



4 YEAR ACTION PLAN 2023-2027



1. INTRODUCTION

Crewkerne Town Council's strategy for the future is the basis for a four-year rolling plan, but also encompassing activities and projects taking place over a longer period of time.

The plan is designed to be flexible and builds in contingencies to ensure that the Council can respond appropriately to unplanned events, changing risks or developing priorities.

This plan is a statement of the Council's vision, objectives and priorities for the financial years until the next planned elections in May 2027. It sets out what Crewkerne Town Council wants to achieve, either directly or by lobbying or influencing another body, such as Somerset Council.

2. OVERVIEW

Crewkerne is located to the southeast of the county of Somerset, just a few miles from the Dorset border. It is a historic market town with a population of approximately 8,000 people. It is bisected by the A30 and A356, as well as being located on the West of England mainline railway to London Waterloo. The town centre and some of the surrounding residential areas, are part of a designated Conservation Area, reflecting the town's historical significance. The Town Council is in the process of producing a Neighbourhood Plan (NP), which will aim to include policies protecting these heritage assets. A significant number of houses are planned to be built in Crewkerne over the coming years.

Crewkerne Town Council has twelve elected councillors (elected May 2022), and employs nine members of staff. The precept for 2023/24 is £526,756. Crewkerne Town Council has an unusually large property portfolio for a town of its size.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

Crewkerne Town Council is responsible for all the major open spaces in the town, including Henhayes Recreation Ground, Happy Valley Recreation Ground, Barn Street Recreation Ground, Bincombe Beeches Nature Reserve and Townsend Cemetery. It also maintains the closed churchyard of St Bartholomew's. The Town Council provides three equipped play areas and a skatepark, tennis courts and a bowling green as well as the community meeting and changing facilities at the George Reynolds Centre.

Other buildings owned and maintained by the Town Council include the Town Hall (including Victoria Hall), George Reynolds Centre, Townsend Cemetery Chapels and Lodge and the Aqua Centre (although this is operated by Crewkerne Leisure Management), public toilets and a car park. Crewkerne is proud to have been awarded three Gold 'In Bloom' awards through its active 'Crewkerne in Bloom' team. The war memorial 'Tommy' and adjacent war memorial gardens have recently been acquired by the Town Council. Additionally, there is a CCTV system, Speed Indicator Device (SID), and two allotment sites.

Somerset Council takes responsibility for street cleaning in the town, including the emptying of the town centre bins. Crewkerne Town Council's grounds team empty approximately 40 other bins twice a week.

All buildings, play areas, vehicles, equipment and any other assets are supported by a schedule of maintenance, which takes account of the expected lifespan of each item. In many cases this will be longer than the period of this plan.

4. GOVERNANCE

Crewkerne Town Council consists of 12 town councillors elected (usually) once every four years. There are no electoral town council wards. The Town Council is the first and most local level of local government. Since the local government reorganisation took place, the higher tier authority is now Somerset Council.

Crewkerne Town Council recognises that the growth of the town combined with growing pressures on Somerset Council and Government funding, means that the Town Council has a more important role than ever before in responding to local issues.

The Town Council also recognises that in the face of the evolving priorities of the new Somerset Council, there may be further opportunities for Crewkerne to more pro-actively control its own direction. Any potential service and asset delegations from the new authority will be carefully considered if they meet any of the following criteria:

- An opportunity for Crewkerne Town Council to achieve its aims and objectives as outlined in this plan.
- A chance to improve quality of service provision or assets locally.
- Achieving value for money for Crewkerne residents.
- Scope to provide new facilities not previously accessible in the community.

5. CREWKERNE TOWN COUNCIL – A VISION FOR CREWKERNE

As part of the Neighbourhood Plan process, the Town Council has been consulting with the local community via a number of consultation events and surveys. The responses received will inform the Town Council's vision statement.

6. ACTION PLAN 2023-27

This document should be read in conjunction with the following action plan table, which sets out the Town Council's plans and priorities until the next scheduled elections in 2027.

This table will be reviewed annually and refreshed to take account of changing priorities, events, budget and funding availability etc.