

Bingham Town Council Improvement Board Action Plan

UPDATED: 26.09.22

Action	Update
GOVERNANCE	
All agendas should be drawn up by the Clerk on behalf of Members with sufficient notice to meet set publication deadlines	All agendas are produced by the Clerk in consultation with the Chair or the Council/Committee and are published with at least 3 clear days' notice, not including the date of the agenda and the day of the meeting.
Reports for agenda items should be written by the Clerk, with appropriate input from Members so they can be circulated with the agendas	Reports are produced by the Clerk with links to information and advice received where appropriate.
Reports should be produced by the Clerk, not Members, to comply with Forward Plan and Agenda publication timetables, with sufficient notice; and all Members should be provided with the reports by the publication date, <u>without exception</u>	All Councillors are provided with the reports produced, regardless if they are members of the committee that is due to meet.
Where verbal advice is given, then this needs to be codified in a report for the agenda to which it is linked and verbal updates, as occurred with the advice provided by the Council's previous HR firm avoided	Reports that contain verbal advice given to the Clerk is confirmed in writing with the appropriate advisor.
If there are legitimate confidential items, and HR matters are confidential items, they should be considered in the confidential section of the agenda. Again, there should be reports for other Members to see and comment on in this confidential section	Confidential reports are shared with all Councillors. The Clerk will determine prior to issuing the agenda if the item should be considered as confidential and the items will be listed on the agenda.
All Members are elected and are entitled to see reports setting out the reasons for any recommended course of action on their agenda	All Councillors receive all reports and agendas, regardless of their membership of committees.
What Members subsequently vote on is a matter for the established democratic process, but just because there may be a majority group there is no excuse to exclude other Members who are not part of any such grouping from access to reports, their background information or to undermine their position in the decision making process	No Councillor is excluded from receiving reports or attending a committee that they do not have membership of. Councillors who are not members of committees, cannot vote, but are able to take part in the debate if they attend the meeting of the committee.
STRUCTURE	
The Council can save money and streamline its decision-making processes. The Improvement Board's independent view is that the Council is significantly over structured and could reduce the amount of bureaucracy to four main areas:	The Council voted in May to change to join the Community & Environment Committee and Recreation & Amenities Committee. The HR Committee would meet biannually or as required and two task and

Action	Update
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Full Council ▪ An official HR Sub Committee reporting to Full Council on staffing matters ▪ Planning ▪ Policy & Resources which will incorporate all the other functions not reserved for Full Council or Planning <p>Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monthly meetings of Full Council, with Planning or other meetings called as necessary. 	<p>finish committees were formed to progress the Council's two major projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full Council • Planning (Executive Committee) • Finance, Policy and Resources • Community, Recreation and Amenities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR Committee – meeting at least twice yearly • Wynhill Re-Development Committee – meets as the project requires • Car Park Committee – meets as the project requires
<p>Consideration be given to amalgamating the position of Chairman and the role of leading the majority group</p>	<p>The Council voted to remove politics from its committee structure and the Council currently has a Conservative Mayor and an Independent Deputy Mayor.</p>
<p>TRAINING</p>	
<p>The Board have requested the Council's training programme be published at the evening's meeting so there can be no ambiguity to any Member about what training modules are available to them and who has been on what modules.</p>	<p>The training information was published at the annual meeting on 24 May 2022 and training opportunities continue to be shared with all Councillors.</p>
<p>All Members should receive social media training.</p>	<p>Social Media training has been offered to all cllrs via Breakthrough Training as part of the civility and respect project.</p>
<p>New Members joining the Council should be required to undertake training sessions in planning, finance, and council administration.</p>	<p>New Cllr training is provided within the first six months. Separate Finance training is available via the Parkinson partnership.</p>
<p>New Mayors, if they are to Chair Council meetings, should go on a suitable management of meetings training course and ensure that any behavioural problems are sorted out at the meetings they preside over.</p>	<p>NALC provide this and it is also available through Breakthrough Training.</p>
<p>NALC training be put in place about the roles and responsibilities of the Proper Officer so that everyone understands how this role should operate in a political environment like the Town Council. It is a unique role unlike many other jobs.</p>	<p>This is included in NALC's new cllr training sessions.</p>
<p>Leading Members engage with NALC regarding peer reviews and political mentoring.</p>	<p>NALC are currently unable to offer this service locally.</p>
<p>CONDUCT</p>	

Action	Update
Members need to ensure they comply with the highest standards of behaviour when interacting with each other in formal settings (the Board did see this at the Council meeting its members attended).	The Full Council agenda for 04 Oct 2022 will include the Civility and Respect Pledge for adoption.
Any future unacceptable behaviour patterns by any Member with staff should be challenged and not supported by other Members in subsequent votes. (This includes with group discussions, If Members are unhappy with reports they should simply vote against reports or defer them until they are.)	Policies in place and Councillors accept that they have the opportunity to vote for, against, abstain or defer the item.
Importantly high standards of behaviour includes comments on social media which can be quite pernicious and lead to residents forming a poor impression of the Council.	Social Media training has been offered to all cllrs via Breakthrough Training as part of the civility and respect project.
Complaints - tit for tat complaints about behaviour to the Monitoring Officer should be avoided, and any issue warranting a formal complaint only be made in extremis about substantive issues or potential illegality if they cannot be resolved locally by the Mayor or the Clerk in the first instance. If there are patterns of behaviour, recording separate instances of it, rather than any complaints about individual episodes, will assist.	There have been no complaints from members made about other members since the improvement board was presented to the Town Council.
The Chair also needs to take firmer control of meetings and rule out any poor behaviour or comments. Similarly at formal meetings Members should address all their comments through the Chair, thereby avoiding any charged personal exchanges.	Meetings are led by the Chair and training is available to assist with supporting Cllrs in this role. The Clerk works closely with committee Chairs on agenda's and meeting preparation.
To demonstrate its commitment to improving standards Bingham Town Council should sign up to the national pledge on civility and respect promoted by the society of local council clerks and National Association of Local Councils:	The pledge will be considered at the 04 October Full Council meeting.
To treat other councillors, Clerks and all employees, members of the public and representative of partner organisations and volunteers with civility and respecting their role. https://www.nalc.gov.uk/library/our-work/civility/3657-bullying-and-harrassment-statement-poster/file	The poster was agreed to be displayed by the Council and is on display in the Council Chamber and staff offices.
SERVICE DELIVERY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	

Action	Update
<p>The Council should build on the “Statement of Activity” included in its council tax precept and agree and publish a Community Plan about what it wants to achieve in the short, medium and longer term. This will help manage local expectations.</p>	<p>The Clerk has been asked to produce a strategic plan and this work is ongoing.</p>
<p>Within this there should be timescales and costings of what the resources are to meet them. Officer expertise (or gaps, such as project management for example) and capacity need to be taken into account, but it will be clear to everyone what is sought to be achieved.</p>	<p>Outstanding – action to complete is with the Clerk</p>
<p>The Council should consult the community on this draft plan and adopt an inclusive dialogue with local residents so there is sound two way communications with an interested and engaged electorate.</p>	<p>Once Council have approved the plan, communication and consultation plans will be agreed by the Full Council.</p>
<p>Once that exercise is completed then yearly milestones should be established and reports to Members flow throughout the year to make sure they happen, including any corrective action that may be required.</p>	<p>Currently all outstanding actions are reported to every committee, with the opportunity to raise queries on progress.</p>
<p>ADVOCACY FOR BINGHAM</p>	
<p>The Town Council cannot afford to complete all the things it aspires to with the resources it has either in reserves or through its current precept. The Council adopted a Bingham Strategy Report in 2015, almost all the issues in it have not changed. Sometimes these major tasks are beyond a lower tier council’s capacity and therefore the only way they are going to happen is through the work with others, as the Bingham Leisure Centre experience demonstrates.</p>	<p>The Town Council have looked for partnership working for the car park project and will be considering an offer to work with the Borough Council on progressing this larger project.</p>
<p>By assembling a coherent and linked Community Plan (see “Ambition & Community Involvement” above) Bingham will be able to engage with other stakeholders and lever in far more resources than it will be able to do so by itself with the limited capacity and expertise it has.</p>	<p>The Town Council will be considering support from Rushcliffe Borough Council to progress the largest of its priorities – long stay parking provision. The Council has shown support for project managers to be engaged for larger projects to assist with specialist knowledge and capacity.</p>
<p>This is a major opportunity for the Council and provides the ways and means to respond to such local demand as the <i>Brilliant Bingham</i> report, without increasing the local precept substantially.</p>	<p>Bingham Growth Board agenda item requested.</p>
<p>There is support of community through the giving of grants, but there could be a more active approach though co-production of developments - something akin to the development of the CLP or the Neighbourhood Plan but with the Town Council working with, and alongside residents. This would both develop and encourage greater engagement and meaningful discussion that goes beyond public attendance and engagement through, for example, the full council meetings.</p>	<p>The Council have employed the services of Welham Architects to engage in consultation with residents and key stakeholders for potential community land uses off Chapel Lane.</p>

DRAFT