



BENTHAM TOWN COUNCIL

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Business Plan 2026–2027

This Business Plan sets out Bentham Town Council's priorities, objectives, and planned expenditure for the financial year 2026–2027. It reflects the Council's commitment to **Building a Better Bentham** by supporting local communities, maintaining and improving public assets, ensuring public safety, and strengthening the Council's ability to deliver services and projects for the benefit of residents. Through responsible financial management, strong governance and partnership working, the Council aims to create a town that is welcoming, safe, resilient and vibrant for current and future generations.

Vision and Strategic Aims – *Building a Better Bentham*

Bentham Town Council's vision is centred on **Building a Better Bentham** by:

- Supporting a thriving, inclusive, and resilient community
- Investing in community groups, volunteers, and local initiatives
- Maintaining and enhancing public spaces, facilities, and heritage assets
- Ensuring safety, accessibility, and wellbeing for residents and visitors
- Strengthening governance, professionalism, and capacity within the Council
- Actively seeking external funding and partnerships to deliver long-term benefits

This vision underpins all decisions, spending priorities, and projects during 2026–2027.

Governance, Staffing and Capacity Building

1. Clerking and Professional Development

During 2026–2027, the Council will continue with the same clerking hours to ensure the effective operation of the Council and to allow staff to undertake professional training. This includes:

- Training towards CILCA (Certificate in Local Council Administration) and ILCA (Introduction to Local Council Administration)
- Strengthening knowledge, understanding, and compliance with local government legislation
- Supporting the Council's eligibility for the General Power of Competence
- Enabling the clerking team to identify and apply for external funding and progress community projects

This investment will strengthen the Council's long-term sustainability and delivery capability.

2. Community Support and Engagement

Community Grant Scheme

The Council has allocated £13,900 to support local community groups through its grant scheme. This funding will help voluntary and community organisations deliver activities, services and events that benefit residents and enhance community wellbeing.

Bentham Boost and Colourful Bentham

Bentham Town Council continues to be fully involved in the Bentham Boost project. In 2026–2027, the Council will support the delivery of Phase 2 of Colourful Bentham, following the successful award of £50,000 in external funding from the York and North Yorkshire Combine Authority Mayoral Fund. This project aims to enhance the appearance of the town, boost civic pride and support economic vitality.

3. Community Assets, Facilities and Public Spaces

Town Hall and Public Facilities

The Town Hall remains a central community asset. During 2026–2027 the Council will:

- Allocate £17,000 to update and replace fire doors and hand railings, ensuring the building remains safe and accessible for all users
- Continue to provide public toilets within the Town Hall, offering a safe, warm and welcoming facility used by both visitors and local residents

The Council is also exploring the potential transfer of the Rose Garden in Low Bentham, along with the public toilet block at Grasmere car park, as part of an asset transfer from North Yorkshire Council.

Insurance

The Council has allocated £7,000 for insurance to protect community assets, facilities, and activities throughout the year.

4. Heritage and Community Safety

Mayoral Roll of Honour

The Council will allocate £1,000 to update the Mayoral Roll of Honour, which has become outdated. This work will preserve local history and recognise civic service.

Defibrillators

The Council recognises the importance of accessible life-saving equipment and has allocated £2,000 to maintain and update defibrillators located around the town.

The Cross on the Green, Low Bentham

A budget of £5,000 has been allocated to the Cross on the Green at Low Bentham to ensure it is safe, structurally sound and preserved for future generations.

£6,000 has been earmarked to update the *Bygone Bentham* heritage trail to help preserve and promote the town's history and historic buildings. The project will refresh historical content, improve signage across Bentham and update trail mapping to make the route clearer and more accessible.

This work will help safeguard Bentham's heritage, improve understanding of the town's past, and enhance the experience for residents and visitors, ensuring that Bentham's history is preserved for future generations.

5. Parks, Playing Fields and Open Spaces

Cleveland Square

The Council is exploring options to use of Cleveland Square as a community events area and exploring ways it can provide a valuable community space, this is working in conjunction with the Bentham Boost.

Goodenber Park

Having taken over the lease for Goodenber Park, the Council has allocated funding for:

- Regeneration and replacement of play equipment

- Ongoing maintenance to ensure the park remains a safe and welcoming space for children and young people

Philip Harvey Playing Field, Low Bentham

As owner of the Philip Harvey Playing Field, the Council will continue to allocate funding to maintain a safe and accessible environment for sport, recreation, and community use.

6. Cemetery and Grounds Maintenance

Cemetery Management and Expansion

The Council is working towards a long-term cemetery expansion, owning the field adjacent to the existing cemetery. In addition:

- The Council has taken ownership of the cemetery entrance area off Butts Lane
- Funding has been allocated to maintain a respectful, tidy and peaceful cemetery environment

Grass Cutting and Environmental Maintenance

A budget of £21,000 has been allocated for grass cutting in and around the Parish, ensuring that Bentham remains tidy, attractive and welcoming throughout the year.

7. Financial Responsibility and Value for Money

Bentham Town Council is committed to prudent financial management, transparency, and delivering value for money. Budgets are set to balance day-to-day service delivery with investment in long-term community assets and projects.

Conclusion

This Business Plan for 2026–2027 demonstrates Bentham Town Council’s continued commitment to Building a Better Bentham. By investing in people, places, safety and strong governance, the Council will continue to enhance the quality of life in Bentham, protect important community assets, and deliver projects that respond to both current needs and future aspirations.