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# Environment Directorate

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Service Plan 2022 - 2023

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## Environment Directorate Service Plan

### About Us

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The Environment Directorate (the Directorate) Plan is aligned with the Corporate Strategy. It aims to provide quality, affordable services that enhance quality of life, the health of residents and increase the feeling of safety of its community. The wide scope of the Directorate enables a coordinated approach to be taken by the Council across the range of services that relate to the 'environment' of the Borough and its use and enjoyment by residents, businesses and visitors. The Directorate is central to providing visible 'outward facing' services.

The Directorate leads the Council in driving forward the environmental sustainability of our communities. We constantly aim for excellence in how we manage our services. We are the custodians of our streetscene and our open spaces. We manage our highways and public rights of way seeking to reduce congestion and improve our transport network. Through our planning and housing service, we work to improve the built environment and increase the number of homes available for residents. Through our regulatory and environmental services, we aim to promote a safe Borough. Our leisure and culture services provide a rich diversity of activities to help all users of the services appreciate the Borough's community offer.

This Service Plan provides a framework for action to support the Council's overarching vision, ambition and objectives, articulated in its approved Corporate Plan, and will shape service delivery plans to enable the Directorate to deliver services in accordance with Council Priorities.

This Service Plan sets out how the Directorate will support community and Council priorities in delivering its vision and looks at the obstacles that it may have to overcome. Underpinning the activities are a recognition that the Directorate needs to be well-run if it is to deliver excellent services. The plan recognises the importance of well-trained and motivated staff and the need to consult and involve customers.

The Plan covers the period to 2022/2023 to coincide with the approved Corporate Plan and Council wide Transformation Programme.

## Who we are

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**Craig Austin**  
Director of Environment



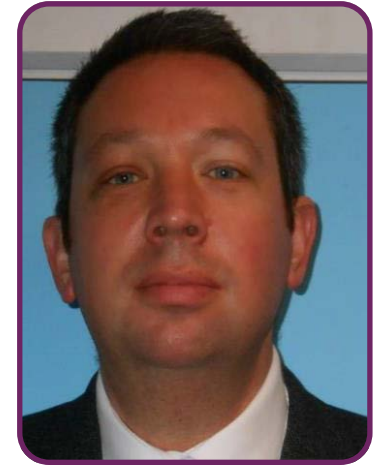
**Paul Pace**  
Chief Officer  
Environment



**Jon Shortland**  
Chief Officer  
Planning, Infrastructure  
& Economic Growth



**Jon Molyneux**  
Chief Officer  
Regulatory Services  
& Culture



**Mathew D'Archambaud**  
Chief Officer  
Transport, Highways  
& Engineering

## Directorate and Services

The Directorate's structure is made up of a Directorate, and four Service Groups, as illustrated. It comprises of four distinct but complementary service groups. Each service group is led by a Chief Officer.

The range, scope and detail of services can be found in accompanying service area business plans, which will encompass the following:

- An outline profile of what the service does and comprises of
- A reflection on what the service did in 2021-22
- A summary of the corporate performance indicators for the service area
- An indication of what the service area intends focus on in 2022-23 (with a list of priorities)
- Contribution to the Corporate Transformation Programme
- Outline of Capital and revenue budgets

## Directorate Vision

The priorities of the 2022 - 2026 Corporate Plan shape Together Bedford – (Place-People-Communities) and helps set the vision for the Directorate. The Directorate has adopted the following vision:

“Valuing our environment and working to enhance the place we live, work and play and support our communities in order to be healthy and prosperous”.

## The Directorate – Overarching Aims

The Directorate is committed to maintaining and improving the local built and natural environment through the services its delivers. The many front-line services we directly provide to the public impact on the quality of life for the people of the Borough and help to make it an attractive, accessible, safe and good place to live, work and visit.

Essentially the Directorate aims to:

- Make plans to enhance places and the environment within our communities whilst encouraging economic growth and prosperity.
- Manage our highway network seeking to reduce congestion and pollution.
- Provide and support transport services and facilities so that Residents and visitors can get around easily.
- Support the economic and environmental benefits and associated government investment surrounding East West Rail.
- Care for our environment including managing our waste, protecting and enhancing our open spaces and the conservation of our built and natural environment.
- Provide a thriving destination for leisure and cultural activity promoting a healthier and more active population benefiting from regular participation and embracing volunteering and community involvement.
- Protect our working and living environment securing the health, safety and welfare of residents and workers within the Borough at work, at home and at leisure.
- Promote healthy outcomes through encouraging our community to be active, be healthy and enjoy our amenities and countryside.

- Work with key partners and government agencies to invest in improving connectivity, particularly first/last mile travel, in order to encourage people to live healthy lifestyles and reduce pollution.
- Commit to reducing carbon production across our organisation with an aim to be carbon zero by 2030.
- Encourage inward investment that creates value jobs, provides opportunity to uplift the skills for local residents and provides economic prosperity at a local, regional and national level.
- Contribute, where appropriate, to the Councils Transformation Programme in order to deliver efficient and well-run services.

## Staffing

Building resilience in our workforce over the next few years is required to manage the challenges and changes we face in a flexible and sustainable manner. Flexibility will be a key feature of our future workforce and effective structures, processes and practices to support this will need putting in place to provide the strength and resilience needed to meet the ongoing changes. Reducing and where possible removing bureaucracy and utilising economies of scale will help support making these changes.

Shifting towards developing new skillset/competencies for our managers will need to include a focus on commissioning, contracting, collaboration, project management skills and creative thinking. This also requires managers that are supportive of change and can demonstrate the willingness to take responsibility and make decisions.

Our current staffing levels are shown to the right:

**Total Full time Equivalent (FTE)  
for Environment Directorate = 660 FTE**

Refuse & Recycling	92.16 FTE
Grounds Parks & Open Spaces	120.59 FTE
Waste & Resources	11.41 FTE
Community Regulation	20.2 FTE
Traffic Operations	43.0 FTE
Fleet & Depots	14.0 FTE
Passenger Transport & Sustainable Development	50.0 FTE
Economic Development & Town Deal	13.7 FTE
Planning & Housing Strategy	15.5 FTE
Planning Development Management	28.1 FTE
Building Control	10.0 FTE
Highways & Building Services	76.0 FTE
Transport Policy and Highways Development Control	11.0 FTE
Engineering & Major Capital Projects	49.0 FTE
Heritage & Compliance	12.0 FTE
Commercial Regulation	15.5 FTE
Community Safety & Resilience	10.0 FTE
Corn Exchange & Markets	11.0 FTE
Libraries & Culture	52.2 FTE
Leisure Services	4.67 FTE

## Workforce Planning

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- Our workforce is our primary resource and our objectives are only achievable through the hard work and flexibility, which our staff consistently demonstrates. It is therefore vital to continue to support this through staff development and succession planning despite the pressures of budget and staffing reduction.
- Over the next 3 years the Council is required to reduce budgetary spend significantly in addition to a number of challenging service savings that have yet to be fully achieved.
- Key developmental themes for 22/23 will include:
  - i. Increasing staff skill and knowledge base to allow greater flexibility in workforce deployment and extension of agile working.
  - ii. Increasing workforce commercial understanding and skills including commissioning, contracting, collaboration and project management to meet the new challenges for service delivery in the future.
  - iii. Increased use of ICT systems and the Council's website to provide information to customers relating to all aspects of services provided.
  - iv. Increasing the use of shadowing, coaching and mentoring to develop staff, which would also support succession planning in the teams and build further skill resilience.
  - v. Exploring opportunities for joint working and/or collaboration with partners or other councils to reduce organisational costs and address staff requirements.
  - vi. Recruiting graduates on career paths and developing employees' skills and knowledge to meet future legislative and service requirements and improve performance, flexibility and efficiency levels.
- A key pressure for the Directorate will be to keep and retain staff while attracting new staff.

## Managing Customer Expectations

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- Public Expectations: There is a continuous rise in demands on the services, placing greater pressure on existing areas of service even before potential reductions in capacity both in terms of financial and staffing resources.
- Improving Customer Service: Work needs to continue to ensure customers can access information about and apply on line for services and monitor case management. Work will need to focus on making full use of digital technology to capture and monitor the timely completion of customer enquiries.

## Better use of Technology

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- Realising benefits from our IT systems: The Council has yet to fully realise the benefits of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and the Customer Relationship Management system and needs to continue to work to do so.
- New Systems: There will be continued need for new or improved IT systems.
- Customer Requirements: Ensure that customers have access to service information at times convenient to them. We will need to develop and improve our IT capability to allow full efficiencies to be realised.

## Workforce Development Strategy

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We recognise that the ability to deliver high quality services is intrinsically linked to:

- Maintaining a competent, diverse and well-resourced workforce
- Ensuring that leadership is of the highest quality and people are well managed in order to deliver high quality customer care.
- Staff are well equipped and encouraged to work across professional and organisational boundaries so that they are able to effectively respond to customer needs.

This year the directorate aims to develop a workforce development strategy to help further transform the way we deliver our services, particularly by providing quality, affordable services that enhance the quality of life, the health of residents, increasing the feeling of safety within its community and helping support businesses and growth. The staff in the Directorate are pivotal in providing visible ‘outward facing’ services for the Council and are truly our greatest asset.

The aims of the strategy will be to

- Strive towards a fully qualified, skilled and equipped workforce which encourages development and progression opportunities.
- Have in place a diverse workforce that truly represents the people we serve.
- Develop our leaders and managers within our system to enable access to internal and external opportunities
- Focus training on hard to fill posts
- Focus our intervention on the five overarching workforce priorities over the next four years (i.e. creating a collaborative and connected workforce; achieving a workforce that is diverse and inclusive; attracting and retaining the best, improving health and wellbeing of our staff and realizing the potential within our existing workforce)

## Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

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Bedford Borough’s population is diverse, and so too are the Council’s employees. We want to continue to build an inclusive and diverse workplace where everyone is welcomed and feels a sense of belonging. Only together can we create an environment where staff feel able to speak up and are listened to, where they are respected and valued and can be themselves every day, regardless of individual circumstances and background.

To this end, the Directorate leadership team will work to create opportunities year on year to improve our understanding of how to better represent our customer needs through improved inclusion and create a workforce that mirrors the communities that they serve.



## Notes

## Finding out more



### **Environment**

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[www.bedford.gov.uk](http://www.bedford.gov.uk)