

# **DISS TOWN COUNCIL**

## **STRATEGY PLAN 2016-2019**

### **FOREWORD BY THE TOWN MAYOR**

**This document represents Diss Town Council's first plan which clearly sets out the future direction of the Council. It has been developed over a few short months but has actively engaged all staff and Councillors. This was critical to ensure everyone 'bought in' to the values, priorities and objectives so that the Town Council is in a strong position to deliver this plan.**

**The plan is not yet complete; there is much work to be done over the next twelve months and more to add detail to the document, to fully understand our key financial commitments over the next three years whilst also developing an understanding of the resources required to deliver on our key priorities, and creating action plans with resource allocations. Developing a budget that focusses on the key priorities whilst ensuring the Council still meets its current obligations and legal requirements will be critical to achieving this.**

**Specifically the Council has said it needs to be more efficient, decisive and proactive. The Town Council will be working hard over the next few months to put the appropriate mechanisms in place to make that happen whilst also ensuring it is looking after its assets properly, delivering services the people want and engaging well with the community.**

**The Council will be reorganising its decision making structure in order to deliver this plan.**

**We welcome community involvement in any aspect of Council activity. After all, Councillors and staff are here to serve the people of Diss and it is hoped this plan will improve the way the Council achieves this by delivering outcomes that matter to this community and make a difference to people's everyday lives.**

**Julian Mason  
Diss Town Mayor  
2015/16**

### **SUMMARY**

**This Strategy Plan has been prepared in order to set out key priorities and objectives for Diss Town Council over the next three years (May 2016 – April 2019).**

**It has been developed using the results of the Diss Future Survey of local residents carried out in 2013 and an internal survey with follow-up workshops involving all staff and councillors of Diss Town Council between January and April 2016. Its primary aim is to represent the current wishes of the community alongside the recognised needs and opportunities arising from local, district, county, regional and national activities and developments.**

**Community is defined as Diss residents, businesses and visitors.**

The objective of this document is to give the community a clear understanding of what the Council intends to focus on and how it plans to deliver over the coming three years. The plan will be reviewed and updated annually while actions and objectives will be reviewed regularly.

### **THE COUNCIL'S VISION**

To make Diss a successful, vibrant, attractive town, where people want to live, work and visit

### **THE COUNCIL'S MISSION**

To support the community and promote Diss as the heart of East Anglia for Business, Leisure and the Arts

### **THE COUNCIL'S VALUES**

*The Council will:*

- Be an advocate and campaigning voice for the people of Diss
- Work to the highest standards of integrity and openness and deliver services to the best of its abilities
- Work in partnership with other organisations to improve services and deliver value for money
- Be accountable and honour its responsibilities
- Be inclusive and supportive of the whole community

### **DISS TOWN COUNCIL PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES**

The Council has identified four key priorities and agreed objectives to define how it will deliver those priorities.

The four key priorities are:

|    |                                       |   |
|----|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. | <b><u>Infrastructure</u></b>          | <b>To actively explore, develop proposals and lobby for infrastructure improvements for the benefit of the community</b>  |
| 2. | <b><u>Heritage and Facilities</u></b> | <b>To preserve and enhance the heritage, identity and facilities of the town</b>  |
| 3. | <b><u>Community Engagement</u></b>    | <b>To strengthen current and explore new links, effective communication and involvement with all our town communities</b>   |
| 4. | <b><u>Internal Operations</u></b>     | <b>To continue to improve the organisational efficiency of the Town Council whilst ensuring it maintains and reviews existing responsibilities and complies with relevant legislation</b> |

**DISS TOWN COUNCIL OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS FOR 2016 - 2019**

| <p align="center"><b>TO ACTIVELY EXPLORE, DEVELOP PROPOSALS AND LOBBY FOR INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS<br/>FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE COMMUNITY</b></p> <p><i>To be driven by our Infrastructure Team</i></p> |                                      |   |  |  |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| <u>REF</u>   | <u>TITLE</u>                         | <u>OBJECTIVE</u>  | <u>ACTION</u>  | <u>DEADLINE/<br/>FOLLOW UP</u>                                     |
| INF 1  | Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) | To develop an NDP that creates a shared vision for the town and sets out how and where the community will support future development including clearly defining infrastructure requirements in partnership with all relevant bodies including neighbouring parishes | <p><b>Milestones</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Designation of neighbourhood area by SNC</li> <li>2. Draft a plan following extensive community engagement and analysis of the evidence base</li> <li>3. Submit final plan to SNC</li> <li>4. Review by Planning Inspector</li> <li>5. Successful referendum</li> <li>6. SNC 'make' the Plan</li> </ol> | <p>by March 2018</p> <p>Monitoring and enforcement of the Plan</p> |
|  | INF 1.1                              |   | Liaise with/lobby potential developers to identify new infrastructure opportunities and create a prioritised shortlist for inclusion in NDP  | by May 2017  |
|  | INF 1.2                              |   | Influence and support future education and health care provision by preparing an outline report summarising 10 year forecast of health and education infrastructure needs based on projected growth for inclusion in NDP   | by May 2017  |
|  | INF 1.3                              |   | Develop a feasibility report for suggested traffic flow improvements for the town for inclusion in NDP   | by May 2017  |
| INF 2  | Partnership working                  | To deliver existing or identified new services in more effective and resource efficient ways, with improved outcomes by investigating new methods and opportunities for collaborative working with other bodies   |  | by May 2017  |
|  | INF 2.1                              |   | Continue to work with the One Public Estate Diss team to identify opportunities to rationalise the public estate by working with identified partners in delivering excellent, efficient and inspiring services to the public to achieve better outcomes in a cost efficient way  | by May 2017  |
|  | INF 2.2                              |   | <i>Action(s) to be identified</i>  |  |

| <u>REF</u> | <u>TITLE</u>   | <u>OBJECTIVE</u>   | <u>ACTION</u>  | <u>DEADLINE/<br/>FOLLOW UP</u> |
|------------|--|--|--|--------------------------------|
| INF 3      | Lobby/<br>represent the<br>interests of the<br>community | To engage fully in all consultative planning<br>processes relating to developments and other<br>initiatives that will impact upon the town or the<br>Council |  |                                |
|            | INF 3.1  |  | Respond robustly to all planning applications in the<br>parish of Diss within the statutory time period (or<br>seek an extension), taking account of the views of the<br>community |                                |
|            | INF 3.2  |  | Respond constructively to all other relevant<br>consultations for initiatives that will impact upon the<br>town or the Council within the specified deadline                       |                                |
|            | INF 3.3  |  | <i>Action(s) to be identified</i>  |                                |

**TO PRESERVE AND ENHANCE THE HERITAGE, IDENTITY AND FACILITIES OF THE TOWN**

*To be driven by our Heritage & Facilities Team*

| <u>REF</u> | <u>TITLE</u>                               | <u>OBJECTIVE</u>  | <u>ACTION</u>  | <u>DEADLINE/<br/>FOLLOW UP</u>   |
|------------|--|---|--|--|
| HF 1       | Maintain existing Council-owned facilities | To develop a facilities management programme to quantify the Council's existing asset management commitments, specify a minimum standard for maintenance of Council's current assets and include in a three year budget plan  | <b>Milestones</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Appoint a surveyor to undertake an asset survey</li> <li>2. Review and assess those items which are outside the scope of an asset survey (eg play equipment, paths, trees etc)</li> <li>3. Develop a facilities management plan using this data</li> <li>4. Incorporate the findings into the budget.</li> </ol> | by October 2017  |
|            | HF 1.1                                     |   | <i>Action(s) to be identified</i>  |  |
| HF 2       | Service Devolution to the Town Council     | To investigate opportunities to take on shared or devolved service provision where it can be proven that DTC could run it more efficiently, cost effectively and/or with better outcomes and where appropriate develop a business case to negotiate with other authorities. |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific options identified by December 2016</li> <li>• Business case prepared by May 2017</li> </ul> |
|            | HF 2.1                                     |   | <i>Action(s) to be identified</i>  |  |
| HF 3       | Increase Service Delivery                  | To investigate options for working with neighbouring parishes and other organisations (eg housing associations) to deliver locally responsive and accountable services  |  | by December 2016   |
|            | HF 3.1                                     |   | <i>Action(s) to be identified</i>  |  |

| <u>REF</u> | <u>TITLE</u>              | <u>OBJECTIVE</u>  | <u>ACTION</u>  | <u>DEADLINE/<br/>FOLLOW UP</u> |
|------------|---------------------------|---|--|--------------------------------|
| HF 4       | Heritage Triangle Project | To continue to support the delivery of all aspects of the Heritage Triangle Project | <b>Milestones</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Formation of the Heritage Triangle Trust</li> <li>2. Completion of the Corn Hall</li> <li>3. Completion of the gardens and boardwalk scheme</li> <li>4. Completion of the streetscape scheme</li> <li>5. Completion of the interpretation programme</li> </ol> | by April 2017                  |
|            | HF 4.1                    |   | To join, support financially and actively engage with the Heritage Triangle Trust in order to facilitate the ongoing involvement of the Town Council in the partnership, its support of the local economy and ensure the long term success of the project  | Review annually                |
|            | HF 4.2                    |   | <i>Action(s) to be identified</i>  |                                |

**TO STRENGTHEN CURRENT AND EXPLORE NEW LINKS, EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AND INVOLVEMENT WITH ALL OUR TOWN COMMUNITIES**

*To be driven by our Community Engagement Team*

| <u>REF</u> | <u>TITLE</u>            | <u>OBJECTIVE</u>  | <u>ACTION</u>  | <u>DEADLINE/<br/>FOLLOW UP</u> |
|------------|-------------------------|---|--|--------------------------------|
| CE 1       | Communications Strategy | To develop a communications strategy setting out how DTC will engage and communicate with the community |  | by end December 2016           |
|            | CE 1.1                  |   | Review Council's identity and develop branding guidelines  | by end June 2016               |
|            | CE 1.2                  |   | To 'go-live' with the new Council website<br><b>Milestones</b><br><ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. New website adapted as required to reflect key priorities</li> <li>2. Minimum key data identified, prepared and uploaded to the website</li> <li>3. Website 'go-live' (end June 2016)</li> <li>4. Active promotion of new website</li> <li>5. Remaining data to be identified, prepared and uploaded to the website (by end September 2016)</li> <li>6. Web visits increased by 50% from 2,500 (by end December 2016)</li> </ol> | by end June 2016               |
|            | CE1.3                   |   | To increase social media activity by<br><ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increasing Facebook 'likes' from 80 to 250</li> <li>2. Increasing Twitter followers from 628 to 1000</li> </ol>  | by end December 2016           |
|            | CE 1.4                  |   | Have a presence at events and market days with a pop up shelter and promotional material to answer questions and provide a direct face to face opportunity to engage with the community. Design and purchase DTC liveried gazebo and promotional material reflecting the Council's key priorities.   | by September 2016              |

| <u>REF</u> | <u>TITLE</u>          | <u>OBJECTIVE</u>   | <u>ACTION</u>  | <u>DEADLINE/<br/>FOLLOW UP</u> |
|------------|-----------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|
|            | CE 1.5                |  | To set up Councillor surgeries to be held in a neutral location  | by September 2016              |
|            | CE 1.6                |  | Work with local youth organisations and schools to set up a Youth Council to engage with young people and give them a voice in the local community | by end September 2016          |
| CE 2       | Community Network     | To facilitate a Diss Community Network linking community groups undertaking similar activities to encourage collaborative working and avoid duplication of effort                            |  | by Dec 2016                    |
|            | CE 2.1                |  | <i>Action(s) to be identified</i>  |                                |
| CE 3       | Community Events      | To organise, facilitate or support a wide variety of community events for the benefit of the whole community   |  |                                |
|            | CE 3.1                |  | <i>Action(s) to be identified</i>  |                                |
| CE 4       | Support Local Economy | To support the local economy through a variety of measures including promotion, cleanliness, partnership initiatives, planning responses, seasonal enhancements (Christmas Lights, bunting). |  |                                |
|            | CE 4.1                |  | <i>Action(s) to be identified</i>  |                                |

**TO CONTINUE TO IMPROVE THE ORGANISATIONAL EFFICIENCY OF THE TOWN COUNCIL WHILST ENSURING IT MAINTAINS  
AND REVIEWS EXISTING RESPONSIBILITIES AND COMPLIES WITH RELEVANT LEGISLATION**

*To be driven by our Internal Operations Team*

| <u>REF</u> | <u>TITLE</u>                     | <u>OBJECTIVE</u>  | <u>ACTION</u>  | <u>DEADLINE/<br/>FOLLOW UP</u> |
|------------|----------------------------------|---|--|--------------------------------|
| IO 1       | Streamline procedures            | To simplify administrative and financial procedures to increase staff resource available to deliver the Council's priorities by saving 600 man-hours  |  | to end March 2017              |
|            | IO 1.1                           |   | To issue all agendas to councillors electronically   | by end May 2016                |
|            | IO 1.2                           |   | Review the necessity and effectiveness of daily data collection and reporting currently undertaken and simplify/cease if deemed appropriate  | by June 2017                   |
|            | IO 1.3                           |   | To review filing, storage and archive systems to simplify and streamline   | by June 2017                   |
|            | IO 1.4                           |   | Review the Council's banking arrangements and internal controls in order to pay invoices and wages electronically  | by end August 2016             |
|            | IO 1.5                           |   | Review the Council's internal controls in order for payments from within budgets or for Council approved expenditure to be authorised under delegated authority and reported regularly to Council  | by end March 2017              |
| IO 2       | Increase Income and Reduce Costs | To increase net income through revenue generation opportunities (excluding precept) and reduce costs by identifying cost efficiencies and undertaking an in-depth review of all current service provision | <b>Milestones</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To increase net income by 10% (over 16/17 budget) in this financial year</li> <li>2. To increase net income by 5% for the 2017/18 budget considerations</li> <li>3. To increase net income by a further 10% over the 2016/17 net income (currently £94,000) for the 2018/19 budget considerations</li> </ol> |                                |

| <u>REF</u> | <u>TITLE</u>                   | <u>OBJECTIVE</u>   | <u>ACTION</u>  | <u>DEADLINE/<br/>FOLLOW UP</u>                   |
|------------|--------------------------------|--|--|--|
|            | IO 2.1                         |  | Identify and quantify potential new revenue streams  | by end<br>March 2017                             |
|            | IO 2.2                         |  | Identify and quantify cost efficiencies  | by end<br>March 2017                             |
|            | IO 2.3                         |  | Review all Council activities to determine who it is delivered for, how much it costs, and if still relevant, to identify relevant opportunities for alternative delivery mechanisms   | by June 2017                                     |
| IO 3       | Budget Setting                 | To set a budget that meets the minimum requirements for delivering the Council's existing commitments, the resources necessary to deliver key priorities and objectives, and reflects identified efficiencies and income opportunities | <b>Milestones</b><br>1. Identify key risks (ie loss of SNC grant/asset deterioration)<br>2. Develop facilities management programme<br>3. Identify cost savings<br>4. Identify new income streams<br>5. Draft budget<br>6. Approved by Council | by January<br>2018                               |
|            | IO 3.1                         |  | <i>Action(s) to be identified</i>  |  |
| IO 4       | Meeting Statutory Requirements | To ensure the Council continues to comply with all legislative requirements including but not limited to governance and finance  |  | to be reviewed annually                          |
|            | IO 4.1                         |  | To review the effectiveness of internal controls   | at least annually or more frequently if required |

| <u>REF</u> | <u>TITLE</u>          | <u>OBJECTIVE</u>   | <u>ACTION</u>   | <u>DEADLINE/<br/>FOLLOW UP</u> |
|------------|-----------------------|--|---|--------------------------------|
|            | IO 4.2                |  | Budget for appropriate training, memberships and conference attendance for key staff and Councillors throughout the year to ensure they are kept up to date with legislation changes and best practice guidance | annually                       |
|            | IO 4.3                |  | Review all relevant policies  | annually                       |
| IO 5       |                       | To agree Officer delegations   |   | by end June 2016               |
| IO 6       | Responsible Employers | To ensure that the recruitment, appointment, remuneration and management of all staff is carried out fairly, with due diligence and in compliance with all relevant legislation, good practice and nationally agreed terms and conditions of service |   |                                |
|            | IO 6.1                |  | Review all employment related policies and practices and ensure that staff are being managed in accordance with the Council's policies and identify relevant training needs                                     | at least annually              |
|            | IO 6.2                |  | <i>Action(s) to be identified</i>   |                                |