



RAMSGATE TOWN COUNCIL

BUSINESS PLAN MAY 2023 TO APRIL 2027

(Adopted December 2022)

Note: This plan was written by the Council for the 2019-2023 term of office in order to inform the budget for 2023/2024. The details may be changed by the Council for 2023-2027 who will be elected in May 2023.

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. And 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, it 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 it provides clear guidance to your Councillors, together with the 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, to clarify what it doesn't do; in other words, to explain 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 it 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 April 2009; there are 16 Councillors that 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 three committees; 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, these 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. And there is a section of the Council meeting when time is set aside for public participation.

Values & Conduct

The Town Council has adopted the model Code of Conduct that sets out the standards for Councillors.

The Council also commits 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 in our planning and consultative activities
- To support, value and develop staff, enabling them to continuously 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 2023.

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. To improve the environment of the town.

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

ACTIONAL STEPS 2023/2024 FINANCIAL YEAR

The following actions are planned for the year 2023/2024, however, 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 due to the required contribution 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 To 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 the areas of responsibility to include a number of 'pocket parks' across the Wards.
 - 1.2.2 Support and enable the volunteer gardening groups.
- 1.3 To organise various improvement projects with organisations such as Community Pay Back, the Pfizer's community team and Town team.

- 1.4 To undertake “Facelift Thursday” projects whereby public areas that are suffering from neglect are tackled by the team of Technicians (within their capabilities, and with consideration of responsible landowner).
- 1.5 To maintain Charlotte Court as suitable space for playing of Petanque, whilst also facilitating a monthly speciality market and other activities.
- 1.6 To explore the viability of a new green space for Ramsgate.
- 1.7 To advocate for the prompt return of a weekly town centre market, working with TDC to deliver this if required.
- 1.8 To manage the Montefiore Woodland in conjunction with the volunteer group
- 1.9 Develop a community centre at Radford House, specifically:
 - 1.9.1 Implement ‘meanwhile’ uses prior to development of the building that will provide essential information required to shape a long-term business plan and provide opportunities and services for local residents.
 - 1.9.2 Confirm any final design changes and take the project to tender, with the intention that refurbishment will commence in October 2023.
- 1.10 Provide community facilities at Customs House.
- 1.11 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).
- 1.12 To continue to provide grants 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).
- 1.13 To provide assistance and encourage Friends Groups and volunteering opportunities.
- 1.14 To promote activities within Ramsgate via the CommunityAd Magazine – Delivered to all households in Ramsgate.
- 1.15 In conjunction with the Council’s Assets Strategy to work with TDC on the devolution of assets, in 2023 this will include exploring the following:
 - 1.15.1 Cliff Top Shelters
 - 1.15.2 East Cliff Lift
 - 1.15.3 East Cliff Bandstand and surrounding area.
 - 1.15.4 A Beach Club for the East Cliff

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

How will this be achieved:

- 2.1 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 To improve processes for community engagement.

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 To provide a Visitor Information Centre that aims to be open 7 days per week.
- 3.2 To 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
 - 3.4.5 Armed Forces Day
 - 3.2.6 Active Ramsgate Initiatives
 - 3.2.7 Christmas Lights Switch On
 - 3.2.8 New Years Eve Fireworks
 - 3.2.9 Christmas Late Night Shopping event
 - 3.2.10 Organise a public event for the Coronation.
- 3.3 To provide a budget for support of community events (application required).
- 3.4 To maintain the RTC Events Equipment for use by the community during public events.
- 3.5 Sustain civic and ceremonial traditions.
- 3.6 The Mayor to undertake civic and ceremonial duties in the town and attend community engagements and represents Ramsgate at civic events outside of the area on behalf of the town.
- 3.7 To 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 To implement the newly revised Active Ramsgate brief; that promotes Ramsgate as a destination for recreational and active pursuits.
- 3.9 Enhance plantings in the town centre.
- 3.10 To 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 Ensure representation is made in respect of work being undertaken by other stakeholders for Ramsgate, currently this includes:
 - 4.2.1 High Street Heritage Action Zone (TDC)
 - 4.2.2 Welcome Back Fund (TDC)
 - 4.2.3 Safer Streets Fund (Kent Police)
 - 4.2.4 Future High Street Fund (TDC)
 - 4.2.5 Levelling Up Fund (TDC)
- 4.3 Respond to any planning application/consultation made to TDC outside the environs of Ramsgate which may impact upon the Town (i.e. Manston airport).

- 4.4 Advocate for an increased Police visibility and resources throughout the parish.
- 4.5 Advocate for 20mph speed restrictions in residential areas and improve road safety.

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 Investigate retro-fitting activities at The Custom house to ensure energy efficiency.
- 5.2 Develop Radford House to be energy efficient using green energy.
- 5.3 Use green energy sources and environmentally friendly products, limits the use of paper and plastics, especially single-use plastics, conserves water and reduces waste, recycling as much as possible.
- 5.4 Consider how to increase tree coverage, possibly using public land outside of RTC's ownership (e.g. TDC land).
- 5.5 Plan for a green community in the Ramsgate Neighbourhood Plan.
- 5.6 Support and promote the green initiatives of the Government, District & County Councils.
- 5.7 To keep a watching brief on matters relating to the quality of the sea and Southern Water's use of the sea for wastewater dumping.

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 decisions are made.
- 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 supplies 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's team.
- 6.8 To 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.