



Bishop Auckland Town Council

Community Sub-Strategy 2026–2031

1. Purpose of the Sub-Strategy

This Community Sub-Strategy supports and sits beneath the **Town Council Strategy 2026–2031**, specifically delivering Strategic Priority 5.1 – Community.

It provides the framework through which the Council will achieve the agreed Community objectives set out in section 5.1 of the overarching strategy and ensures that ambition is translated into measurable, deliverable activity.

It builds on:

- The Council’s Community Engagement Policy (reviewed May 2026)
- Previous Community Engagement Strategy and Action Plan iterations
- Councillor workshops, community feedback, and officer experience

This sub-strategy is supported by:

- A rolling Community Action Plan
- Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
- Bi-monthly reporting to Community Committee and quarterly reporting to Full Council
- Annual review and refresh of the action plan.

2. Community Vision

A connected, inclusive and proud Bishop Auckland, where residents feel heard, supported and actively involved in shaping their town.

This vision directly supports the Council’s aim to strengthen the wellbeing, safety and pride of residents.

3. Community Strategic Objectives (as set out in Town Council Strategy 7.1)

This sub-strategy is explicitly structured around the Community objectives agreed in section 7.1 of the Town Council Strategy:

1. Support physical and mental wellbeing through donations, grants and partnerships
2. Deliver a high-quality, inclusive events programme
3. Improve community safety and resilience in partnership with police and emergency services
4. Enhance communication and community participation

All themes, priorities and actions within this document align to one or more of these objectives.

4. Strategic Themes and Priorities

Theme 1: Wellbeing, Inclusion & Community Support

Linked Objective: Support physical and mental wellbeing through donations, grants and partnerships

Priority:

- Enable communities and individuals to thrive through targeted support and partnership working

Key commitments:

- Maintain and strengthen a transparent community grants programme
- Support organisations addressing health, wellbeing, isolation and inequality
- Work with partners to avoid duplication and maximise impact

Key areas of focus:

- Community and wellbeing grants
- Partnerships with voluntary, health and support organisations
- Use of Council assets to support community wellbeing activity

Theme 2: Events, Culture & Town Pride

Linked Objective: Deliver a high-quality, inclusive events programme

Priority:

- Use events, culture and celebration to bring people together and build pride in Bishop Auckland

Key commitments:

- Deliver and support inclusive, accessible and high-quality events
- Celebrate the town's heritage, identity and achievements
- Encourage participation from all sections of the community

Key areas of focus:

- Annual civic, seasonal and remembrance events
- Heritage, cultural and arts activity
- Town Pride, Youth and Community Awards

Theme 3: Community Safety & Resilience

Linked Objective: Improve community safety and resilience in partnership with police and emergency services

Priority:

- Contribute to a safer, more resilient Bishop Auckland through partnership and local leadership

Key commitments:

- Work constructively with police, emergency services and partners
- Support initiatives that improve perceptions of safety and community confidence
- Strengthen community preparedness and resilience

Key areas of focus:

- ASB and community safety partnership working
- Emergency and resilience planning
- Community reassurance and information sharing

Theme 4: Engagement, Communication & Participation

Linked Objective: Enhance communication and community participation

Priority:

- Ensure residents are informed, engaged and able to influence local decisions

Key commitments:

- Deliver inclusive and transparent engagement and consultation
- Improve the Council's visibility, accessibility and communication
- Support councillors in their community leadership role

Key areas of focus:

- Digital and non-digital communication
- Public consultation and feedback loops
- Outreach to underrepresented groups

5. Delivery Approach

The Council will deliver this sub-strategy by:

- Embedding the Community objectives across all relevant Council activity
- Working in partnership rather than duplicating services
- Using evidence and engagement to shape priorities
- Remaining flexible to respond to emerging community needs

An annual Community Action Plan will:

- Set out actions against each of the four Community objectives
- Identify lead members and officers
- Allocate resources
- Define success measures

6. Measuring Success

Progress will be measured against the four Community objectives through:

- Participation and attendance data
- Community and partner feedback

- Grant outcomes and impact reporting
- Delivery against the Community Action Plan

Performance will be reported:

- Quarterly to Council (headline progress)
- Annually through a public-facing report

7. Review and Governance

This Community Sub-Strategy will:

- Be owned by Full Council
- Be reviewed annually
- Inform budget setting, service planning and partnership activity

It will remain a live document, evolving alongside the Town Council Strategy and the needs of Bishop Auckland's communities.

Appendix 1 - Bishop Auckland Town Council Community Action Plan 2026–2028

Supporting the Community Sub-Strategy 2026–2031 and Town Council Strategic Priority 5.1 – Community

1. Purpose of the Action Plan

This Community Action Plan sets out practical, deliverable actions to implement the Community Sub-Strategy 2026–2031. It focuses on the first two years (2026–2028) and will be reviewed and refreshed annually.

The Action Plan is structured directly around the four Community objectives agreed in section 5.1 of the Town Council Strategy to ensure clarity, accountability and measurable progress.

2. Community Action Plan – Table

Objective (Community Strategy 5.1)	Ref	Action	Lead	Timescale	Measures of Success	Status
Support physical and mental wellbeing through donations, grants and partnerships	1.1	Maintain and promote the Community Grants Programme, including annual review of criteria and targeted promotion to smaller and underrepresented groups	Community Support Officer	Annual	Number of grants awarded; diversity of recipients; impact feedback	
	1.2	Strengthen partnerships with voluntary, health and support organisations to coordinate wellbeing activity and advocate for local provision	Mayor / Town Clerk/Community Support Officer	Ongoing	Number of active partnerships; joint initiatives delivered	
	1.3	Maximise use of Council assets (including Kingsway Court) to support community wellbeing, advice and learning activity	Town Clerk / Deputy Clerk	Ongoing	Usage levels; range of activities supported	
Deliver a high-quality, inclusive events programme	2.1	Deliver the Council’s annual civic and seasonal events programme (including Christmas, Remembrance and civic events), ensuring accessibility and inclusion	Deputy Town Clerk / Community Committee	Annual	Attendance figures; event feedback; partner involvement	
	2.2	Support partner-led events and festivals through funding, promotion or in-kind support, with a focus on widening participation and town pride	Community Support Officer / Community Committee	Ongoing	Number of events supported; reach and diversity	

	2.3	Deliver Town Pride, Youth and Community Awards and promote positive stories and volunteering	Community Committee	Annual	Number of nominations; public engagement	
Improve community safety and resilience in partnership with police and emergency services	3.1	Maintain and strengthen partnership working on community safety and anti-social behaviour	Committee Chair/ /Community Support Officer	Ongoing	Frequency of engagement; shared initiatives	
	3.2	Improve communication with residents around safety, reassurance and relevant local issues	Town Clerk/ Deputy Town Clerk	Ongoing	Reach of communications; resident feedback	
	3.3	Develop the Council's role in community resilience and emergency preparedness in partnership with relevant agencies	Town Clerk/ Deputy Town Clerk	2026–2027	Plans or protocols in place; partnership engagement	
Enhance communication and community participation	4.1	Improve digital and non-digital communication, including website content, events calendar, printed materials and noticeboards	Town Clerk/ Deputy Town Clerk	Ongoing	Website usage; distribution reach	
	4.2	Deliver meaningful community engagement and consultation on key projects, with clear feedback on outcomes	Community Committee/ Community Support Officer	As required	Participation levels; evidence of influence	
	4.3	Encourage volunteering and civic participation, including support for events and community initiatives	Community Committee/ Community Support Officer	2026–2028	Volunteer numbers; initiatives supported	

3. Monitoring and Review

- Progress against this Action Plan will be reported quarterly to Community Committee
- A summary will be published annually for residents
- The Action Plan will be reviewed and refreshed each year to remain responsive to community needs and Council priorities

4. Relationship with other strategies

This Action Plan supports:

- The Town Council Strategy 2026–2031
- The Community Sub-Strategy 2026–2031
- The Allotment and Environment Sub-Strategy 2026-31 and the Strategic and Corporate Sub-Strategy 2026-31

- The Community Engagement Policy
- It will align with budget setting, service planning and partnership activity.