



**MALDON TOWN COUNCIL
FORWARD BUSINESS PLAN 2018-2022**

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Objectives

The purpose of this Forward Business Plan is to enable Maldon Town Council to work in a co-ordinated way in the best interests of all who live, work and visit Maldon and use the Town Council's services. This is a central part of the Town Council's vision, purpose, aims, objectives and values.

A Plan ensures that the Council can take a measured and consistent approach to:

- The design and delivery of existing services
- The identification of improved facilities and services
- The prioritisation and allocation of resources
- The achievement of Value for Money and best practice

This document provides an overview of the Council's plans to improve the quality of life for all the town's residents, businesses, and visitors. The plan will set out the aims and objectives of the Town Council for a three-year period. The plan will be regularly reviewed to monitor progress and to update the plan.

The Plan will influence the direction and content of all other internal strategies and the use of resources of the Council, particularly through the budget process. There will be internal pressure arising from plans to improve service quality and the availability of resources. External pressure will arise from factors such as Government policy, legislation, strategic plans and partnerships.

1.2 The Town and its Council

Maldon is an historic maritime, market town in the County of Essex, situated on high ground at the head of the Blackwater estuary. Archaeological evidence indicates it has been settled since prehistoric times and was known to the Romans, Saxons, Vikings and Normans. It first appears in the written record in the 10th century, was the location of an Anglo-Saxon burgh fort and the location of the famous Battle of Maldon in 991. The town was granted a Royal Charter by Henry II in 1171.

Maldon is world famous for its annual Maldon Mud race, Maldon salt and the Thames sailing barges that can still be seen at the Hythe.

At the centre of Maldon is a market town with its own unique character and charm. It has an attractive Town Centre with many fine historic buildings. It is important to the people of Maldon that this character and historical image is retained. These assets provide a solid foundation for future economic improvement. A good Town Centre may be judged by the variety and quality of its shops and places for people to socialise. The town has a good mix of independent retailers as well as some national retailers. Many arts and entertainment events take place in the town that support the local economy, such as the Vintage Christmas Fayre, Cabbie Day, when Maldon is visited by a London taxi charitable outing for disabled and disadvantaged children, and annual Carnival, events which attract many visitors to the Town Centre. The long term strategy for the Town Centre is that it should have a vibrant day and evening economy.

The town has one secondary Academy, five primary schools and several pre-schools. There are places of worship in the Town Centre and industrial areas on either side of the town. The Blackwater Retail Park is the latest business development and this will eventually include an hotel.

Maldon's maritime history is still evident along the Quayside, with its historic Thames sailing Barges, and other traditional craft including a 1945 steam tug, undergoing restoration. The Promenade Park continues to offer a well patronised green open space and a number of recreational facilities. A short walk from the town centre is the historic hamlet of Beeleigh with its abbey and the remains of a Steam Water Mill. Nearby is the Museum of Power, located in the former Southend Waterworks, in Langford. In Maldon's Station Road is the Combined Military Services Museum, which contains a unique national collection of weaponry through the ages. The Museum in the Park, at the gates of the Promenade houses a collection

of historical objects reflecting the social, domestic and industrial history of Maldon and the surrounding district.

Since its inception, Maldon Town Council has taken over a number of assets from Maldon District Council, but has also developed its own activities. The Town Council has premises in Maldon which provides its offices and a Town Hall, and is also responsible for two historic Grade 1 listed buildings; the Moot Hall and St Peter's Church (the latter houses the Plume Library as well as the Maeldune Heritage Centre). It also cares for the remains of St. Giles medieval leper hospital in Spital Road. Maldon is twinned with Cuijk in the Netherlands and Villeparisis in France and has an active Twinning Association.

1.3 The Town Council's Role

The Council sees its role as:

- Representing Maldon on key strategic issues to ensure the best outcome for our residents and businesses;
- Supporting the economic prosperity of the Town Centre, by promoting Maldon, organising the Town Centre Christmas Lights display, the Vintage Christmas Fayre, and the summer Town Centre floral displays;
- Preserving and enhancing the history and environment of the town. It does this by co-ordinating the Heritage Weekend activities within the town, supporting local venues to work together as a Heritage Group. Promoting Maldon, its heritage and traditions with civic events such as Remembrance Sunday and Merchant Navy Day;
- Maintaining, improving and extending council services and facilities for all sections of the community;
- Supporting the many local organisations and clubs to continue their vital work in the town;
- Representing Maldon by liaising with other authorities on key strategic issues, and,
- Communicating openly and transparently with residents by ensuring that the information on the council's website is accurate and up to date.

1.4 Structure of the Town Council

The Council consists of 15 councillors representing the four wards of Maldon, and it employs 3 full-time and 4 part-time members of staff. Councillors are elected every 4 years.

The Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor are elected annually by councillors at the Annual Town Council Meeting in May.

There are three main committees, supported by sub-committees or working groups as required. Under the Council's Standing Orders, the committees have delegated powers to act. The 3 committees are: Finance & General Purposes; Environment and Planning.

Town Council and main committee meetings are held every six weeks, with the Planning Committee meeting taking place every two weeks.

All meetings are held at the Town Hall and are open to the public with a period of time set aside for members of the public to question the Council.

The Town Council holds Foundation Status under the new Local Council Award Scheme. The Council also meets the eligibility criteria and has passed the resolution for the use of the Power of General Competence:

1.5 Management Structure

The administration of the Town Council is carried out by a qualified Town Clerk who is appointed by the corporate body of the Town Council. The Town Clerk is required to carry out all the functions required by law as the Town Council's proper officer and to issue all statutory notifications. The Town Clerk is also the appointed Responsible Financial Officer.

The Town Clerk is supported by an Assistant Proper Officer, an Assistant Responsible Financial Officer, an Environment Clerk, a Planning Clerk, and a Mayor's Secretary/Administrative Assistant.

2. CORPORATE VISION, AIM AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 Vision for Maldon

Councillors want Maldon to be a thriving and vibrant destination that has strong connections with surrounding areas and is supported by its heritage assets, waterways and green spaces. The Town will need to support an increase in the number of employed people and a more diversified thriving economy in order to deliver a successful future with its role as a tourism and leisure destination strengthened in relation to the natural beauty and ecology of the Blackwater Estuary.

The Town Council is committed to examining and reviewing its responsibilities and supporting a viable development plan for the future in partnership with the District Council.

The Town Council will continue to work towards making significant improvements within the local community, in particular the Town Centre and the environment, by working closely and where appropriate, in partnership with other organisations.

The council's vision is to contribute to the creation of a successful town, where people want to live, work, play and visit, with all residents having access to a high quality of life, both now and in the future.

In order to achieve this vision, the Council will:

- Engage in an open dialogue with the residents to understand their needs, and in turn explain how we will address these needs within the resources and powers available to the Town Council.
- Assist and encourage other bodies to provide high standard, cost-effective services to help meet the needs and wishes of residents.
- Promote the best interests of the town for the betterment of the local community.

The Council's corporate objectives are:

- To enable residents to enjoy high-quality social, recreational and cultural facilities within the town and to seek the continuing improvement and development of these facilities in accordance with the desires expressed by residents.
- To encourage and promote the economic and commercial vitality of the town

- To consult with and take due regard of all comments received from other statutory bodies, voluntary organisation and individuals to ensure improving standards of service that meet with local needs.
- To safeguard the environment in and around Maldon from inappropriate development and to maintain it for the future.
- In trying to ensure that it is able to represent and promote these objectives, the Town Council accepts that it has financial responsibilities

2.2 Financial Information

Recognising that the precept (that part of the council tax which is allocated to Maldon Town Council) is public money, it is this council's highest priority to make sure that it is spent effectively and wisely.

Councillors will scrutinise all expenditure, looking for value for money and the elimination of waste, whilst seeking to deliver high quality services, events and projects. The Council has robust and scrupulous controls in place to ensure that the highest standards of accountability are met, and that all council procedures and activities are fully transparent. In order to achieve its goals the council will seek grant funding to support the money already secured in earmarked reserves for major projects. The council's aim is to become cost neutral, with regard to balancing operating costs and seeking ways to increase its income.

The Town Council's three year Business Plan will seek to provide details of its planned spending in order that residents can receive an indication of what the precept will be in the future. The precept is the local tax levied by the Town Council which is collected on our behalf by Maldon District Council as the billing authority.

- The Council set a precept of £366,579 for 2019/20. This represents a 4.6% increase in the Town's element of the council tax.
- The Town Council's element of Tax Band D for 2019/20 is £69.29 per Band D household.

Allowances

Councillors' allowances are set at £0.00. There is, however, a separate civic allowance given to the Town Mayor, so that Mayoral duties may be performed. The agreed amount for 2019/20 is £2000. An allowance of £500 can be claimed by the Deputy Town Mayor for performing civic duties on behalf of the Town Mayor.

3. AREAS OF CONCERN

The Town Council continues to keep a watching brief on the following issues which affect Maldon, and intervenes or lobbies where it can be effective.

3.1 Health Issues

Currently primary care is under pressure as GP services have struggled to keep up with housing and population growth along with an increasing elderly population. With hospitals at a distance, residents have difficulty in getting the treatments they need. There are a range of pharmacies, and dental and ophthalmic services readily available. Other services such as mental health or physiology are patchy. Obesity, particularly in children, minor injuries, injuries particularly falls and hip damage in the elderly, are significant issues. There are opportunities to alleviate pressures on NHS services by greater use of pharmacist skills and more self-care, together with healthier eating and appropriate exercise.

In the longer term, the vision is that Maldon residents will benefit from a bespoke healthcare centre to meet the needs of local residents for minor health problems. There will be satisfactory public transport links to and from hospitals for more major health problems. There will be good local access to high quality medical care, with special attention given to mental health. The reduced patient/doctor ratio will enable reasonable waiting times to meet with GPs. Children and adults will be fit, healthy and active.

The Town Council will work with the District Council and Mid-Essex CCG to ensure that the NHS provides adequate healthcare facilities to meet the needs of Maldon's population, utilising planning gains from the considerable residential development seen over recent years and that which is planned for the future.

3.2 Community, Safety and Crime

Maldon is generally considered to be one of the safer places in Essex to live, although crime and anti-social issues have increased and measures to reassure residents and visitors remain essential. Reduced Police resources have caused a lower level of response to activities which are seen by the Police as of lower priority.

Maldon District Council is developing comprehensive CCTV coverage of much of the Town Centre which will be monitored 24 x 7 by the Chelmsford CCTV Centre. Community self-help is undeveloped and represents an opportunity to combat crime

The long term strategy is that Maldon is a safe and caring place to live in.

At the present time there is a feeling that low level crime is not being dealt with as it should be e.g. drug and alcohol abuse and anti-social behaviour; There is scant policing (if any) with local knowledge; Police response time is slow and sometimes arbitrary.

Maldon Town Council is seeking to re-establish a local police presence by supporting Community Special Constables, who will know and understand their local environment with the aim of improving police response times and their willingness to deal with specific incidents and ensuring that residents and businesses are aware of the risks and how to effectively handle them

3.3 Public Transport

The Town Council is a consultee on Public Transport issues. Within the period of this Plan, the Council will:

- Liaise with suitable partners, such as Essex County Council and the bus operators to maintain and improve services
- Consider the provision of bus shelters if a need is identified.
- Advocate measures to alleviate parking congestion in the town centre

4. LOCAL RECREATION

The council is seeking to support and maintain the following assets and activities within Maldon.

4.1 Entertainment and the Arts

There is a thriving local entertainment and arts scene in the town. Performing arts are led by local amateur dramatic organisations and musicians. There are regular recitals in the United Reformed Church and St Mary's Church. A wide range of clubs and societies meet at West Maldon Community Centre and the Town Hall including the U3A, covering interests such as photography or painting and other recreational activities. There is a long-established Tourist Information Centre, located in Wenlock Way, which provides information to visitors and local residents.

4.2 Sport and Recreation

At the Blackwater Leisure Centre, there is a swimming pool with indoor sporting and exercise facilities, good quality playing fields across the town for football and cricket on their own grounds. Clubs exist for hockey, rugby and bowls. The River Blackwater and other open spaces provide for informal recreation including pet exercising.

4.3 Youth

Maldon's young people generally are engaged, active, curious, and are acquiring knowledge and skills as they grow up. They enjoy opportunities to pursue their interests and to socialise. They have aspirations for themselves in the future. There is a minority that are disengaged and indulge in misbehaviour.

5. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The Town Council scrutinises and directs the work of its three main committees. It is also responsible for the delivery of the town's civic events.

As part of its overall strategic plan and to complement the budget and precept-making process, the Town Council and its Committees review their priority lists annually. The detailed list of each committee's priorities is given below, together with an action plan and budget forecast:-

5.1 Finance and General Purposes Committee

The Finance and General Purposes Committee is responsible for:

- Setting Council policy
- Preparing, control and supervision of the budget
- Setting Fees & Charges
- Information technology
- Audit (external & internal)
- Council staff and establishment
- Complaints
- Code of Conduct
- Risk Management
- Forward Business
- Strategic Plan (three year plan)
- Premises
- Grants
- Website

Within the period of this Plan, the Council will:

- Continue to review its policies and procedures to ensure that the Council is run in a legal and business-like manner.
- Continue to improve the budget setting and monitoring process and to identify inefficiencies.
- Continue to review the Council's Information and Communication needs.
- Ensure accounting and audit procedures are completed in a timely manner.
- Review and maintain a risk management strategy as a standing item of Committee business.
- Review and update the Strategic Plan on a regular basis.
- Manage the Council's administration procedures in light of the General Data Protection Regulation 2017.
- Continue to support local non-profit organisations by providing grants and discounted venue hire.
- To review and upgrade as necessary the Town Council's telecommunications systems and website to provide effective communication facilities.
- Maintain and enhance the quality of the Maldon Town Council Annual Report and newsletters.
- Maintain and refurbish all of its properties and ensure that all statutory testing is carried out on a regular and timely basis including work identified in the QI

reports on its buildings and improvements to facilities required to the Town Hall.

- Seek to influence the use of any potential planning gain funds to enhance the facilities within the Town.
- The festive lighting display which is installed and maintained by the Council is a major feature of the Town Centre in December. The Council will ensure this continues.
- The Town Council organises a Vintage Christmas Fayre in the Town Centre, which includes the ceremonial switch on of the festive lighting. The Town council will ensure that this safe and successful event continues.
- Consider other opportunities to organise other successful events to promote the town.

5.2 Environment Committee

The Environment Committee is responsible for:

- Allotments – 3 sites
- Maintenance of Amenity Areas
- Bus Shelter cleaning and maintenance
- Closed Churchyards
- Community Safety
- Wycke Hill and Ware Ponds
- St Giles Ruins
- Leech Memorial Garden
- Market Hill Garden
- Grounds maintenance
- Floral Displays
- Horse Trough & Cromwell Pump
- War Memorial maintenance
- St Giles Ruins
- Street Furniture
- Support for Maldon in Bloom group activities

5.3 Planning Committee

This Committee is a consultee on the following:-

- Planning Applications
- Advertising applications
- Applications for works to trees
- ECC Highways issues
- Other transport and environment-related issues including the Southend Airport and minerals and gravel extraction with organisations such as NATS and Magnox.

5.3.1 Planning Applications

Maldon District Council is the local planning authority, with the Town Council being a statutory consultee. The Town Council's Planning Committee meet every other week to consider the local planning applications.

Within the period of this Plan, the Committee will:

- Meet every other week to make recommendations to the local planning authority in a timely manner.
- Staff and Councillors to undertake regular training and updates to maintain and increase their knowledge base.

5.3.2 Highways

Essex County Council is the highways authority for Maldon. Within the period of this Plan, the Town Council will:

- Work with the Highways Authority to improve the quality of the existing road infrastructure.
- Consider measures to improve pedestrian safety and work with the highways authorities to deliver those measures.
- Liaise with the Local Highways Panel to introduce road and pedestrian safety schemes.
- Work with the Highways Authority to improve the air quality in and around Maldon.
- Continue liaison with ECC Highways about residential parking issues.

6. ACTION PLAN SUMMARY 2019-2022

ACTION	COMMITTEE	TIMESCALE	COMMENTS
Plume Building	Finance & General Purposes	2019-2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lease for Maeldune Heritage Centre to be resolved • Carry out repairs identified in 2017 QI report, starting with a survey of the floor
Moot Hall	Finance & General Purposes	2019 – 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority repairs from 2015 QI report carried out • Complete other repairs before next report in 2020. • Review support needed by FOMH to run museum • Resolve MH staffing issues • Roof improvements
St Giles Ruins	Environment Committee	2019-2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain grant funding • Carry out priority repairs identified in 2018 QI report • Install additional railings
Town Hall	Finance & General Purposes	2019-2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New DDA compliant front door • Improve heating system • Redecoration • Refurbish kitchen
Grounds Maintenance contract	Environment Committee	2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiate new grounds maintenance Contract
Town Centre Christmas Lights Display	Finance & General Purposes Committee	2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiate new contract to supply of Town Centre Christmas Lights display
Maldon Vintage Christmas Fayre	Finance & General Purposes	Annual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise event