

**Iminster Town Council
Strategic Plan 2018/19-2020/21**



Approved by Council 12 December 2017

The Town Council will work to make Iminster a place in which people want to work, live and visit.

Introduction

Iminster Town Council is the local council for the parish of Iminster, it is the third tier of local government - Somerset County Council and South Somerset District Council being the other tiers.

The town of Iminster has a population of approximately 6,000 of whom approx. 4,700 are aged over 16 years. There are approx. 2,700 dwellings.

The Town Council's responsibilities include the cemetery, play areas, approx. 55 acres of amenity land / recreational space, the Market House and the weekly market.

The civic year runs from May and starts with the election of the Mayor, appointment of the Deputy Mayor and election of the Committee Chairs at the Annual Town Council meeting.

There are 15 Town Councillors who serve the whole of the town (the town is not divided into wards) and elections to the Town Council are held every 4 years.

Context of the Strategic Plan

This 3 year Strategic Plan (2018/19-2020/21) is the Council's second rolling strategic plan. The first plan which started development in late 2016 followed by implementation from April 2017 was the foundation for this document; during that first year areas such as the quarterly reporting have been honed to link with risk management. It is intended that this second plan will be complemented by the development of 3 year financial strategy thus linking the Town Council's core strategic activities of project plans, budget and risk management.

Iminster is set to experience a high level of growth with at least 1 major housing development (outline planning permission has been granted for up to 400 dwellings) The major roads passing close to the town are the A358 (leading to the M5) and the A303 / A30. The A303 is a major route from London to the west country. The A303 and the A358 have been identified for improvement; at the time of drafting this strategic plan it is understood that Highways England will be consulting again on the route options – the first consultation having been beset with adverse criticism.

The Town Council's resourcing levels (time and money) are finite and constrained by a number of factors, including some beyond the Town Council's control – such as the levels of council tax support grant available and the impact of new legislation.

The development of a 3 year rolling strategic plan and complementary medium term budget is intended to focus activity and decision making, help prioritise projects and resourcing, and provide a baseline against which progress can be measured.

Iminster Town Council SWOT Analysis

Town Councillors have done a SWOT analysis (November 2017) to help identify areas of performance that could be improved and may be addressed when undertaking activities and projects

<p style="text-align: center;">Strengths</p> <p>People (Staff and Councillors) Non-political council Friendly Diversity of experience and knowledge Cautious and balanced approach Community involvement of councillors Size of the council Community knowledge Knowledge of the area Community spirit Thrifty and prudent Open Spaces management communication Governance Collaborative working</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Weaknesses</p> <p>communication Structure needs review Time Generation of income Restricted budget Office accommodation / Council Chamber Risk adverse</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <p>Income generation Grant funding Better communications (especially electronic) Development of Town Local community / people Financial Planning Skills and knowledge of people new to the town A303 & A358 Dualling – potential for more employment Neighbourhood Plan Public Transport ITC accommodation Brexit</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p> <p>Loss of grants Doing something new Unseen risks Time constraints Development of town Finance Ability to do nothing Government policy / cuts Anti social behaviour Communication (management of electronic comms) Public transport A303 & A358 road improvements taking people away from the town Brexit</p>

Strategic Themes

The Town Council's resources will be focussed on 3 strategic themes:

- The Iminster Economy,
- The Iminster Environment
- Community Engagement and Governance

For the duration of this strategic plan any project or activity must either be a legal / best practice requirement and / or fit within at least 1 of the strategic themes.

The Work Plan

. The workplan will indicate: the project / activity, the link between the activity and the strategic theme, when the item was first added to the workplan and the likely year on which work will be started .

Monitoring Progress

A status report will be presented to the Town Council at least quarterly. There will be a report page for each strategic theme, the workplan items for the theme will be listed together with the progress made in the reporting period and the planned work for the next reporting period. There will also be a risk assessment for the theme and information on current risks and mitigations.

The list of projects / activities to be included in the 2018/19–2020/21 workplan are:

Note: the list is not in any priority order

Project / Topic	Date first put on workplan	(Anticipated) Start Date
Open spaces – implementing masterplan for Wharf lane Rec & Brittens Field (paths & Play area)	2017/2018	2017/2018
Cemetery – researching future need, the availability of suitable land and the feasibility of developing a new cemetery, acquiring suitable land and designing new facility	2017/18	
Protecting Herne Hill from the impact of nearby development – including obtaining designation as a local nature reserve and acquisition of additional land	2017/2018	2017/18
Herne Hill – encourage use by providing route signage and information boards	2017/2018	2017/2018
Town Council accommodation	2017/18	
Neighbourhood Plan	2017/18	2017/2018
Protecting the burial / cemetery records whilst maintaining accessibility	2017/18	2017/18
Public Transport – investigate the possibility of enabling service provision	2018/19	
Instigate the set-up of a Community Land Trust	2018/19	
Coach parking / Service Station to bring people into the town	2018/19	
Improve the visual impact of the approach roads to the town	2018/19	
Weekly Market	2018/19	
Local Information Centre - closer collaboration	2018/19	