

➤ The Forward Plan for 2009/2014

Draft Consultation Document

Bradley Stoke Town Council is consulting all residents on their Draft Forward Plan for 2009/2014, which sets out their aims for the next five years.

We would ask you to read this document and to comment on the content by emailing forwardplan@bradleystoke.gov.uk or writing to Bradley Stoke Town Council, 7 The Courtyard, Woodlands, Bradley Stoke, South Glos, BS32 4NQ .



➤ The Forward Plan for 2009/2014

Draft Consultation Document

Dear Resident

Bradley Stoke Town Council is consulting all residents on their Draft Forward Plan for 2009/2014, which sets out their aims for the next five years.

Council Members are very keen to get the views of residents and would ask you to read this document and to comment on the content. You can write to us at the address on the back page.

You can also download a copy from the BSTC web site and have your say by emailing forwardplan@bradleystoke.gov.uk

Your views are very much appreciated and we look forward to receiving them.

The closing date is Friday 30 October 2009.

Looking forward to some interesting dialogue.

Kind Regards

Councillor Mark Forsyth
Chair
Bradley Stoke Town Council

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➤ 1.0 Context

1.1 A Brief Profile of Bradley Stoke

1.1.1 History

Bradley Stoke is a large development first planned in the 1970s. It comprises 1,000 acres of land that incorporate 650 acres for housing. One hundred acres have been used for employment purposes and there are 180 acres of major public open space. In 1984 the name 'Bradley Stoke' was chosen, deriving from Bradley Brook and Stoke Brook, which flow through the area. The first turf was cut in March 1987 with a JCB excavator instead of the traditional spade. Bradley Stoke really began to take shape in 1988 with about 10% of the area in the north encompassing light industrial and commercial development.

Some 9,000 houses and flats have been built giving a population of close to 21,000 (14,600 on the electoral roll) with seven schools, playing fields, local shops and a variety of leisure services supporting the residents. The six primary schools are all fully functional and receiving excellent OFSTED reports whilst the Bradley Stoke Community School has recently achieved Specialist School status in Performing Arts and Modern Foreign Languages, with a sixth form to be opened for its first intake in 2010. The Willow Brook Centre is now open, providing a wide range of shops and facilities.

1.1.2 Geography

The M5 to the north and the M4 to the east form two boundaries of Bradley Stoke. The B4057 (known as Winterbourne Road) forms the southern boundary, where Bradley Stoke borders Stoke Gifford, and Orpheus and Braydon Avenues roughly form the western boundary alongside Little Stoke and Patchway. The motorways were cut through the parish of Almondsbury in the 1960s and separated over 200 acres from the main part of the ancient parish which now lies to the north of what is called the 'Almondsbury Interchange'. The area of land in the north of Bradley Stoke that used to be part of Almondsbury parish now comprises about a fifth of the new parish of Bradley Stoke.

A small area of land was once part of Patchway and the remainder came from Stoke Gifford apart from a tiny triangle of land in the bottom southeast corner, now occupied by a factory, which was once in Winterbourne. Only a few of the pre-1987 dwellings exist and these include a small hamlet in The Common (East), where Manor Farm used to be.

Much of the area was medium-grade farmland although a number of attractive natural features such as Savage's Wood, Webb's Wood and Sherbourne's Brake have been incorporated. Four brooks run through the town with landscaped areas around them and a lake was constructed by Wessex Water during the construction of the town.

➤ 2.0 Introduction

2.1 The Forward Plan

The Corporate Plan is a statement of Bradley Stoke Town Council's Vision, Purpose, Objectives and Values.

The purpose of this plan is to provide an overview of the Council's plans to improve the quality of life for all residents, businesses and visitors in Bradley Stoke.

The plan will state the aims and aspirations of the Town Council for the next five years from 2009-2014. It will be reviewed on an annual basis to allow progress to be monitored and revised and will be openly available to residents for consultation.

2.2 Vision for Bradley Stoke

In the 17 years of the Town Council's existence it has always demonstrated that it has placed the highest emphasis on consistency, quality and originality. The Town Council wants to examine in detail its responsibilities, review them and set a viable development plan for the future.

Bradley Stoke Town Council will continue to make significant improvements to the local community by working closely and in partnership with other organisations. These organisations are effective and key contributors. They represent various elements of the community including voluntary, business and public sectors.

2.3 Mission Statement

Bradley Stoke Town Council will work to promote and develop the interests and diversity of this vibrant community.

➤ 3.0 Role of The Town Council

- To provide a democratic and representational voice for the community
- To support and contribute towards the economic and social growth of the local community
- Where the Town Council directly provides services it endeavours to ensure that they are quality services at the most effective cost
- Where the Town Council deals with other agencies providing public services for the Town, it endeavours to ensure that they are dealt with promptly and efficiently.

3.1 Strategic Aims

- To support the residents of the Town in order to ensure that their needs are met by the most effective provision of all services. These will fall into the following categories: cultural; business; educational; leisure; and local resources.
- To preserve and enhance the physical environment of the Town including public and private open space
- To ensure that all Council initiatives comply with the principal of sustainable development

3.2 Town Council Values

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

3.3 Responsibilities

3.3.1 Activity Centres

- Baileys Court
- Rooms, cricket pitch, bowling green
- Bradley Stoke Jubilee
- Rooms, multi-use courts (including Netball, Tennis & 6-a-Side), football pitches, Jubilee Green
- Brook Way
- Rooms, multi-use courts (including Netball, Tennis & 6-a-Side)

The Town Council is committed to ensure that all its facilities are accessible to people with disabilities. All premises have been inspected to ensure that they comply with the Disabilities Discrimination Act and the Town Council will ensure that access to any new Council Offices, Community Buildings and other facilities – by wheelchair users and other disabled persons – is compliant with appropriate legislation.

3.3.2 Play

- Six children's play areas
- Skatepark
- Beacon Play Scheme

3.3.3 Community

- Coffee mornings
- Easter egg hunt
- Annual Festival
- Annual Fireworks
- Mayor's charities
- Financial support for community groups
- Local Produce Market

3.3.4 Communications

- Annual Report
- Annual Town Meeting
- Newsletters
- Website
- Town Map
- Noticeboards
- Responding to external agency consultations

The Council publishes an Annual Report and quarterly newsletter summarising its activities and will look at ways of improving their circulation to residents of Bradley Stoke.

A Town Map will be produced an updated on a regular basis.

The statutory Annual Town Meeting (as distinct from the Council's Annual General Meeting) is held each May to give residents an opportunity to discuss issues directly with their elected representatives.

➤ 4.0 Strategy 2009-2014

Bradley Stoke Town Council welcomes the involvement of all sections of the local community in its decision making process

4.1 Services

The Council provides a number of services to the local population. It will ensure that these services meet the needs of local residents and that they represent value for money. The Council also welcomes the involvement of all elements of the local community in its decision making process and consults residents on all issues of importance. All formal meetings are open to the public with time given for questions and statements.

4.2 The Quality Status Scheme

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs commissioned the University of Wales to review the Scheme in 2006 and their research helped the National Stakeholders to the Scheme to agree amendments that would help councils achieve ever higher levels of professionalism and help to cement their position as community leaders.

As of 27 June 2008, the Scheme changed to better reflect the increased professionalism of councils. In order to achieve Quality Status, parish and town councils must demonstrate that they have reached the standard required by passing several tests. More information is contained in Appendix D.

Continued holding of Quality Status is dependent on periodic reassessment.

Bradley Stoke Town Council is considering achieving Quality Status with the appointment of a new Clerk when the present incumbent retires and attendance by Councillors on the requisite courses. The Town Council is committed to ensuring that all staff are trained and suitably qualified.

4.3 Encouraging Partnerships

The Town Council is one of many organisations working within the community. We have encouraged investment of both time and resources by other agencies to help achieve our objectives. We should continue to work not only with the Unitary Authority – South Gloucestershire Council – but also with the business community, voluntary bodies and local residents' associations for the benefit of the community.

4.4 Crime and Disorder

The Town Council will continue to work with Avon and Somerset Police and other agencies to reduce vandalism and criminal activity within the Town. The provision of CCTV cameras and window shutters in the areas managed by the Town Council has proved to be an effective deterrent. The Town Council will seek to build upon the CCTV configuration in its Activity Centres, and ensure that their effectiveness is reviewed and enhanced as required.

The Town Council will continue to work in partnership with the Safer and Stronger Community Group to reduce levels of crime and the fear of crime in Bradley Stoke.

Council is currently considering the possibility of contributing towards the employment of a dedicated police officer for the Town. Frequent meetings will be held between nominated Town Council representatives and the Police to discuss and review local issues.

4.5 Public Services

The Town Council will strive to ensure that enquiries and complaints received from the public are directed to the appropriate agencies. Enquiries and complaints include such matters as road surfaces, traffic calming, bus services, housing and other benefits, council tax, electoral roll, planning, land registry, births, marriages and deaths.

In summary, we will endeavour to offer frontline advice and support to residents on local issues and by putting them directly in touch with the appropriate public body. Council receives up to date information on many consumer, public safety and criminal matters.

4.6 Recreational facilities

The Town Council maintains three Activity Centres with excellent sports facilities run on a non-profit making basis. Rooms for public hire are maintained to a high standard and are popular for parties and receptions as well as conferences and other meetings. See under Responsibilities (see 3.3 above).

4.7 Public Relations

The Town Council wants to raise the profile of the town but is aware that this task will be more achievable now that a wider range of facilities is available. Individual events, such as the Community Festival and the Annual Firework Display, will continue to be publicised.

The Town is twinned with Champs-sur-Marne in France and schools, local groups and individuals are enjoying the relationship with frequent exchange visits.

We are building on the good communication links that have been developed over the years with the local press and other media.

Liaison with other bodies and organisations will continue.

The Council will continue to appoint representatives to serve on a wide range of outside organisations including local schools and voluntary organisations. We will, where appropriate, ask residents for their views on the services we provide. In the first instance, this is likely to take the form of various consultation exercises.

4.8 Youth Provision

To ensure that youth facilities are maintained and improved within the town; ensuring that the considerable funds allocated to this work is spent with effect and ensuring that, whilst meeting the growing needs of the young community of Bradley Stoke, we provide value for money for the Council Tax payers of the Town.

Council will support South Gloucestershire Council's commitment to build a comprehensive centre for Youth on the Community School site in Fiddlers Wood Lane. Known as "The Hub" it will provide a central base with satellite facilities in neighbouring parishes of the Severn Vale or Southern Brooks area. Council is currently working with South Gloucestershire Council to provide a temporary youth service at Brook Way Activity Centre until "The Hub" is completed.

➤ 5.0 Priorities For Improvement

5.1 Consultation

The Town Council considers its primary role to be 'to provide a democratic representational voice for the Bradley Stoke community' and has been committed to consulting widely on both its performance and changing local community aspirations and needs. Over the past year or so it has used the following range of methods for consultation:

- Town meeting
- Focus group meetings
- Town newsletter, leaflets
- Local press & on-line newspapers
- Website
- Multi-agency partnership groups

The Town Council also organizes monthly Saturday morning surgeries which are attended by Town Councillors – who may also be South Gloucestershire Councillors – in order to meet with local residents.

5.2 Review Programme

5.2.1 Leisure Issues

The Town Council will continue to implement the improvement plans from its completed reviews. Key actions during the coming years include:

5.2.2 Activity Centres, Rooms and Sports Facilities

- Maintenance, refurbishment and repainting as necessary
- Renewing furniture as required
- Improving facilities as required
- Maintenance of multi-purpose courts
- Encouraging development of youth bowling

5.2.3 Play Areas

- A rolling programme is in place for replacement of equipment in all play areas.

5.2.4 Football

- Improving drainage of football pitches

5.2.5 Environment

The Town Council will ensure that the areas of amenity land for which it is already responsible are well maintained to a high standard.

- We will protect and enhance our local environment and encourage the use of sustainable resources
- The Jubilee Green and Beacon Play Scheme is intended for informal play and leisure activities for all ages

5.2.6 Landholdings

The Council owns one small pocket of land – approx ¼ acre – which is part of an informal open space alongside Bradley Stoke Way. All other land operated by the Town Council is on long lease from South Gloucestershire Council.

In recent months, Council has been presented with a petition requesting allotments to be made available to residents. In response, the council is investigating the acquisition of land outside the parish to meet the demand.

5.2.7 Council Offices

The growth and raised profile of the Town Council and the obvious needs for suitable accommodation for staff, the public and members of Council are all factors which have accelerated the need to provide suitable premises. Working parties have been set up by Council to explore the options available and to review the staffing structure.

5.2.8 IT Issues

Town Council staff will maximise the use of IT resources, making increasing use of e-mail and further development of the website. In the longer term Council will consider the possibility of desktop publishing, artwork and presentational material. A Members' Intranet will also be created.

In the next five years, planning should be made to migrate to new and more powerful hardware.

- Operating systems will be enhanced according to business need.
- The website will be enhanced further to satisfy increasing demand from residents, businesses and students undertaking projects on Bradley Stoke.
- The Council will also consider and evaluate alternative application systems dependent on business needs.

5.2.9 Accounting issues

The Town Council currently utilises nationally accepted accounting and payroll software packages and adheres to the requirements of The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 as amended by The Accounts and Audit (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2006. As current turnover falls within the £200K and £1 million thresholds, final accounts are prepared on an 'income and expenditure' basis in line with an intermediate audit. Turnover is expected to exceed the upper limit within the next five years and therefore a full audit and increased charges will apply although the current accounting structure and Financial Statement are already based upon the requirements of a full SoRP audit.

5.2.10 Banking Issues

The Town Council currently uses a bank which is recognised by NALC (National Association of Local Councils) and follows an ethical policy in line with those accepted by Council.

The Town Council is in the process of establishing another account(s) in order to facilitate an emergency transfer of funds as approved by Council at its meeting of 15 July 2009.

Emergency transfer of funds to be included in Financial Regulations.

'Delegated powers be given the Town Clerk and Finance Officer/RFO (in conjunction with) The Chair of Council, Chair of Finance and Leisure and The Chair of Planning, to be able to act immediately in the event of a significantly enhanced indication of risk attached to a particular bank or financial institution, in order to transfer funds to another institution immediately should it be deemed necessary to do so'.

The Town Council continues to receive payment of bills and invoices by either cash or cheque. Many of the Town Council's customers have increasingly requested payment by debit card instead of cheques and Council will investigate the acceptance of payment of its invoices by this means.

5.2.11 Review of Strategy

The Town Council will review this Corporate Plan annually so that our priorities are adequately reflected.

➤ A. Financial Projections

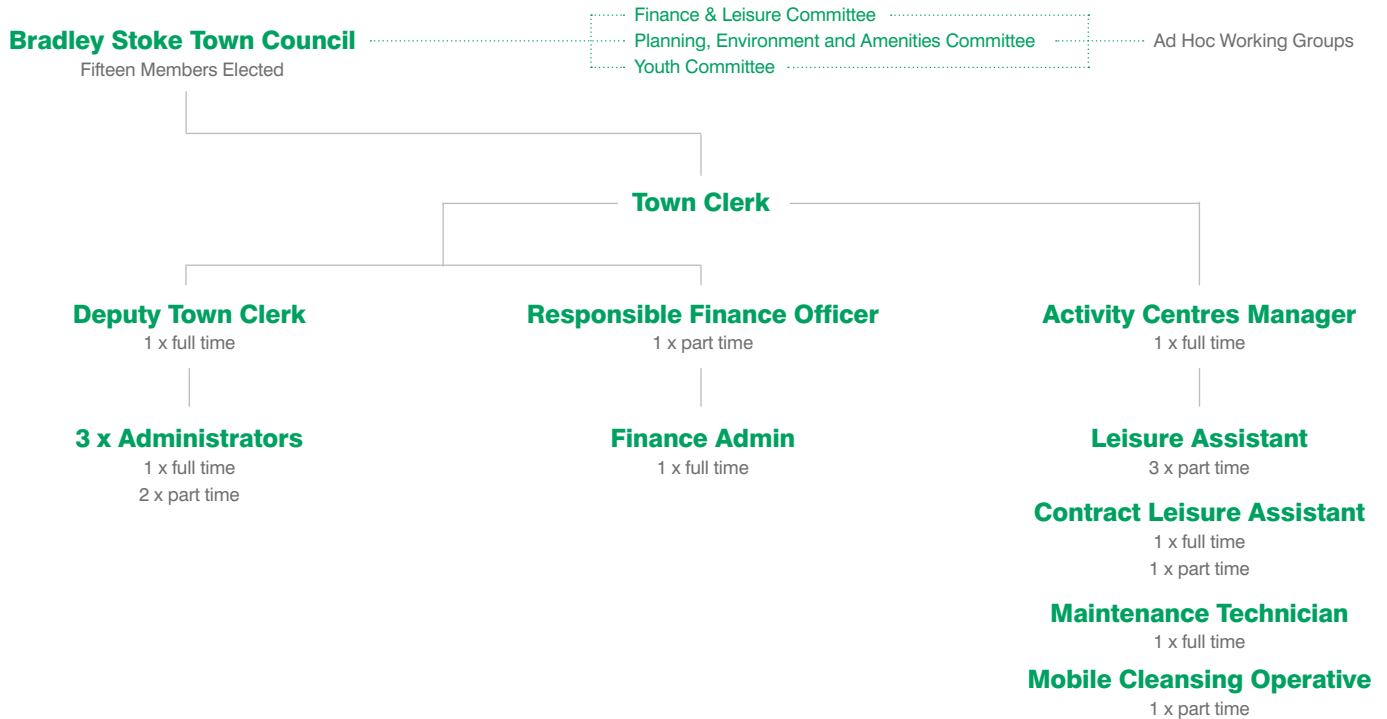
5 Year Budget Plan Summary

	Approved Budget 2008/9 @ Year End	Approved Budget 2009/10 @ Amended June 09	Projected Budget	Projected Budget	Projected Budget	Projected Budget
Income						
Bank Interest/Investment Income	£16,400	£7,200	£7,200	£7,200	£7,200	£7,200
Activity Centres Income	£125,800	£122,500	£128,520	£132,376	£133,897	£137,914
Training Income	£100	£200	£200	£200	£200	£200
Total Income	£142,300	£129,900	£135,920	£139,776	£141,297	£145,314

Expenditure						
Non Activity Centre Costs	£509,306	£531,567	£551,430	£568,956	£587,087	£609,030
Community/ Firework Events	£28,300	£28,800	£30,930	£32,477	£34,100	£35,805
Grants and Other Funding	£124,227	£141,550	£143,902	£150,521	£157,463	£164,745
Office Expenditure	£661,833	£701,917	£726,262	£751,954	£778,651	£809,581
Bradley Stoke Jubilee Centre	£89,453	£91,960	£99,348	£104,037	£108,954	£114,112
Brook Way Activity Centre	£37,144	£39,809	£43,413	£45,440	£47,565	£49,793
Baileys Court Activity Centre	£94,858	£94,948	£99,398	£104,064	£108,957	£114,088
Activity Centres Running Costs	£221,455	£226,717	£242,160	£253,541	£265,476	£277,993
New Assets	£43,010	£9,560	£10,800	£11,165	£11,548	£11,951
Planned Projects	£12,711	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Total Expenditure as per budget overleaf	£939,009	£938,194	£979,222	£1,016,660	£1,055,675	£1,099,514
Adjustments to/from Reserves at Year End	£0	£0	-£3,125	£18,900	£10,600	£16,000
Total budget + reserve adjustment	£939,009	£938,194	£976,097	£1,035,560	£1,066,275	£1,115,524

Shortfall						
Difference Between Income and Expenditure	£796,709	£808,294	£840,177	£895,784	£924,978	£970,210
Less:						
Previous Year End Balance C/FWD	£37,134	£44,017				
Funding Shortfall	£759,575	£764,277	£840,177	£895,784	£924,978	£970,210
Possible Achievable Precept	£768,904	£775,259	£802,393	£830,477	£863,696	£902,562
	Approved	Approved	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected
Projected year end position		£10,982	£37,784	-£65,307	-£61,282	-£67,648

➤ B. Council, Committee and Staffing Structure



➤ C. Quality Status

A commitment to excellence for your community

“Local Councils are vital to re-invigorating local democracy. The Quality Parish and Town Council Scheme has played an important role in improving the quality of management and administration of parish and town councils. The Government welcomes the revision of the Scheme and encourages local councils to consider seeking accreditation.”

Hazel Blears, Secretary of State, Communities and Local Government.

The Quality Parish and Town Council Scheme was launched in 2003 following the Government’s Rural White Paper, 2000. The aim of the Scheme is to provide benchmark minimum standards for parish and town councils. The Scheme is supported by six National Stakeholders, the Commission for Rural Communities,

the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Local Government Association, the National Association of Local Councils and the Society of Local Council Clerks.

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs commissioned the University of Wales to review the Scheme in 2006 and their research helped the National Stakeholders to the Scheme to agree amendments that would help councils achieve ever higher levels of professionalism and help to cement their position as community leaders.

As of 27 June 2008 the Scheme is changing to better reflect the increased professionalism of councils. There are now three tests which are highlighted below but there are also a number of amendments to some of the existing tests, again mentioned below.

In order to achieve Quality Status, parish and town councils must demonstrate that they have reached the standard required by passing several tests. These are:

- Electoral Mandate
- Qualifications of the Clerk
- Council meetings
- Communication and Community Engagement
- Annual Report
- Accounts
- Code of Conduct
- Promoting local democracy and citizenship
- Terms and Conditions
- Training

