

# **BUSINESS PLAN**

2015 - 2019



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Sprowston Town Council would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the development of this Business Plan. Adopted by Sprowston Town Council on 12 August 2015, to be read in conjunction with the Five Year Financial Forecast to accompany this Business Plan 2015 – 2019 reviewed annually. Sprowston Town Council will review this document on 18 May 2016.

# Introduction

## **What is a Town Council Business Plan?**

It is a statement of the Town Council's vision for the town, its purpose, values, objectives and key priorities.

It is not intended to be a traditional 'Town Plan' which sets out aims and ambitions that are delivered by the community and partners as a whole. Rather it is a document that sets out what Sprowston Town Council itself can achieve, either directly or by trying to increase its influence on the relevant delivery body, such as the District or County Council.

The aim of the Business Plan is to give Sprowston's residents a clear understanding of what the Town Council is trying to achieve and how it intends to deliver this. It details what the Town Council intends to focus on over the next five years. The Business Plan will be used each year to plan activities and set the budget for the coming year.

## **Why has the Town Council decided to produce a Business Plan?**

Having an agreed strategy will provide a framework for the Town Council to work within, enabling it to operate in a more consistent and co-ordinated way. The Town Council already has a Neighbourhood Plan for Sprowston to 2026, which has been based on community engagement and involvement, the Town Council will become more confident and proactive in its decision-making by combination of the two documents. Individual projects such as the redevelopment of Sprowston Diamond Centre have a business plan and an updated version specifying need of community facilities in the area.

At the same time, the Business Plan will help the local community to have a better understanding of what the Town Council does and also to clarify what it doesn't do; in other words to explain what issues fall under the responsibility of other delivery bodies such as Broadland District Council and Norfolk County Council.

It is a 'live' document which the Town Council will update regularly, enabling it to track and monitor its progress against the key priorities. Because the Business Plan will be publicly available, Sprowston's residents will also be able to monitor progress.

## **Community Involvement in the Business Plan process**

To ensure that the Business Plan truly represents Sprowston's best interests, the Town Council felt that the consultation in Sprowston to produce the Sprowston Neighbourhood Plan (consultees) reflected the views of the residents and covered issues such as housing, green space and business development.

The Council has a Community Engagement Strategy which has been followed in order to complete this Business Plan. The Council has an active website giving information and social media is used to contact harder to reach groups. The Council regularly consults other agencies such as the Police, churches, local schools and groups.

## Monitoring the Business Plan

Evaluating progress against the list of activities which make up the 'Action Plan' (Appendix 1) will take place at the three weekly Town Council meetings. Each meeting will consider one of the Business Plan themes and will seek to understand the progress made, where further work is needed and if there are any blockages to progress. The whole Business Plan will be reviewed annually and updated to keep the document relevant and up-to-date.

The Business Plan will be available on the Town Council website, with hard copies available to view in the Town Council Office and Library.

*Our Business Plan will continue to be the main way of telling you what we are doing to meet the needs of the community. It's a two-way conversation. Please tell us what you think about it. We welcome your comments. If you require further information that would help you understand what we are trying to achieve, please let us know. We can also provide additional information on the issues raised in the Plan.*

*Please respond to the Town Clerk*

## The Town Council

### An overview of Sprowston Town Council

There are three tiers of local government, each with different responsibilities. Sprowston Town Council is the first and most local tier, with an important role to play in promoting the town, representing the interests and supporting the work of different groups in the community. Broadland District Council is the second tier and is responsible for services including development planning, strategic planning policies for all development (including housing and employment sites) via its Core Strategy, environmental services such as street care and cleaning. Finally Norfolk County Council's responsibilities include highways (relating to both roads and pavements), education, health and social services, public rights of way, libraries and museums.

Sprowston Town Council has fifteen Councillors who are elected every four years. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman are elected each year at the Annual Town Council Meeting in May. Councillors are unpaid and commit their time to improving Sprowston and maintaining it as an attractive and sustainable place in which to live and to do business. Elections were last held in May 2015 and are scheduled for 2019 and then again in 2023.

The full Council meets every three weeks on a Wednesday at Sprowston Diamond Centre. All meetings are open to the public with a period of time set aside for members of the public to address Council.

Working groups are formed to deal with issues as they emerge and may include non-Councillors. There are currently no working groups. The Town Council is now undertaking a review of its Governance in order to consider any changes that may help with the delivery of this Business Plan. Additional committees and working groups may be set up as a result of this review.

The Town Council holds the Foundation level of the Local Council Award Scheme. In 2012, the Council qualified for the 'General Power of Competence (GPC)' which gives Town and Parish Councils more 'power to act' – this means that Councils have the power to do anything that individuals generally may do, such as trading or setting up a company to provide a service. This brings new opportunities for Sprowston Town Council in terms of providing cost-effective services and facilities to meet the needs of local people. Such new activities could be one outcome of this business plan process. The Council re-affirmed the GPC in 2015.

The Town has an electorate of 14,691 (as at March 2013 census).

### **Town Council Staff and Management**

The Council currently employs a total of twelve staff of which three work in administration, five in park maintenance and four in community facilities provision.

The administration of the Town Council is carried out by a qualified Town Clerk (June Hunt) who is appointed by the Council and who is also the Council's Responsible Financial Officer (RFO). The Town Clerk must carry out all the functions required by law as the Town Council's Proper Officer and issue all statutory notifications. She is supported by the Committee Support and Public Relations Officer (Evelyn Elliot) and the Finance Officer (Caroline Butler) responsible for general and financial administration.

### **Corporate Vision and Objectives**

#### **The Town Council's Spatial Vision for Sprowston is:**

By 2026 the community of Sprowston will be strong, cohesive, creative and forward-looking. The community will be safer, healthier, more prosperous, sustainable and inclusive. High quality homes will meet people's needs and aspirations in attractive and sustainable places. People will have access to good quality jobs, essential services and community facilities, with less need to use a car.

#### **The Town Council's Mission Statement:**

The Town Council aims to provide an accountable, valued and qualified service to the community to improve the quality of life of residents of Sprowston. It does this in a number of ways:

- It provides a democratic and representational voice for the community.
- Where services are provided directly they are managed to a good quality standard, in an efficient, effective and responsible way, at an affordable cost.
- Where services are provided by others, the Town Council endeavours to ensure that they are dealt with effectively, and in accordance with the wishes of the community.

It works with residents, local authorities and other service providers, businesses and community organisations with the aim of achieving a safe, healthy, prosperous and sustainable community.

## The Key Objectives of Sprowston Town Council are:

- 
- *To serve those who live, study and work in Sprowston.*
  - *To promote and represent the community's view and aspirations at local, county, regional and national level.*
  - *To provide high standard, cost-effective services and amenities to help meet the needs and wishes of residents.*
  - *To work in partnership, or otherwise, with other statutory and voluntary bodies, businesses and individuals to ensure an improving standard of services and facilities to meet the needs and expectations of Sprowston's residents.*
  - *To achieve a greater degree of influence over service delivery and development in the town to ensure that the best interests of Sprowston are taken into account.*
  - *To seek a fair share of investment in the town by local, county and regional authorities.*
  - *To encourage the devolution of services to the Town Council where they can be delivered more effectively and efficiently, and ideally with no additional cost to the tax payer*
  - *To enhance and promote the historic and cultural heritage of Sprowston and safeguard its unique identity and its natural and built environment.*
  - *To encourage and promote the economic and commercial vitality of the town and to strive for a pleasant, clean and safe environment throughout the town.*
  - *To promote and support local voluntary groups and clubs that seek to assist residents and visitors to Sprowston.*
  - *To be a professional, competent and caring Town Council.*
  - *To help create a socially inclusive and caring community which embraces all its residents, irrespective of age, culture, income, race, sexual orientation or religion, and which seeks to develop their well-being, knowledge, understanding and mutual co-operation.*
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## Financial Information

### Income

The Town Council is mainly funded by the residents of Sprowston, through what is known as the 'precept'. This is the local tax levied by the Town Council which is collected on its behalf by Broadland District Council as part of the Council Tax bill. On average, £106.59 per year (band D property) of Sprowston residents' Council Tax (i.e. £2.04 per week) contributes to the Town Council 2015/16 precept. As an example, the budgeted expenditure for the Council for 2014/15 was £679,118. This was funded from

- £532,969 from Sprowston Council Tax Payers
- £284,691 from income on Allotments, Cemetery, S.106, Leisure, parks and open spaces and Community Buildings

### Net Budget for 2015/16

- The upkeep and maintenance of leisure, parks and open spaces £121,600
- Sprowston Diamond Centre and Community Buildings £187,600

- Allotments £4,450
- Cemetery £33,850
- Administration and general activities £144,300
- Street Scene £48,250

Except for allocated contingency sums, the budget is fully allocated. Therefore, unless the Town Council is able to secure new grant funding, which is only available for certain activities, any new activities or facilities which require additional resources would either have to replace an existing activity, be funded from reserves, or be funded via an increase in the precept. Any un-used contingency or under spend can be allocated to a rolling capital fund and built up for specific purposes.

### **Reserves**

Sprowston Town Council adopts a risk-based approach to its level of reserves which is reviewed annually. Currently the minimum level of General Reserves is set at approximately eight months gross operating costs, within Audit Commission guidelines of 3-12 months costs. Reserves can only be held above this for specific, earmarked purposes.

### **Allowances**

Councillors are unpaid and receive no allowance for their duties. There is, however, an allowance given to the Chairman to meet any expenses involved in fulfilling the Chairman's duties. The agreed amount for 2015/16 is £200.

### **Sprowston Town Council's Main Areas of Responsibility**

The Town Council has responsibility for:

- the management, maintenance and development of Sparhawk Park, the Recreation Ground, Windsor Park Gardens, Blue Boar Lane Play Areas (Halls Wood and Cranes Croft) and Wilks Farm Drive play areas.
- Millennium woodland and Loke.
- management of a municipal cemetery
- the provision of allotments.
- the upkeep of the bus shelters
- the funding and delivery of town events (and support and facilitation of groups providing town events).
- the provision of Community Organisation Grants.
- Street lighting in the Sprowston area.
- submitting comments on all planning applications and change of use applications in Sprowston as a consultee of the Planning Authority (Broadland District Council).

The Town Council under delegated function from Norfolk County Council:

- improves the cutting of Sprowston's grass verges from the specified 5 cuts to approximately 8 per year.

The Council is also represented on a number of external organisations, including:

- Norwich Airport Consultative Committee
- Senior Citizens Club
- Representative on Norfolk Association of Local Councils

### Who else has Responsibility for Service Delivery in Sprowston

- **Broadland District Council** is responsible for environmental services (litter, refuse and recycling, including dog fouling), business support and the provision of housing services (along with Housing Associations).
- **Norfolk County Council** is responsible for on-street parking, highways issues, signage, lighting on main roads and co-ordinating public transport (along with service providers). The County Council is also responsible for health and social care, library services and education.
- **Norfolk Constabulary** is responsible for addressing crime and anti-social behaviour in Sprowston.

Where services are provided by others, the Town Council endeavours to ensure that they are dealt with effectively and in accordance with the wishes of the community.

## Key Themes and Activities

### TOWN COUNCIL GOVERNANCE

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#### *Good Governance Objectives*

Sprowston Town Council aims to be a professional, competent and caring Town Council, to be open and accountable in all it does and to ensure the sound financial management of Town Council resources.

The Town Council aims to:

- *be well-informed about the needs and opinions of the town's residents and businesses by consulting them on major issues.*
- *improve services to the public by encouraging members and staff to develop their skills, by undertaking appropriate training.*
- *ensure Councillors are given the opportunity to keep abreast of new opportunities and policy.*
- *be a good and fair employer by providing fulfilling work opportunities and conditions for its staff.*
- *Continuously promote public participation in all Town Council meetings and initiatives.*
- *maintain accreditation as Foundation level of the Local Council Award Scheme, aspiring towards Quality and Quality Gold.*
- *deal with enquiries and fault reports from members of the public speedily and efficiently.*
- *Be an effective custodian of the Council's property and documents.*

The Town Council recognises the role of 'good communications' in building positive relationships with the public and with organisations that provide services in the town and as such will continue to seek to improve established channels of communication.

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## **Governance Activities:**

To achieve the objectives detailed above, the Council will:

- Maintain the Town Council website providing information about the Town Council and also signposting people to other service providers.
- Post regular news of Town Council initiatives on the website.
- Distribute the Town Councils newsletter Sprowston Matters.
- Provide an opportunity at each Town Council meeting for public questions and comments.
- Make versions of the Town Council Business Plan available on the Town Council website.
- Share a report covering Town Council activities during the previous twelve months at the Annual Meeting.
- Carry out a Governance Review with any recommendations for changes to be agreed at the next Annual Town Meeting in May 2016.
- Conduct a review of training needs of both Councillors and staff following any Governance changes and then review annually.
- Seek accreditation of Quality or Quality Gold Status of the Local Council Award Scheme.
- Invite representatives of outside agencies to address the Council on key matters of interest (to Town Council Meetings but also to round table discussions with the Council).
- Set up working groups with other statutory and voluntary bodies, businesses, residents and other stakeholders as appropriate, in order to facilitate coordinated effort.
- Appoint representatives to appropriate external agencies and committees.
- Attend relevant conferences and meetings.

## **Leisure and Community**

*Sprowston Neighbourhood Plan – Objective 11 : To encourage the development of healthy and active lifestyles.*

The Town Council is responsible for the delivery of a number of community services and amenities:

### **Recreation Ground, Recreation Ground Road**

This six acre site has entrances at Recreation Ground Road, Edwards Road and Dixon Road. It is surrounded by housing, Sprowston First School and the local library. Opening times are 8.00 am Monday to Saturday and 10.00 am on Sundays. Closing times vary throughout the seasons and are advertised on the gates. The park is attended daily by caretaker/cleaners to monitor and clean the facilities. Facilities include: open space to enjoy ball games, kick wall with basketball hoop, 2 full size and one mini football pitches, cricket pitch, bowling green, ten tennis courts (two hard surfaces and eight grass), purpose built cycle fun track suitable for off road pedal cycles, small children's play area with swings, slide, climbing frame, see-saw and spring mobiles. Public conveniences are provided at the Recreation Ground, as well as seats, litter and dog bins and two car parks. Dog bags are available free of charge to encourage dog owners to scoop the poop and keep the park as pleasant as possible for all visitors.

### **Sparhawk Park, Sparhawk Avenue**

This enclosed park incorporating a tree lined pathway and mature broad leaf copses can be accessed from Sparhawk Avenue and Peregrine Road. Facilities include two children's play areas one fenced for infants incorporating roundabout, circular cone climber, spinning apparatus and slide. The other is a large open play area, suitable for older children, with swings, multi-climbing frame and aerial runway. There are also public conveniences, seats, picnic tables and litter bins. Soft ball games only, cycles may not be ridden and no dogs allowed except for registered assistance dogs. Opening times are 8.00

am Monday to Friday and 10.00 am Saturday and Sunday. Closing times vary throughout the seasons and are advertised on the gates.

### **Barkers Lane Playing Field, Barkers Lane**

This area is a large informal playing field with community shelter and football goal. Access is via Barkers Lane, Church Lane or the Millennium Woodland.

### **Cranes Croft and Hall Wood Road (off Blue Boar Lane)**

These two enclosed play areas are suitable for younger children aged 3 - 9 and have a range of play equipment.

### **Millennium Woodland, Church Lane**

Planted in 2000 to celebrate the new millennium this maturing woodland with its designated walkways is very popular with local residents. Backing onto open farm land and situated opposite Sprowston cemetery it is a tranquil and peaceful place to visit. There is wheelchair access for 130 metres into the woodland via Church Lane, seating throughout the site and an information interpretation board to help visitors identify various species. To attract more wildlife bug houses have been placed in various locations around the woodland. Pedestrian access is via Church Lane, Barkers Lane Playing Field, Millennium Loke/Wilks Farm Drive.

### **Wilks Farm Drive Play Area**

This large open play area is sited to the North of Wilks Farm Drive next to the Millennium woodland backing onto farm land. A tarmac pathway runs across the site from North Walsham Road to the woodland. Facilities include open grassed play area, multi climbing frames, swings, slides and some seating.

### **Windsor Park Gardens**

Winner of Broadland District Council's Green Award 2008 this park and open space overlooks the Redmayne Playing Field and includes swings, multi activity unit, kick wall, basketball hoop and seating.

The Town Council strives to maintain well-kept parks for Sprowston's residents and visitors to enjoy, seeking to improve existing facilities in all parks where necessary. As such, the Town Council will:

- continue to work with Broadland District Council to improve dog fouling enforcement
- continue to source grants to provide ongoing financial support towards equipment and facilities
- continue to support initiatives for improving teenage/young adult provision at the parks, in partnership with members of the community
- improve cross-marketing of the parks – ie provide information about the facilities available at the parks.
- continue to provide access to public toilets for people using the Recreation Ground and Sparhawk Parks.
- pursue creative options for improving the management and development of the parks at no additional cost to Sprowston tax payers. Particularly the field at School Lane.
- consider options for increasing community involvement in the parks development, for example facilitating community interest groups to source fund for improvement projects such as Harrisons Wood a future acquisition site at Blue Boar Lane.
- review the use of the open space at Post Mill Close.
- maintain a record of all trees on Council owned land and check for defects with an arboriculture consultant.

- review the use of the Pavilion and monitor the use of facilities following redevelopment of the changing rooms.
- work with developers to provide high quality games/play areas within their development.

## **Cemetery**

*Sprowston Neighbourhood Plan – Policy 22 An area of 2.4 hectares is allocated as an extension to the existing burial ground at Church Lane.*

The Council owns a 6-acre civil cemetery in Church Lane, which is open to receive the remains of both residents and non-residents. A small area remains un-consecrated for non-faith interment. The cemetery is situated next to St. Mary and St. Margaret’s parish church and is maintained by the Council’s grounds staff who also manage the adjacent closed churchyard. Sprowston cemetery was opened shortly after the Second World War in 1946 following the closure of the parish churchyard. An extension was added in the 1970s followed by a further six acres in 2011 to cope with demand.

## **Provision of Allotments**

*Sprowston Neighbourhood Plan – Policy 21 The Green Heart ( allotment site).*

Sprowston Town Council has 92 garden allotments available for hire by residents which are situated next to the Council’s Church Lane Cemetery. The average size of each plot is 10 metres by 20 metres and the site is fenced with water standpipes distributed across the area. The main access to the allotments, which is suitable for vehicles, is via Church Lane however, there is also pedestrian access via the cemetery. To be eligible for an allotment, residents must be over 18 and registered on the electoral register. There is currently a waiting list of approximately 5 years.

The Town Council strives to maintain well-kept allotments for Sprowston’s residents. The provision of additional allotments, was given high support from consultees, particularly in view of the new development on the fringe of Sprowston. The Council will:

- continue to rent out the 92 Town Council plots, maintaining regular inspections and taking any necessary remedial action if plots are found to be unused or not adhering to the rules of tenancy agreement.
- conduct a bi-annual review of the Town Council Allotment site waiting list.
- liaise with Broadland District Council about any new sites that become available and endeavour to provide more allotment plots to those on the site waiting list.
- Include information on the Town Council website about allotments and the waiting list, also to publicise any other privately-owned allotment sites when known.

## **Community Buildings/Assets**

*Sprowston Neighbourhood Plan – Policy 19 A community hub building for the south side of Sprowston at Sprowston Diamond Centre on School Lane.*

The Town Council wants to see important buildings and other assets in Sprowston protected and preserved for the town. The Town Council has acquired the building on School Lane for community

purposes and now known as Sprowston Diamond Centre. A business plan was prepared for the acquisition of the building which has now been reviewed following the granting of planning permission for extensive redevelopment into a community building with sports facilities. The Council retains the office building at the Recreation Ground, currently leased to generate income towards Council's funds.

In terms of other buildings and assets in the town, the Town Council will:

- maintain a list of 'community assets' in Sprowston (key community buildings and land) to be submitted to Broadland District Council for inclusion on a 'Community Asset list' which helps ensure that the Town Council will be informed in good time if any such asset is likely to be sold.
- Preserve and maintain any assets which are managed by the Town Council (e.g. Sprowston Diamond Centre, Parks and Open Spaces, bus shelters) in a good condition.

## **Youth Activities**

*Sprowston Neighbourhood Plan – Policy 17 Harrisons Wood off Blue Boar Lane, is identified for a woodland activity park.*

The Town Council is keen both to increase its own engagement with the youth of the town and also to encourage and facilitate improvements to services which meet their needs. To help achieve this it will:

- form and task a Town Council Working Group, to facilitate increased engagement with Sprowston's Schools.
- work together with the District Council to facilitate access to leisure activities for local youth, particularly during the summer break.
- work with the Schools to help improve access to information about leisure activities/clubs for their students.
- form a working relationship with the youth to bring about facilities such as a youth shelter, skate board park and play equipment at Blue Boar Lane development and cycle track at Harrisons Wood.

(see also youth-related activities under the section on report on Parks and Open Spaces with actions)

## **Town Events**

The majority of the events and festivals held in Sprowston are organised by other organisations. The Town Council wishes to be involved in the community activities of Sprowston residents.

In the Sprowston Neighbourhood consultation, many residents indicated they were unsatisfied with the number of events and festivals in Sprowston, and would like to retain more events and a number of people gave suggestions for new events which would be of interest to locals however, little support and offers of help were received to deliver events. The Town Council will:

- retain a small budget to fund community celebrations/festivals, with smaller amounts of funding made available in occasional grants for those external events which are felt particularly to benefit Sprowston's residents.
- encourage and support the establishment of a Town Events Management group to comprise Councillors, community volunteers and others, to manage community events as appropriate.
- continue to fund and support community events
- consider outsourcing any events which the Town Council manages (if and when this becomes necessary).

- include information about local clubs and societies on the Town Council website and link through to other websites which promote events.
- work with Broadland District Council, Norfolk County Council, Norfolk Constabulary and other stakeholders to influence the improved scheduling of any externally run events and to encourage better management of problems/issues.

### **Community Organisation Grants**

Through its grants programme the Town Council supports community groups to provide services which benefit the Sprowston community. As such, the Town Council will continue this important service but take actions to increase the impact the grants achieve by:

- reviewing the grant policy in terms of assessing the likely impact of the grant.
- increasing active promotion of the Community Organisation Grants scheme on the new Town Council website.
- working with neighbouring parishes to consider opportunities for and potential benefit of an additional joint parish community fund.

### **Other Community and Leisure Services**

The Town Council will, make reference to the Sprowston Neighbourhood Plan and work in partnership with appropriate agencies and organisations, in order to encourage and facilitate any opportunities to develop further the cultural, educational, sporting and social life of Sprowston's residents.

## **TOWN APPEARANCE, ENVIRONMENT SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY**

*Sprowston Neighbourhood Plan – Policy 1 The environmental assets of the area will be protected and opportunities taken for their maintenance and enhancement, and increasing the benefits for residents and wildlife.*

The Town Council strives to ensure the town retains a pleasant, clean and safe environment. While the Town Council itself is not directly responsible for delivery of environmental or policing services, it works in partnership with the relevant delivery bodies to encourage a high standard of services that meets the needs and expectations of its residents, businesses and visitors to the town.

The Town Council works with District and County Council, local Housing Associations and other bodies to address issues and complaints about the town's appearance, environment and safety.

### **Litter, Refuse and Recycling**

Broadland District Council is responsible for litter management and refuse in the town. The Town Council addresses problems associated with litter, dog fouling, fly tipping, graffiti etc. at its parks and open spaces, outside these areas it is the responsibility of Broadland District Council. While satisfaction with the management of litter and household refuse/recycling collections in the town were relatively high in the consultation (79%/89% satisfaction), repeated comments were made about the issue of dog fouling. To try to improve standards of cleanliness the Council will:

- continue to report incidences of fly tipping, fly posting and dog fouling to the District Council, ensuring that these are addressed in a satisfactory time and manner.
- promote and facilitate 'Town Tidy Up' days on the Town Council website and at Council Meetings.
- continue to provide and finance emptying of dog and litter bins on our recreational sites.

- monitor the litter collection at our recreational sites.

## Local Safety and Policing

*Sprowston Neighbourhood Plan – Policy 10 To be a place where people feel safe.*

In general, feedback consultation shows good levels of satisfaction with public safety rating local policing high at 93%.

The Town Council will continue to work with Norfolk Constabulary to facilitate the provision of a good service. To do so it will:

- continue to work with Norfolk Constabulary to share information on local crime and safety issues. This includes the PCSO team attending monthly Town Council meetings and the Town Council forwarding any enquiries and concerns submitted to them.
- facilitate access to the Police, by including Police contact information on the Town Council's website.
- continue to support the Safer Neighbourhood Area Meetings.

## Emergency Planning

The Town Council does not have incident emergency plan. As such the Town Council will:

- work with Norfolk County Council to provide information on the Town Council's website and literature relating to Community Emergency Planning in particular information on flood prevention for the householder.
- work with Broadland District Council to build up community resilience and emergency preparedness.

## TRANSPORT, ACCESS AND HIGHWAYS

*Sprowston Neighbourhood Plan – Objective 7: to enhance transport provision to meet the needs of existing and future populations while reducing travel need and impact. Policy 20: Traffic calming measures at School Lane. Policy 14: Improved local centre on Wroxham Road.*

The Town Council is not directly responsible for the delivery of highways, transport, access or parking services in the town, but strives to ensure that the relevant delivery bodies provide a good quality, affordable service which takes into account the needs and expectations of its residents and the town's employees and businesses.

### Highways (including winter gritting)

Road and pavement repairs, traffic flow and winter gritting are the responsibility of Norfolk County Council. The Town Council wishes to ensure that the town's roads and pavements are safe and also that the local interests are taken into consideration in the scheduling of any road works.

The consultation respondents indicated they were dissatisfied with the condition of the pavements and main roads, with 69% dissatisfied with the maintenance of side roads. The most common complaint related to the uneven kerbs.

In an effort to improve the management and maintenance of highways in the town, the Town Council will:

- work with the County Council on a long-term plan for road and pavement repairs in the town, including effective maintenance of roadside verges and appropriate and well-maintained signage. Street signage is a responsibility of Broadland District and the Council will regularly monitor the repairs of signs.
- continue to collate and forward any reports of reported incidences to the District or County Council.
- liaise with the County Council to influence scheduling of major road works so that, as far as possible, disruption to residents is minimised and peak visitor periods are avoided.
- Include clear information on the Town Council website to signpost people to the appropriate contact in relation to highways issues and provide guidance about how they can raise issues.
- forward any complaints the Town Council receives about road, pavement or kerb damage to County Council.
- encourage the County Council to accelerate road and pavement repairs.
- lobby the County Council to ensure that adequate budget is set aside for ongoing maintenance within any future capital works.
- work with County Council to maintain the existing winter gritting bins.
- allocate Town Council budget for emergency gritting into earmarked reserves to be available to supplement gritting in case of a severe winter, for example, to facilitate the gritting of pavements.
- monitor and promote the public rights of way in the Town in conjunction with Norfolk County Council.

## Public Transport

*Sprowston Neighbourhood Plan – Objective 7 : to enhance transport provision to meet the needs of existing and future populations while reducing travel needs and impact.*

Public transport is the responsibility of Norfolk County Council. In the consultation, generally there was satisfaction with the provision of public transport in Sprowston, but the comments included repeated complaints, in particular related to the provision of services to Sprowston North East.

The Town Council wants to secure a more effective and affordable public transport service which better meets the needs of Sprowston's residents and workers. As such it will:

- lobby Passenger Services at Norfolk County Council both directly and jointly with neighbouring parishes to improve the quality of service, particularly in terms of cost and scheduling.
- lobby Norfolk County Council to provide buses before developments are fully completed to improve access.
- continue to support the park and ride service in Sprowston and encourage Sunday use, particularly at Christmas.
- to support a Bus Rapid Transit system to be introduced along Salhouse Road.

## Parking

Broadland District Council as the planning authority considers parking as part of the planning process. Norfolk Constabulary is the enforcing authority for indiscriminate on-street parking outside residents'

properties, which received 54% dissatisfaction in the consultation, particularly outside schools at drop and pick up times.

In representing the interests of both residents and local workers, the Town Council strives to protect residents' needs for street parking. To do this the Town Council will:

- lobby Broadland District Council to ensure planning for any future housing developments includes adequate provision for parking, wider roads, garaging and sufficient allocated parking spaces for residents and visitors.

## **TOWN CENTRE ECONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT**

*Sprowston Neighbourhood Plan – Objective 6: To make sure people have ready access to services.*

The Town Council wishes to encourage and promote the economic and commercial vitality of the town to ensure its future prosperity and sustainability.

In terms of economic development and planning, the Town Council is guided in its activities and decisions not only by its Corporate Objectives (listed in this document) but as referred to in the Sprowston Neighbourhood Plan and also by the following specific economic development objectives:

- to support a balanced approach to economic growth, ensuring the sustainability of the town while safeguarding Sprowston from inappropriate development.
- to support and strengthen Sprowston's 'independent' retail offer, but not at the total exclusion of larger multiples that meet the everyday needs of Sprowston residents.
- to encourage a vibrant retail mix and in particular to do what it can to encourage and support new businesses which meet the needs of Sprowston residents (while at the same time not pursuing such a restrictive policy that the number of employ retail units is increased).
- to support the provision of good quality, well-managed events and festivals in the town, with its own financial support focused on community celebrations/events (see section on Leisure and Community).

Although the Town Council's own funds are limited it works in partnership with appropriate agencies and organisations in order to encourage and facilitate any opportunities:

*Sprowston Neighbourhood Plan – Policy 4-7 Business and Employment.*

- to develop commerce and light industry for enhanced employment opportunities in the town.
- to promote and support entertainment and the arts.
- to promote the town and encourage tourism.

While Town Planning and Development is managed by Broadland District Council, the Town Council strives to represent the interests of its residents and business.

*Sprowston Neighbourhood Plan – Policy 2 Development will be well designed to fit in with the local area and contribute to creating a strong sense of place. Objective 12: To involve as many people as possible in new planning policy.*

To achieve this, the Town Council will:

- lobby District and County authorities to ensure Sprowston benefits from a fair distribution of support/spend through S.106 and CIL monies.
- continue to comment on all key strategic planning documents and consultations that affect Sprowston ensuring that the Council's knowledge and understanding of the local context is taken into account in planning decisions.
- review the way in which it currently considers and comments on planning applications, ensuring that its recommendations are robust and clear.
- establish closer working relations with the Local Planning Authority (Broadland), in particular the Officers and Members on the Planning Committee, in order to ensure that the needs and best interests of Sprowston are taken into account in planning decisions.
- work to secure Sprowston representation on the Broadland District Council Beeston Park Programme Board.
- consider options for proactively targeting specific new businesses which meet the needs of local residents and support the economic sustainability of Sprowston.
- work with Broadland District Council to determine and ensure the best use of any retained business rate income (as a result of new National Business Rate policy in 2013).
- explore with stakeholders on new designated developments a neighbourhood agreement where each party makes commitments about how they will help improve the area.
- improve liaison with local businesses and encourage and facilitate coordinated initiatives, such as the setting up of a Town Team.

## HOUSING AND HEALTH

*Sprowston Neighbourhood Plan – Objective 2 : To allocate enough land for housing, and affordable housing, in the most sustainable settlements. Policy 18 residential development on School Lane.*

As the Strategic Housing Authority, Broadland District Council is responsible for working with Housing Associations, local developers and Community Land Trusts to provide affordable housing in Sprowston. The allocation of land for new residential accommodation is managed by Broadland District Council, with housing targets and possible sites detailed in the Sites Specific Allocations of Land Plan of the Local Development Framework (LDF). The Town Council input into the original search for sites within the LDF.

Consultation with residents resulted in respondents to indicate they were dissatisfied with the provision of affordable housing in Sprowston. Over 50% of consultees were also dissatisfied with the provision of social housing and rented housing. The Town Council wants to help improve this by:

- working with the local Housing Associations to try to ensure that the targeting of future housing developments is informed by local need.
- improving local understanding of Housing Policy and provision by including information on its website.
- supporting the development of affordable homes on sites identified in the Allocations of Land Plan and on appropriate new sites.

## Health

### *Sprowston Neighbourhood Plan – Policy 9 Health provision. Supporting the Community.*

Health and social care falls under the remit of Norfolk County Council. The Town Council wants to maintain satisfaction with local health and social care provision in Sprowston and meet the needs and expectations of its residents by:

- representing and promoting the community's views and aspirations in relation to health and social care provision at the local, county, regional and national levels.
- working in partnership with relevant statutory and voluntary bodies, groups and agencies to ensure local care and medical services are retained and that health and social care services, including care for the elderly, meet residents' needs and expectations.

## APPENDIX 1 : ACTION PLAN

TOWN COUNCIL GOVERNANCE	LEAD/ PARTNERS		ACTIVITY	TIMESCALE Short term: up to March 2016; Medium term: April 2016 to March 2017; Long term: 2017 onwards	BUDGET REQUIRED	COMMENTS
OBJECTIVE						
Improved communication	Sprowston Town Council (STC)	1.1	Maintain the Town Council website	Short term	Yes	Providing information about the Town Council and also signposting people to other service providers as detailed under sections
	STC	1.2	Produce a regular update of Town Council initiatives on new website	Short term and ongoing	No	
	STC	1.3	Distribute the Town Council's newsletter	Short term and ongoing	Yes	Continue to make better use of local media.
	STC	1.4	Provide opportunity at each Town Council meeting for public questions and comments	Ongoing – three weekly	No	
	STC	1.5	Provide updated versions of the Town Council Business Plan on the website	Ongoing - annual	No	
	STC	1.6	Provide annual report at Town Meeting	Ongoing - annual	No	Action Plan will be monitored and updated monthly but Business Plan as a whole updated annually
Improved effectiveness of Council	STC	1.7	Carry out a Governance Review	Short term - annual	No	To check effectiveness/ speed of

						decision-making by setting up committees and working parties.
	STC	1.8	Conduct a review of training needs of both Councillors and staff following Governance Review and annually	Short term and ongoing	Yes	Retain budget for training.
	STC	1.9	Seek re-accreditation of Foundation Level Local Council Award Scheme and progress to Quality and Quality Gold	Short / Medium term	Yes	
<b>Increased influence/coordination in matters that impact on Sprowston</b>	STC STC/BDC/NCC, Police and other service providers	1.10	Invite representatives of outside agencies to address the Council on key matters of interest	Short term and then ongoing	No	Encourage proactive round table discussions with key service providers, (particularly on parking, new Business Rate Retention Scheme, parks and youth activities; also increased involvement with Housing Group); with NCC on highways planning, public transport, with BDC increase coordination and proactive discussions ref Development Control, LDF and Housing)

	STC and other service providers	1.11	Set up new working groups in order to facilitate coordinated effort	Short term	No	e.g. Youth Working Group, Town Events Group, widen membership of Grow Your Community etc.
	STC	1.12	Appoint representatives to appropriate external agencies and committees	Ongoing	No	Encourage STC representation on local group committees
	STC	1.13	Attend relevant conferences and meetings	Ongoing	Yes	
<b>Improved quality of Sprowston's Open Spaces, Parks and Woodland Areas</b>	STC / BDC	2.1	Continue to improve dog fouling enforcement in open spaces, parks and woodland areas	Short term - ongoing	No	
	STC / BDC	2.2	Continue to provide ongoing financial support to play equipment through grants and lobbying BDC	Short term	Yes	
	STC / BDC (developers) / Members of the Public	2.3	Support initiatives for improving teenage / young adult provision in parks and open spaces, in partnership with BDC and members of the community	Medium term	Yes	
	STC	2.4	Encourage and facilitate the use of parks and open spaces as a site for events with a view to generating rental income for the park	Ongoing	No	
	STC	2.5	Improve cross-marketing of the parks and open spaces	Short term	No	e.g. promote the parks and open spaces so that people

						using the facilities know about it
	STC	2.6	Continue to monitor the provision of toilets in Sparhawk and Recreation Ground Park	Long term	Yes	Review cost of toilets and no long term supervision of use
	STC / BDC Developers	2.7	Pursue creative options for improving the management and development of the parks	Medium term	Yes	Review CIL and S.106 monies towards existing play area equipment
	STC	2.8	Consider options for increasing community involvement in Open Spaces, Parks and Woodland areas	Medium term	No	
	STC	2.9	Review the equipment at Wilks Farm Drive and Windsor Park Gardens. Future of open space at Post Mill Close	Medium term	Yes	
	STC	2.10	Review the use of the changing facilities at the Pavilion	Medium term	No	
<b>Protection and management / maintenance of Sprowston's assets</b>	STC / BDC / Developers	2.11	Include information on the Town Council website to clarify the allocation process	Short term and ongoing	No	This will also help distinguish between the Town Council managed site and the desire to increase provision.
	STC / BDC	2.12	Draw up a list of key community assets in Sprowston (key community buildings and land) to be submitted to BDC for inclusion on a Community Asset list	Medium term	No	Prioritise Cottage Plantation Woods and Blue Boar Public House
	STC	2.13	Keep in good	Ongoing	Yes	

			condition any assets which are managed by the Town Council (e.g. Parks and Open Spaces, Sprowston Diamond Centre and bus shelters)			
<b>Increased youth engagement and support</b>	STC – working with SYEP, BDC, Schools, activity providers, Youth services etc.	2.14	Form a Town Council Working Group on young people to facilitate increased engagement with Sprowston Schools	Medium term	No	
	STC Youth Working Group – BDC	2.22	Work together to facilitate access to leisure activities for young people, particularly during the summer break	Medium term	Yes	
	STC	2.23	Work with Sprowston Schools to help improve access to information about leisure activities / clubs for their students	Medium term	Yes	
	STC	2.24	Form a working relationship with the youth to bring forward facilities which will be used by that age group	Medium term	No	
<b>Improved quality of STC events and improved management of external events</b>	STC	2.25	Continue to fund and support community events	Short term	Yes	STC to provide funding. Consider outsourcing any events which the Town Council manages
	STC	2.26	Encourage and support the establishment of an independent Town Events	Short term	No	

			Management Group			
	STC	2.27	Include information about local clubs and societies on the Town Council website and link through to other websites which promote events	Medium term	No	
	STC External events providers, NCC, BDC, local groups	2.28	Work with BDC, NCC and other stakeholders to influence the improved scheduling of general, externally-run events, and to encourage better management of problems / issues such as parking, noise etc.	Medium term	No	
<b>Increased impact of Community Grant Scheme</b>	STC	2.28	Continue to fund Community Grants Scheme	Ongoing	Yes	
	STC	2.29	Review grant policy in terms of assessing the likely impact of the grant	Medium term	No	
	STC	2.30	Increase active promotion of the Community Grants Scheme on the Town Council website	Short term	No	
	STC	2.31	Work with neighbouring parishes to consider opportunities for and potential benefit of additional joint parish community fund	Medium term	Yes	
<b>Improved environmental services and appearance</b>	STC works with BDC	3.1	Monitor the effectiveness of street cleaning (including dog fouling) and litter	Ongoing	No	Include parks financed by STC

			collection services in the town and raise any problems with BDC			
	STC works with BDC	3.2	Work with BDC to ensure local complaints are directed to BDC Environmental Services	Ongoing	No	Add information on contacting Environmental Services to STC website
	STC	3.3	Promote and facilitate STC 'Town Tidy Up' days on STC website, at Council meetings etc.	Ongoing	No	
	BDC	3.4	Signpost community groups and individuals to BDC for support with community litter picks	Ongoing	Yes	
	STC	3.5	Continue to provide and finance dog and litter bins on recreational sites	Ongoing	Yes	
	STC	3.6	Monitor the litter collection at recreational sites and innovative ways to improve	Long term	No	
<b>Consistent safety of Sprowston's residents, workers, students and visitors</b>	STC	3.7	Continue to work with Norfolk Constabulary to share information on local crime and safety issues. This includes Sprowston PCSOs attending Town Council meetings and the Town Council forwarding any enquiries and concerns submitted to them	Ongoing	No	
	STC	3.8	Facilitate access to the Police by	Ongoing	No	

			including Police contact information on the Town Council's website			
	STC	3.9	Continue to support and work together with the Safer Neighbourhood Area Meetings	Ongoing	No	
	NCC / BDC Flood and Emergency Recovery Group	3.10	Continue to work with other members of the Flood and Emergency Recovery Group at BDC and NCC to build up community resilience and emergency preparedness	Ongoing	No	
	STC	3.11	Provide information on the STC website related to Community Emergency Planning	Medium term	No	
<b>Improved standards in highways management and maintenance</b>	Lead NCC Lead BDC on road nameplates	4.1	Work with NCC on a long-term plan for road and pavement repairs in the town, including effective maintenance of roadside verges and appropriate and well-maintained signage	Medium term	No	Work with Parish Rangers and provide regular schedules of works in the Sprowston area
	STC	4.2	Forward any complaints STC receives about road, pavement or kerb damage to NCC	Ongoing	No	
	Lead STC to lobby NCC	4.3	Liaise with NCC to influence scheduling of major road works so that, as far as	Ongoing	No	

			possible, disruption to residents is minimised and peak commuter periods are avoided.			
	STC	4.4	Provide information on the STC website related to NCC	Ongoing	No	
	Lead STC to lobby NCC	4.5	Lobby NCC to ensure that adequate budget is set aside for ongoing maintenance within any future capital works	As required	No	
	NCC - STC	4.6	Work with NCC to maintain an adequate supply to winter gritting bins	Medium term	Yes	Consider purchase of additional bins if required. Facilitate NCC in the appropriate locating of winter gritting bins
	STC	4.7	Allocate Town Council budget for emergency gritting into earmarked reserves to be available to supplement gritting in case of a severe winter, for example to improve the gritting of pavements	Short term	Yes	
	STC – NCC	4.8	Monitor and promote the public rights of way in the town in conjunction with NCC	Ongoing	No	Ensure Parish Rangers cut public rights of way when in Sprowston
<b>Improved local transport provision</b>	STC – Passenger Transport Services NCC – House	4.9	Lobby Passenger Transport Services NCC both directly and jointly with	Short term and ongoing	No	Sprowston service to Tesco's and railway station to be explored.

	Builders		neighbouring parishes to improve the quality of service, particularly in terms of cost and scheduling			
	STC	4.10	To increase use of park and ride.	Short term	No	Future of Park and Ride to be explored through Sprowston Neighbourhood Plan
	STC	4.11	To support Bus Rapid Transit system to be introduced along Salhouse Road	Medium term	No	Harrisons Woodland entry point for cyclists to be maintained with signage
<b>Improved parking provision</b>	Lead STC – BDC - developers	4.12	Lobby BDC (LPA) to ensure planning for any future housing developments includes adequate provision for parking	As required	No	
<b>Increased local influence on planning decisions and development</b>	Lead STC – to lobby BDC, NCC and House Builders	5.1	Lobby County and District authorities to ensure Sprowston benefits from a fair distribution of support/ spend	Ongoing	No	
	STC - BDC	5.2	Continue to comment on all key strategic planning documents and consultations that affect Sprowston, ensuring that the Council's knowledge and understanding of the local context is taken into account in decisions and conforms to the Sprowston Neighbourhood	Ongoing	No	

			Plan			
	STC	5.3	Review the way in which the Town Council currently considers and approves planning applications, ensuring that its recommendations are robust and clear	Medium term	No	Links with training for Members
	STC	5.4	Establish closer working relations with LPA (BDC) in particular with the Officers and Members on the Planning Committee and Beeston Park Programme Board	Medium term	No	Invite representatives to attend a meeting with Town Council. Encourage representation on the BDC Planning Committee
	STC	5.5	Encourage local residents to participate in any strategic planning consultations which impact upon Sprowston	Ongoing	No	
	Lead STC to lobby BDC	5.5	Work with LPA (BDC) to review retail mix	Long term	No	
	STC	5.6	Consider options for proactively targeting specific new businesses which meet the needs of local residents and support the economic sustainability of Sprowston	Medium term	No / ?	Unless targeting was going to include developing a brochure in which case there would be printing costs
	STC	5.7	Work with BDC to determine and ensure the best use of any retained business rate income	Short term	No	As per new policy on Business Rate retention from 2013
	STC / Stakeholders in Development	5.8	Work in partnership with all stakeholders interested in the	Medium term	No	

	and Members of the Public		development of land at Sprowston to consider the merits of a neighbourhood agreement			
<b>Improved coordination both between Sprowston businesses and between businesses and the Town Council</b>	STC	5.9	Improve liaison with local businesses and encourage and facilitate coordinated initiatives, such as the setting up of a Town Team	Long term	No /?	Lobby local and national authorities for improved support and conditions for local businesses
<b>Improved local housing provision</b>	STC - BDC	6.1	Establish a closer working relationship with the HA's and BDC in order to increase local influence and work together to improve satisfaction with housing provision in Sprowston	Long term	No	Through expansion of working group
	STC	6.2	Include information about local Housing Policy and Provision on Town Council website	Short term	No	
	STC - BDC	6.3	Support the development of affordable homes on sites identified in the LDF Sites Specific Allocations of Land Plan and on appropriate new sites	Ongoing	No/?	Budget could be required if STC wanted to provide financial support to any Community Land Trusts or similar
	STC	6.4	Continue to look for and review possible sites for affordable housing	Medium term	No	Working group
<b>Retain quality health and social care services</b>	STC – BDC – Stakeholders through Grow Your Community	6.5	Work in partnership with the relevant statutory and voluntary bodies,	Ongoing	No/?	STC lead in cohesion of Grow Your Community

			groups and agencies to ensure health and social care services meet residents' needs and expectations			
	STC	6.6	Include information about Grow Your Community on Town Council website	Short term	No	

## APPENDIX 2 : SPECIFIC ACTIONS FROM THE BUSINESS PLAN

TOWN COUNCIL GOVERNANCE	GREATER DETAIL / CURRENT POSITION		PRIORITY	REVIEW: Medium term: April 2016 to March 2017; Long term: 2017 onwards	BUDGET REQUIRED	COMMENTS
OBJECTIVE						
Staffing – employment and Health and Safety policies and procedures; fire risk assessments; employee handbook	H&S policy in place, fire and risk assessments undertaken, Staff Handbook completed – annual reviews required	1.1	High	Short term	Yes /?	
Seeking external funding sources	Current funding for Sprowston Pavilion refurbishment Sprowston Diamond Centre	1.2	High	Short term	Yes /?	Target Action
Council structure	Continuing reviews	1.3	Low	Short term		
On-going activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noticeboards</li> <li>• Committee support</li> <li>• Administration</li> <li>• Council finances, end of year accounts, audit etc.</li> <li>• Personnel matters, staff management</li> <li>• IT and office equipment</li> <li>• Publicity and website</li> <li>• Annual Report</li> <li>• Newsletter</li> <li>• Annual Town Council</li> <li>• Emergency Planning</li> <li>• New legislation</li> <li>• Responding to consultations</li> <li>• Policy Reviews</li> <li>• Contract Reviews</li> <li>• Training Strategy</li> <li>• Community Forums</li> </ul>	Maintenance  Preparation Preparation  On-going  Arrangements / Administration	1.4	High	Short term	No	Street lights
Cemetery	Maintenance	1.5	Low	Short term		
Allotments	Maintenance	1.6	Low	Short term		
Recreation Ground	Maintenance	1.7	Low	Short term		
Wilks Farm Drive	Maintenance Play Equipment	1.8 1.9	Low High	Short term Long term	Yes	Replacement

Windsor Park Gardens	Maintenance Play Equipment	1.10 1.11	Low High	Short term Long term	Yes	Replacement
Sparhawk Park	Maintenance	1.12	Low	Short term	No	
Blue Boar Lane Play Areas	Maintenance	1.13	Low	Short term	No	
Blue Boar Lane Amenity Area	Skateboard facility	1.14	High	Short term	Yes /?	
Post Mill Close	Open Space	1.15	High	Short term	Yes	Wall Repair
Barkers Lane Open Space	Maintenance	1.16	Low	Short term	No	
Millennium Woodland	Maintenance	1.17	Low	Short term	No	
Harrisons Wood	Cycle Track Car Park	1.18 1.19	Medium Medium	Medium term	Yes	
Youth Forum	School involvement	1.20	Low	Short term	No	
Area within Parks and Open Spaces	Outdoor Gym Equipment	1.21	Low	Long term	Yes	
Solar energy installations for Council buildings	Maintenance	1.22	High	Short term	No	
Neighbourhood Plan	Monitoring	1.23	High	Short term	No	
Consultation with Developers	On-going	1.24	High	Short term	No	

## APPENDIX 3 : REPORT ON PARKS AND OPEN SPACES WITH ACTIONS

### PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

#### 1. Overview

- 1.1 This section of the business plan has been prepared for Members to form a 5 year action plan for the improvement and maintenance of recreational facilities in Sprowston.

It identifies the present condition of the Council's parks and open spaces, where located and existing play equipment, against the budget and resources available to the Council. In addition, the community's expectations have been sought and taken into consideration throughout this report.

- 1.2 The parks and open spaces referred to in this report are:

Barkers Lane Open Space

Blue Boar Lane / Wroxham Road Development

Cannerby Lane Amenity Area

Home Farm (Blue Boar Lane) Cranes Croft and Hall Wood Road

Millennium Woodland

Post Mill Close

Sparhawk Park

Sprowston Recreation Ground

Wilks Farm Drive Open Space and two play areas

Windsor Park Gardens Open Space and play area

Council employees patrol, as part of their duties, all of the above open spaces.

- 1.4 Reference is made in this report to the Cemetery and Allotments sites, both on Church Lane, for completeness of the Council's land ownership and financial commitment.

- 1.5 The Council's community building on Church Lane Sprowston Diamond Centre is the subject of a separate **Business Plan** dated January 2013 updated July 2015.

- 1.6 Part of any project has been to gain feedback from young people giving assurance to the Council to know what they want, and what they would use. The children and families using the facilities will continue to be consulted on a regular basis. Any proposals for improvements to facilities must be accompanied by consultation under the Council's **Community Engagement Policy**.

- 1.7 In 2008 Sprowston Town Council consulted communities - including children and young people themselves - to find out what people wanted, and to help decide what the basis of any 'play strategy' bid should be. The consultation contained the following individual quotations:

"most leisure activities, located as they are at the Recreation Ground, are aimed at sports;

many of the activities are provided by private businesses, such as bowling, swimming, indoor soft play areas for young children, and crazy golf, and so are paid for, and might have reduced hours out of the summer season;

transport to and from facilities is a key factor for people in deciding whether to use them; the quality of some play areas was very poor, and often there were accessibility difficulties for children with disabilities, or the facilities catered only for younger children;

the area at Barkers Lane has no play facilities, it is a grassed area with a goal post and a youth shelter;  
 many young people get together in the evenings with friends, regardless of the weather or time of year, but there are no free facilities and little for them to do;  
 young people do want things to do, and new activities to try out with their friends, preferably in the evening and ideally on a Friday or Saturday night;  
 there are large areas of open space in Sprowston, but these do not necessarily encourage play;  
 children want to explore and take risks”.

- 1.8 The Council potentially has available the following 2015-16 budget
- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| Play equipment renewals fund               | £15,500.00 |
| Playground Equipment – new and replacement | £7,500.00  |
- 1.9 Members should be aware that any identified capital spend will, where possible, be investigated by the Town Clerk through grant aid available now or in the future. In many cases this might mean match funding and an ensuing report will be brought to a future Council meeting.
- 1.10 Signage at open spaces and parks, particularly playgrounds, is important. The need to advise the public of information is of paramount importance to ensure order is maintained. Signs in playgrounds to advise which age groups can use the facilities are essential to mitigate response to any potential claims from accidents. It is essential to establish the usage policy of the Council in each area that it has responsibility. There is no signage at Wilks Farm Drive, Post Mill Close or Cannerby Lane open spaces.

The Council potentially has £500.00 available in the 2015-16 budget for Paths, Seats and Signs.

- 1.11 Inspection of the play equipment is carried out by Council staff and publicity liability indemnified by Zurich Insurance. Periodic unscheduled maintenance of the play areas is carried out by the grounds staff, and includes removal of sharps and clearing of broken glass, graffiti removal and identification of repairs.
- 1.12 The Council carried out the last building condition survey in 2003 by NPS Property Consultants Limited. Any detailed buildings inspection, including electrical installation, safety and fire alarms asbestos reports and heating installations are carried out prior to development of a specific building.

## 2. **Barkers Lane Open Space**

- 2.1 Barkers Lane open space is field land, former agricultural area bounded by natural hedges, for informal recreation situated on Church Lane and Barkers Lane, with access leading to the Millennium Woodland through to Wilks Farm Drive crossing Millennium Loke.
- 2.2 There is a community shelter with seating, the usage of which has been monitored and found to be low. A police presence has been requested and this area has been targeted for additional local community policing. A litter bin is situated in the centre of the site cleared by the grounds staff. This bin is considered inadequate and due for replacement, due to its open top design not repelling rain. This area has the benefit of a goal post for informal kickabouts.

- 2.3 The signs at Barkers Lane open space restrict the use of “motorised vehicles, golf practise, fishing casting, flying of model aircraft, horse and pony riding”.
- 2.4 This area is patrolled by PCSO (Police Community Safety Officers). There has been evidence of underage drinking.
- 2.5 Dog walkers are encouraged to clean up after their dogs with the provision of two dog bins at this site.

### 3. **Blue Boar Lane Wroxham Road Development**

The layout of this development includes 2 x 4-8 year old play space activity areas which have been adopted by this Council. Together with an area of open space and an older age 8 years and above child’s’ play space, including a teen shelter. Adoption of the larger play area by the Council is presently being negotiated with a skateboard park.

### 4. **Cannerby Lane Amenity Area**

This is a grassed area in front of shop premises. This area has been subject to “donuting” by young people in cars. Police have requested that this land has barrier posts erected in an effort to prevent this practise. Access to this land must be unrestricted for Councils’ grounds staff when performing duty of routine maintenance. There is no signage to ownership on this land.

### 5. **White House Farm Development**

- 5.1 This proposal has progressed to the planning application stage and consequentially the detail of leisure on this site has not yet been finalised. This site does have potential for football pitches and/or tennis courts without changing facilities, as well as open space and play areas.
- 5.2 The Council has indicated, in principle, adoption of the maintenance of the woodland area now known as Harrisons Wood. A management plan for the area has been prepared, but as yet there are not details of the commuted sum this Council would receive on handover from Broadland District Council.

### 6. **Millennium Woodland**

- 6.1 This area has been subjected to maintenance work since tree planting in 2000, in accordance with the original planting schedule of a natural woodland walk. The planting of wild flowers to the planting specification is ongoing.
- 6.2 The Council has designated the woodland as an area where dogs are kept on a lead. Dog walkers are encouraged to clean up after their dogs by provision of a dog bin at this site, and further bins at Wilks Farm Drive and Barkers Lane.
- 6.3 Encouraging healthy living for all people, regardless of age, could be supported by the introduction of trim trail apparatus, such as stretching points a sit up bench, or dip station, positioned near the entrance to Barkers Lane open space.

## 7. **Post Mill Close**

- 7.1 Post Mill Close is a small public open space area bounded by housing and finished in hard surface.
- 7.2 This area, at present, stands without Council decision as to a future use as an amenity space.
- 7.3 The condition survey of 2003 identified the asphalt surface as uneven and in need of resurface/tar spray and the perimeter retaining wall in need of brick replacement, re-pointing and replacement coping at a total estimated cost of £8,068.00. The perimeter wall was removed as a safety precaution. An up to date cost of rebuilding the wall and/or planters to secure the area will be sourced and reported to Council.

## 8. **Sparhawk Park**

- 8.1 Sparhawk Park is surrounded by properties and has the reputation of being a small person's park with a picnic area appreciated by adults. The play equipment is for the ages ranging from toddler to 11 years. That is not to say that teenagers do not use this park and there is a tendency for pupils to congregate during free periods, reading books and having lunch, from Sprowston High School and into the evenings before the park is closed at dusk.
- 8.2 There are two gates into Sparhawk Park, one on Sparhawk Avenue and the other on Peregrine Road. The gates and metalwork are in need of repainting. Norfolk County Council has given the Council notice to quit an area of the park, operative on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015.
- 8.3 Sparhawk Pavilion has a toilet block, with staff accommodation. The toilets at Sparhawk Park are open to the public. These toilets, which were identified in the 2003 building condition survey for refurbishment and upgrading to comply with the Disabilities Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 and 2005, as in need of refurbishment, which was carried out to a high standard.
- 8.4 Sparhawk Park has received new signage to reflect the age of users of equipment no dogs, ball games or cycling within the park. Signage and/or the Park Supervisor discourage adults and children from riding through the Park, although there is an existing pathway, which could be developed into a cycle path. The park does provide a diagonal cut through from Sparhawk Avenue to Peregrine Road, the outcome of which is awaited from Norfolk County Council.

There is a restriction on dog walkers who are not allowed on the park. There is consequentially no provision for a dog bin.

There is no provision of cycle racks at this park to facilitate the locking of cycles and consequently children keep their cycles with them, laying them on the grass where they are playing.

- 8.5 The fencing has barbed wire to restrict access to the park after closing hours. This form of deterrent needs identification signage to resist any litigation that could present itself to the Council. The majority of barbed wire at the Recreation Ground has been removed, the remainder being monitored for future removal.
- 8.6 Sparhawk Park has two play areas, recently refurbished, and separated by a path. It is to be assumed that the reason for restricting bicycle riding in the park has been a safety measure to

prevent accidents involving young children running from one area to the other, crossing in front of bicycles using the path. Consequently a disregarded rule of the park is no cycles. A balanced view of use of cycles in the park needs to be reviewed.

- 8.7 The swings in the other play area need protection barriers, a consideration for the play equipment budget of 2015-16.
- 8.8 There is a fenced area at Sparhawk Park which contains a garage which could be utilised for other activities by incorporating the area into the main body of the park.

## 9. **Sprowston Recreation Ground**

- 9.1 The Recreation Ground is surrounded by properties and serviced by two main gates from Recreation Ground Road and Edwards Road. Recreation Ground is regarded as a Sports Field Park predominantly grassed as seasonal team game areas, with tennis courts, BMX track, basketball area, bowls green (usage fee scale in operation) and a children's play area.
- 9.2 The two sets of gates to the grounds are locked at lighting up times and opening times are displayed. This does deter young persons with or without cycles to enter the grounds and there is very little disturbance to occupants of neighbouring properties at both entrances to the park.
- 9.3 The external areas include car parking, access roads and distribution footpaths, servicing the Council office, workshop building and yard, bowls pavilion and green and pavilion sports and social centre.
- 9.4 The pavilion building is hired for functions and a schedule of charges is in operation. The positioning of the pavilion within the recreation ground and the locking of the gates at sunset by the park supervisors is not conducive to optimum lettings leaving the majority of hiring for children's parties held on Saturday and Sunday afternoon.

The kitchen in the pavilion was refurbished as part of the 2014-15 budget.

The refurbishment of the changing areas together with extension is currently being undertaken with resultant works being part of an application for funding through the Football Foundation, Veolia and Council funds. The Council has a provision for match funding of £70,000.00 in the 2015-16 budget.

- 9.5 There is a Byelaw made by Sprowston Town Council applicable to the recreation ground preventing "any unauthorised motorised vehicle" being driven on or over the ground. The same Byelaw refers to dogs being under proper control and be effectually restrained from causing annoyance to any person.
- 9.6 The Council supplies dog bags, has dog bins and encourages the clearing up after dogs by use of notices. Complaints are regularly received from users of the sports park that incidences of dog fouling and dogs not under control has spoilt enjoyment of regulated play and informal games.

Realistically whilst the council can make any management rules (in the interests of public health and safety) it wishes; prosecutions can only be brought with Orders to ensure the enforcement is a court matter.

- 9.7 Since May 1955 there has been an agreement with Norfolk County Council for the use of the Recreation Ground by Sprowston Junior School. The original agreement was signed in May 1955, with an annual payment of £200.00. There was a variation dated 1<sup>st</sup> April 1983 with an increase payment of £1,100.00 annually, to be reviewed every 3 years, the agreement to run for the next 10 years. The 10 year renewal dates of 1993 and 2003 following the 10 year fixed term have both expired. The annual payment to the Council from Norfolk County Council is increased each year in accordance with the Council's scale of fees and charges.

The school uses the football pitches for after school matches. Grass and hard tennis courts are used during the season first week April until second week July for two afternoons a week. An athletics track and discus throwing funnel is white lined fortnightly by council grounds staff.

- 9.8 The toilets were identified as part of the condition survey of 2003 for refurbishment and upgrading to comply with the Disabilities Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 and 2005 and have been upgraded accordingly.
- 9.9 The play area is very popular particularly by younger children when leaving the two adjoining schools. The equipment has been upgraded and now fulfils the needs of many play activities.
- 9.10 The basketball multi use equipment at Edwards Road entrance to the park has been fenced stopping the occasional indiscriminate parking precluding use of this equipment. This equipment has in many cases been superseded by a MUGA (Multi Use Games Area). The estimated cost of replacement of this equipment would be £75,000.00.
- 9.11 The Recreation Ground does attract a large number of young people and this could be supported by a community shelter, providing the need for somewhere to hang out. Estimated cost of a shelter is £10,000.00.

## 10. **Wilks Farm Drive Open Space and two play areas**

- 10.1 The amenity areas at Wilks Farm Drive and Barkers Lane have been identified as hot spots for the congregation of teenagers and there have been incidents reported involving under aged drinking, evidenced by discarded bottles. Vandals have targeted the play equipment at Wilks Farm Drive and the Council's employees and Broadland District Council regularly remove graffiti, which is beginning to become offensive.

An area of concern is broken glass, where bottles are smashed against the concrete bin. Replacement with a galvanised bin must be considered at time of refurbishment of the play area.

- 10.3 Complaints by users of this open space include inadequate children's equipment, request for resurfacing of the paths and additional lighting.
- 10.4 Failing timber railings at the smaller play area and at the open space continue to be replaced as part of routine maintenance. The Council has agreed that as the equipment fails by not meeting safety checks it will be removed.

The perimeter fence of the open space has been subjected to patch repairs but continues to pass a condition survey.

- 10.5 Large deciduous trees in the field and abutting properties, along the perimeter, are part of an bi-annual arboriculture inspection with a maintenance plan.
- 10.6 The open space area has little or no provision for seating. The original plan for this area needs to be revisited with recommendations for future use and development of this open space.
- 10.7 The play area for juniors needs fencing to prevent dogs entering the area. The equipment needs reviewing and a preliminary estimate has been received for £54,350.00. Costs for providing a MUGA and a shelter have been quoted previously in this report.
- 10.8 Dog walkers are encouraged to clean up after their dogs with three bins at this site.
- 10.9 The play area would benefit from a sign stating no dogs in the area and the age group permitted to use play equipment. However, the lack of fencing would make this impossible to sign and monitor let alone enforce.
11. **Windsor Park Gardens Open Space and Play Area**
- 11.1 The adoption Agreement between Broadland District Council and the Council to assume responsibility for the open space and play area at Windsor Park Gardens was signed during 2014.
- 11.2 The play area at this site has been signed and there are dog and litter bins for use of residents. The equipment is in need of replacement. This would be at a similar cost to Wilks Farm Drive play area.
12. **Allotment Site**
- 12.1 The Council provides 92 allotments at Church Lane. The recent increase in popularity, possibly through television and the highlighting of healthy eating, together with smaller garden areas, has the result of over 44 applicants on the waiting list. There is a shown need for more allotments in Sprowston and with the increase in building of properties that have little garden space, this need can only increase.
- 12.2 The Council has in the past rented additional adjoining land from Sprowston Parochial Church. An approach has been made and declined to resume this arrangement, due to the land being farmed under a long leasing arrangement.
13. **Cemetery**
- 13.1 The cemetery is bounded by hedges to three sides and wall and railings to Church Lane.
- 13.2 The Cemetery extension has been landscaped with drainage and laid out for burial plots. To realise its full potential, the extension of cemetery land required engaging of consultants to advise on drainage, burial alternatives, memorial options and planning of the site. Tree planting consistent to the requirements of the planning permission will commence this Autumn.
- 13.4 Maintenance, felling and replanting of trees is an ongoing concern and ornamental varieties with manageable growth are favourable, in view of the surrounding memorials and resultant roots.

- 13.5 The Council has responsibility for maintenance of the closed churchyard. An ongoing survey of the memorials has not identified any need for concern. The railings around the churchyard and tombs are checked for compliance to health and safety requirements for visitors to the cemetery.
- 13.6 The building at the cemetery was refurbished during 2014 providing a public toilet and waiting facilities for mourners, together with works area for storage and washroom.
14. Attached is a draft appendix listing possible project actions identified in the above report. These have been given no specific priority but follow the paragraph numbers of this report.
15. The Council is asked to consider improvements to the facilities of Sprowston with regard to budget provision which forms the basis of a 5 year improvement and maintenance action plan.

## ACTIONS

TOWN COUNCIL GOVERNANCE	GREATER DETAIL / CURRENT POSITION	REF	PRIORITY	REVIEW: Medium term: April 2016 to March 2017; Long term: 2017 onwards	BUDGET REQUIRED	COMMENTS
<b>OBJECTIVE</b>						
Fit for Life Apparatus	Residents requested received		Low	Long term	Yes	Est. £15,000
Seating at Cannerby Lane	Monitor requests		Low	Long term	Yes	Est.£1,500
Barrier restriction public safety existing Barkers Lane onto public highway (two areas)	Monitor usage of field area		Low	Long term	Yes	Est.£2,000
Seating Wilks Farm Drive	Identify seating and budget		Low	Long term	Yes	Est. £300 each seat
Signage Wilks Farm Drive Play area	Policy of usage on signage	1.10		Short term	Yes	£500
Swing barriers at Sparhawk Park and repairs to wetpour	Consultation on Health and Safety to show need		Low	Long term	Yes	Quotation requested
Play equipment renewals	Decision on timescale of renewals awaited		Medium	Medium term	Yes	Est.£54,350 each area
Sprowston Diamond Centre development Phase 3	Working group to identify phased development		High	Medium term onwards	Yes	£2,291,582
Tennis court refurbishment	General Maintenance £800		Medium		Yes	£3,800
Footpaths Windsor Park Gardens	General Maintenance		Medium		Yes	£2,300
Replacement Street Lighting	Consult with		High to		Yes	£32,000

	lighting contractor as to need		Low			
Harrisons Woodland Maintenance	Fit for purpose of public use		High	Medium term onwards	Yes	£35,000 of CIL contribution
Skateboard Park	Identify with young people design aspirations		High	Medium term onwards	Assured capital funding	£100,000 from developers £50,000 loan from CIL contribution
Sprowston Events	Working party aspirations		High		Yes reallocation of 2014/15 budget	£15,000