, Ramsgate's residents will also be able to monitor progress.

The Town Council

Ramsgate Town Council (RTC) was formed in in April 2009; there are 16 Councillors who represent seven Wards (Central Harbour, Northwood, Newington, Eastcliff, Nethercourt, Pegwell and Sir Moses Montefiore).

The Council has 13 members of staff who are managed by the Town Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer. Contact details for all the Councillors and officers can be found on our website.

The Council meets monthly and there are four committees: Asset Management, Planning & Infrastructure, Finance & General Purposes and Town Promotion, and a variety of sub-committees and working groups that focus on specific areas of business in greater detail, which meet at least quarterly. All Council and Committee meetings are open to the public, who can attend in person or watch on our YouTube channel. There is also a section of every full Council meeting when time is set aside for members of the public to ask questions or make comments on the Council's work.

Values & Conduct

The Town Council has adopted the model Code of Conduct that sets out the standards of behaviour expected of Councillors. This can be viewed by clicking on the following link - (www.ramsgatetown.org/town-council/policy-and-procedures).

The Council has also committed to the following values:

- To conduct its business with integrity and impartiality
- To remain open and accountable
- To make the most efficient and effective use of resources
- To encourage co-operative and partnership working
- To consult and listen to local people
- To support, value and develop staff, enabling them to continue to improve the quality of our services
- To project clear and positive leadership in the community

Assets

RTC has a modest asset list and actively seeks transfers of assets if funding is available and the transfer aligns with its regeneration policy. The current portfolio includes:

- **Allotments** (Multiple sites)
Freehold of three statutory allotment sites, and lease of two non-statutory allotment sites from the District Council.
- **Charlotte Court**
Freehold. Small town centre courtyard. Acquired under asset transfer from Thanet District Council.
- **The Custom House**
Leasehold of over 100 years. RTC's administrative base and Visitor Information Centre. Part let to RNLI and a commercial tenant
- **The Montefiore Woodland**
Freehold. Five acres of woodland jointly managed by RTC and a volunteer group. Acquired via asset transfer.
- **Radford House**
Freehold. Former Fire Station purchased for community purposes, pending refurbishment commencing in 2025.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The following objectives will inform all activities of the Council in 2023 – 2027:

SO1. Provide facilities and services that promote the health & wellbeing of residents

SO2. Provide a strong democratic and representational voice for the community and work in collaboration with our partners

SO3. Promote Ramsgate as a desirable, thriving and sustainable place in which to live, visit and do business

SO4. Use the Town Council's influence to affect the decisions of public and private sector bodies for the benefit of Ramsgate

SO5. Improve the environment of the town

SO6. Ensure good governance and fiscal responsibility of all Council activities and assets

ACTION STEPS 2024/2025 FINANCIAL YEAR

The following actions are planned for the year 2024/2025, though the work of the Council is not limited by these plans. The Council is always ready to consider new projects and challenges, and some plans may not come to fruition during the year, if for example a contribution is required from other partners.

Some activities also support multiple Strategic Objectives. For the purpose of this document activities have only been listed once.

SO1. Provide facilities and services that promote the health & wellbeing of residents.

How will this be achieved:

- 1.1 Continued good management of over 400 allotment plots across 5 sites (3 statutory, 2 non-statutory). The Council will also look out for opportunities to create new allotment sites.
- 1.2 Progress development of an Open Spaces Strategy, which includes:
 - 1.2.1 Continued maintenance of open spaces on behalf of the District & County councils, and increasing our areas of responsibility to include a number of 'pocket parks' across Ramsgate.
 - 1.2.2 Support and enable the volunteer gardening groups.
- 1.3 Organise various improvement projects with organisations such as Community Pay Back, Pfizer's community team and Ramsgate Town Team.
- 1.4 Undertake "Facelift Thursday" projects whereby public areas that are suffering from neglect are tackled by the team of Technicians (within their capabilities, and in co-operation with responsible landowner).
- 1.5 Maintain Charlotte Court as suitable space for playing of Pétanque, and for other opportunities and activities that may be suitable.

- 1.6 Manage the Montefiore Woodland in conjunction with the volunteer group.
- 1.7 Develop a community centre at Radford House – and in 2024/2025 specifically:
 - 1.7.1 Tender for construction work to be completed, a contractor and final budget to be confirmed, works to start.
 - 1.7.2 Preparation for opening and implementation of business plan to take place (incl. staffing arrangements, branding, advertising, legal agreements, furniture, IT provisions).
- 1.8 Provide community facilities at the Custom House.
- 1.9 Provide funding and resources to assist organisations that help those in need in the community (for example, the Citizen’s Advice Bureau, The Salvation Army and the Rape Crisis Counselling Service).
- 1.10 Continue to provide grants to community groups via the Ramsgate Fund and Councillors’ Ward Grant budgets (for supporting small, targeted projects that benefit their Ward, without having to seek approval of the Council/a Committee).
- 1.11 Provide assistance and encourage Friends’ Groups and volunteering opportunities.
- 1.12 Promote activities within Ramsgate via the CommunityAd Magazine, delivered bi-monthly to all households in Ramsgate.
- 1.13 In conjunction with the Council’s Assets Strategy, work with TDC on the devolution of assets. In 2025 this will include exploring the following:
 - 1.13.1 Cliff Top Shelters
 - 1.13.2 East Cliff Lift
 - 1.13.3 East Cliff Bandstand and surrounding area.
 - 1.13.4 A Beach Club for the East Cliff
- 1.14 To encourage the District Council to provide public conveniences where needed, including season facilities, and consider providing the latter where the District Council will not.

SO2. Provide a strong community voice and work in collaboration with our partners

How will this be achieved:

- Underwrite the development of the Ramsgate Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.2 Produce a Highways Improvement Plan, and identify and fund improvements to be undertaken each year.
- 2.3 Ward Councillors to advocate for residents and provide assistance where possible.
- 2.4 Improve processes for community engagement.

- 2.5 Participate in the Thanet Area Committee, Kent Association of Local Council and the TDC Parish Forum.

SO3. Promote Ramsgate as a desirable, thriving and sustainable place in which to live, visit and do business.

How will this be achieved:

- 3.1 Provide a Visitor Information Centre that aims to be open 7 days per week.
- 3.2 Directly organise the following annual events:
- 3.2.1 Remembrance Sunday Parade
 - 3.2.2 Christmas Lights Switch On
 - 3.2.3 New Years Eve Celebration
 - 3.2.4 Holocaust Memorial Day
 - 3.2.5 Armed Forces Day
 - 3.2.6 Active Ramsgate Initiatives
 - 3.2.7 Christmas Late Night Shopping event
 - 3.2.8 A public event for Operation Dynamo
- 3.3 Provide a budget organisations can bid to for support of community events.
- 3.4 Maintain the RTC events equipment for use by the community for public events.
- 3.5 Sustain civic and ceremonial traditions.
- 3.6 The Mayor to undertake civic and ceremonial duties in the town, attend community engagements and represents Ramsgate at civic events outside of the area on behalf of the town.
- 3.7 Promote Ramsgate as a visitor destination via the Visit Ramsgate brand (website, leaflets, social media, etc), and external resources such as Visit Kent and the Tourism Team at Thanet District Council.
- 3.8 Continue the Active Ramsgate project; promoting Ramsgate as a destination for recreational and active pursuits for visitors and local residents.
- 3.9 Enhance plantings in the town centre.
- 3.10 Undertake beautification projects, including:
- 3.10.1 Decorative lighting displays
 - 3.10.2 Provision of palms and flowers.

SO4. Use the Town Council's influence to affect the decisions of public and private sector bodies for the benefit of Ramsgate

How will this be achieved:

- 4.1 Scrutinise and respond vigorously and robustly to planning applications made to TDC for developments in Ramsgate;

- 4.2 Respond to any planning application/consultation made to TDC outside the environs of Ramsgate which may impact upon the Town (e.g. Manston airport).
- 4.3 Ensure representation is made in respect of work being undertaken by other stakeholders for Ramsgate. Currently this includes various Levelling Up Fund Projects (managed by TDC).
- 4.4 Advocate for increased Police visibility and resources throughout the parish.
- 4.5 Advocate for 20mph speed restrictions in residential areas and other measures to improve road safety and make Ramsgate a pedestrian and cyclist-friendly town.

SO5. To improve the environment of the town.

How will this be achieved:

In 2022 the Council declared a Climate Change Emergency and committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2030. To prepare for this the Council will:

- 5.1 Maintain a Climate Change Task Group with Council and community representation, which will lead on Council approved climate-related actions.
- 5.2 Have a plan of actions within the Council's own remit.
- 5.3 Work with other Councils to share information, partnership and influence.
- 5.4 Have a plan of work with the local community, which includes exchanging information and raising awareness, and community projects.
- 5.5 Have a plan to maximise local resources for climate action.

SO6. Ensure good governance and fiscal responsibility of all Council activities and assets

How will this be achieved:

- 6.1 Implement the Council's new Communications Strategy.
- 6.2 Ensure that the Council adheres to all statutory obligations (incl. Local Government Act 1972, Health & Safety at Work Act, Employment Rights Act) to ensure good governance, mitigation of risk and lawful decision-making.
- 6.3 Continue to invest in our staff and Councillors with agreed continuous professional development and training.
- 6.4 Be a living wage employer.
- 6.5 Use local and ethical suppliers of goods and services wherever practicable.
- 6.6 Ensure that the Council's assets are well maintained and fit for purpose.

- 6.7 Develop an appropriate depot for the Technician team.
- 6.8 Implement the Council's Collections Policy and ensure the safe keeping (incl. cataloguing and safe keeping) of the Council's artefacts and documents, including the Civic Regalia.