



# Congleton Town Council

Historic market town

Town Clerk: **BRIAN HOGAN**



To: **MEMBERS OF THE FINANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE**

7<sup>th</sup> January 2016

Dear Councillor,

## **Finance and Policy Committee Meeting – Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2016**

You are requested to attend a meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee to be held in the Town Hall, High Street, Congleton on – **Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2015** commencing at **7.00pm.**

**The Public and Press are welcome to attend the meeting.** There may be confidential items towards the end of the meeting which the law requires the Council to make a resolution to exclude the public and press.

Yours sincerely,

Brian Hogan  
Town Clerk

## **AGENDA**

1. Apologies for absence (Members are respectfully reminded of the necessity to submit any apology for absence in advance and to give a reason for non attendance).
2. Minutes of Last Meeting (enclosed)  
To approve the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2015.
3. Declarations of Interest  
Members are requested to declare both “pecuniary” and “non pecuniary” interests as early in the meeting as they become known.
4. Outstanding Actions  
There are no outstanding actions.
5. Grant Approvals and Commitments 2015-16 (enclosed)  
To receive a statement showing the current position.



Congleton  
**beartown**  
where friends are made

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6. New Applications for Financial Assistance (enclosed)
  - i) **GR 15/1516 Congleton Harriers**
7. Grant Activities Monitoring Forms (enclosed)
  - i) **Team Congleton Ltd – Original Grant Reference GR20/1415**
8. Management Accounts for November 2015 (enclosed)

To consider the Management Accounts to November 2015.
9. Bank Reconciliation (enclosed)

To receive and consider the bank reconciliation for 30th November 2015.
10. List of Payments (enclosed)

To receive and consider the Payments List between 1<sup>st</sup> November and 30<sup>th</sup> November 2015.
11. Council Tax Support Grant (enclosed)

To receive and consider correspondence from Cheshire East the removal of the Council Tax Support Grant and a proposed amendment.
12. Tax Base 2016-17 (enclosed)

To consider correspondence from Cheshire East concerning the approval of the tax base for 2016-17.
13. Vale Allotments (enclosed)

To receive and consider a report on the status of Vale Allotments Project.
14. Shop Mobility (enclosed)

To consider a request from Shop Mobility for financial and moral support.
15. National Insurance (enclosed)

To consider correspondence from Works and Pensions confirming the increase in National insurance contributions.
16. Internal Audit Report (enclosed)

To receive and consider the Internal Auditors report and recommendations.

17. Internal Audit Review (enclosed)

To consider a report reviewing the ongoing arrangements for the appointment of Internal Auditors.

18. Contract Regulations (enclosed)

To consider correspondence from NALC concerning proposed changes to financial standing orders when procuring contracts in excess of £25,000.

19. Corporate Business Plan (enclosed)

To consider the Corporate Business Plan for 2016-17.

20. Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016-20 (enclosed)

To receive and consider the Medium Term Strategy 2016-20.

21. Business Risk Assessment (enclosed)

To consider the Business Risk Assessment for 2016.

**To: Members of the Finance & Policy Committee**

**Cllrs:**

G Edwards (Chairman), Mrs. J Parry (Vice Chairman)  
N Adams, Mrs S Akers Smith, Mrs D S Allen, J G Baggott, P Bates, C H Booth,  
R Boston, Mrs S A Holland

**Ccs:** Other members of the Council and Honorary Burgesses (4) for Information; Press (2)  
Congleton Library, Congleton Tourist Information Centre.

## CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 26<sup>th</sup> November 2015

#### **PRESENT**

#### Councillors

Mrs S Akers Smith  
Mrs D S Allen  
Mrs A L Armit  
J G Baggott  
R Boston  
C Booth  
D T Brown  
G R Edwards (Chair)  
Mrs S A Holland  
Mrs A M Martin  
Mrs J D Parry (Vice)  
Mrs E Wardlaw (Town Mayor)

#### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs P Bates.

Apologies were also received from Cllrs, H Richards and G S Williams who are not a member of this particular Committee.

#### **2. MINUTES**

**FAP/29/1516 RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2015 be agreed and signed by the Chairman.

#### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members are requested to declare both "pecuniary" and "non-pecuniary" interests as early in the meeting as they become known.

Cllrs J G Baggott, D T Brown and Mrs E Wardlaw declared a non-pecuniary interest in any matters related to Cheshire East Council.

Cllr G R Edwards declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 6 (ii) and did not take part in any discussions on this issue.

#### **4. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

There are no outstanding actions.

**5. GRANT APPROVALS AND COMMITMENTS 2015-16**

A summary of grant approvals and commitments was considered by the Committee and it was noted that £7,274 is available for grants in 2015-16.

**FAP/30/1516 RESOLVED** that the grant summary be received.

**6. NEW APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

**FAP/31/1516 RESOLVED** that:-

**i. GR 13/1516 – Cheshire Border County Girlguiding**

It was determined that this application did not meet the criteria to receive a grant, but, the applicant was to be encouraged to contact other organisations in the Town such as the Town trust to seek funding.

**ii. GR 14/1516 – Congleton Pantomime**

A grant of £400 be approved towards other production costs.

**7. NEW GRANT ACTIVITIES MONITORING FORMS**

There were no new Grant Activities monitoring forms.

**8. MANAGEMENTS ACCOUNTS FOR OCTOBER 2015**

**FAP/32/1516 RESOLVED** that the Managements Accounts for October 2015 be received.

**9. BANK RECONCILIATION**

**FAP/33/1516 RESOLVED** that the bank reconciliation for 31<sup>st</sup> October 2015 be received.

**10. LIST OF PAYMENTS**

**FAP/34/1516 RESOLVED** that the Payments List between 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015 and 31<sup>st</sup> October 2015 be received.

**11. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT GRANT**

A letter from Cheshire East Council was considered which confirmed that the remaining Council Tax Support Grant of £49,890 provided to the Town Council, would be removed entirely with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016. It was noted that the Government no longer provide this grant to Cheshire East Council.

**FAP/35/1516 RESOLVED** that the correspondence be received and its effect on the Town Council precept noted.

## **12. BUDGET 2016-17**

The Town Clerk presented the draft budget report for 2016-17 and pointed out that the Council Tax Support Grant had now been removed entirely which has significant impact on the Town Council budget.

**FAP/36/1516 RESOLVED that** the budget be recommended for approval at the Town Council meeting which will take place on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015.

## **13. PRESSURE WASHER**

A justification to purchase a pressure washer was considered by the members.

**FAP/37/1516 RESOLVED that** the purchase of a pressure washer be approved with following caveat:

1. Determine whether a secondhand or new pressure washer has the capability of removing chewing gum.
2. If, both have the capability, purchase a secondhand unit at a cost of circa £2,500.
3. If the new unit can provide this capability, but not a secondhand unit, purchase a new unit at a cost of circa £6,500.
4. Liaise with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Finance and Policy Committee before making a purchase.

## **14. TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY**

The Treasury Management Policy for 2016-17 was considered.

**FAP/38/1516 RESOLVED that** the policy and recommendation be approved but, the Town Clerk will investigate the rates provided by Carter Allen with the assistance of Cllr Baggott

## **15. INTERNET BANKING**

A report produced by the Support Manager on Internet banking was discussed. It was noted that the Autopay system provided by RBS is being withdrawn, which is used to pay salaries and is being replaced with internet banking.

**FAP/39/1516 RESOLVED that** the application to apply for RBS Bankline be approved along with the proposed safeguards.

## **16. MEMORIAL TO TREO**

A request to consider providing a memorial to Treo, a dog used by the Army who received an animal V.C, was considered.

**FAP/40/1516 RESOLVED that** the request be supported in principle, but should be incorporated in some way into the work being carried out by the Cenotaph Restoration Group.

## **17. TO APPROVE EXPENDITURE FROM OTHER COMMITTEES**

CES/22/1516 RESOLVED that the Town Council employ and Assistant Cook to complement the staff at the Luncheon Club at a cost of about £4,000 per annum.

THC/16/1516 RESOLVED that the additional expenditure of £1,800 for the fire alarm system be approved.

A considerable debate took place concerning the value that was derived from supporting the Luncheon Club at Fellowship House, and in particular how to encourage more elderly members of the community to attend to derive greater value.

**FAP/41/1516 RESOLVED that:-**

1. Expenditure from both committees be approved.
2. The Assistant Cook to be offered a 12 month contract.
3. In 12 months' time the value derived from the Luncheon Club to be reviewed.

G R Edwards  
Chairman

Congleton Town Grant Commitments										



Congleton Town Grant Commitments 2015/16										
Permitted and S137										
Date Grant Approved	To	For	Section	Minute Reference	Approved EMR b/fwd £	Approved 15/16 £	Paid £	Outstanding £	Date Paid	
	Subsidised Use of Town Hall		GPoC			4,000.00	1773.80	2226.20		
29/08/2014	Tornados Basketball club	Sponsorship of shirts	GPoC	FAP/09/1415	250.00			250.00		
08/01/2014	Team Congleton	Support for "Every step Counts"	GPoC	FAP/43/1415	2,085.26		2085.26	0.00	30/08/2015	
19/02/2015	Trinity Methodist Church	Towards new heating	GPoC	FAP/56/1415	1,000.00		1000.00	0.00	22/06/2015	
19/02/2015	Congleton Spiritualist Church	towards new windows	GPoC	FAP/56/1415	250.00		250.00	0.00	01/08/2015	
26/03/2015	Friends of Congleton Park	Brass in the Park 2015	GPoC	FAP/68/1415	250.00		250.00	0.00	15/06/2015	
26/03/2015	SOL Theatre School	Summer theatre school 2015	GPoC	FAP/68/1415	1,000.00		1000.00	0.00	24/06/2015	
26/03/2015	Congleton Green Space Trust	Support to purchase Vale allotments	GPoC	FAP/68/1415	2,000.00			2000.00		
26/03/2015	Bromley Farm Community Trust	support to produce Bromley Farm news	GPoC	FAP/68/1415	400.00		380.00	20.00	10/11/2015	
26/03/2015	Cong Comm Credit union	Membership of CEVS	GPoC	FAP/68/1415	45.00		45.00	0.00	22/04/2015	
04/06/2015	Congleton Jazz and Blues	Support for 2015 festival	GPoC	FAP/03/1516		500.00	500.00	0.00	13/07/2015	
04/06/2015	Congleton Harriers	Support for Run	GPoC	FAP/03/1516		250.00	250.00	0.00	17/06/2015	
04/06/2015	Plus Dane	Support for raft race	GPoC	FAP/03/1516		450.00	450.00	0.00	03/09/2015	
04/06/2015	Choral Soc and Children's choir	Support for concert	GPoC	FAP/03/1516		250.00	250.00	0.00	03/07/2015	
10/09/2015	Beartown Patchworkers and Quilters	Grant towards display event 2016	GPoC	FAP/12/1516		100.00		100.00		
10/09/2015	Cong Musical Theatre	Grant towards Whistle Down the Wind	GPoC	FAP/12/1516		500.00	500.00	0.00	05/11/2015	
10/09/2015	St Peter's Bellingers	Pennon for flagpole	GPoC	FAP/12/1516		176.10	176.10	0.00	25/09/2015	
22/10/2015	Congleton "Our Gang"	Support for show	GPoC	FAP/19/1516		500.00	500.00	0.00	02/11/2015	
22/10/2015	Margaret Williamson Trust Fund	Donation to the fund	GPoC	FAP/19/1516		5,000.00	5000.00	0.00	10/11/2015	
19/11/2015	Congleton Pantomime	Contribution to Pantomime 2016	GPoC	FAP/14/1516		400.00	400.00	0.00	18/12/2015	
								0.00		
Totals					7280.26	12126.10	14810.16	4566.20		
	EMR b/fwd				£7,280.26		7280.26			
	Budget 15/16				£18,859.00	£65,983.00	Total Grant budget			
	Total approved to date				£19,406.36					
	Total money still available for grants				£6,732.90					



## Congleton Town Council

### Application for Financial Assistance



#### Part 1: Applicant(s) and Project Details

Application Reference Number (office use only)	GR15 15/16
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1.1	<b>Applicant(s):</b>	Phil Dawson	
1.2	<b>Representing:</b>	Congleton Harriers <a href="http://www.congleton-harriers.co.uk">www.congleton-harriers.co.uk</a>	
1.3	<b>Email Address:</b>		
1.4	<b>Tel No.</b>		
1.5	<b>Project Title:</b>	29 <sup>th</sup> annual 'Cloud 9 Hill Race' 6th March 2016	
1.6	<b>Project Objectives:</b>	<p>To promote running and health to the people of Congleton and the surrounding area not only club runners but adults of all ages, abilities and experience. To introduce occasional runners to off-road running as a healthier and safer alternative to road running. To recognise achievements and encourage participation we award prizes in all age categories both Male and Female.</p> <p>To use surplus funds to support local charities and not for profit groups.</p>	
1.7	<b>Brief Project Description:</b>	<p><b>The unique and charismatic 'Cloud 9 Hill Race'</b> is a very popular annual event attracting 400 plus runners every year and ranks highly on the Fell Runners Association calendar. It is one of the largest Fell races in the country taking in Bosley Cloud and the ancient Bridestones along the 9 mile route which starts and finishes in Congleton. Now in its 29<sup>th</sup> year and more popular than ever we expect another large turnout.</p> <p><b>Each year an amount from every entry is donated to local charities.</b></p>	
1.8	<b>Details accounts/budgets</b>	<p>The event is organised by the members of Congleton Harriers running club who give their time free to marshal, time keep, set up and provide refreshments for runners and spectators. The majority of our costs which we estimate in 2016 to be around £2,180 are covered by entry fees, so assuming we get 320 entrants at £7 (£7 entry includes charity donation) then we could expect an income of around £2,240 (312 gives us break even). <b>However, this is not guaranteed</b>, inclement weather can reduce the number of entrants dramatically or even cause cancellation (as happened in the Foot &amp; Mouth year). So, given this is the club's only fundraising event (out of the three we organise each year), and we also donate part of the proceeds to local charity, we are looking to secure support to cover a portion of the costs and ensure the race continues in the future.</p> <p>By maintaining low club subscriptions we feel confident we are able to attract more runners of all ages and from all walks of life thus providing</p>	

		a relatively inexpensive means of keeping fit and meeting other like minded people. We cater for beginners by ensuring club members accompany them on runs as well as offer transport should they wish to attend races.	
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## Part 2: Cost Details / Resources / Timescale

2.1	<b>Total Cost of Project:</b>	Approx £2,180	
2.2	<b>Total contribution sought:</b>	£250	
2.3	<b>What will the money be spent on?</b>	Memento for each finisher / prizes £900 Leisure centre and equipment hire (estimated) £250 Medical support £480 Refreshments £250 Printing and promotion £150 Race numbers and pins £50 Fees £50 Cups £50 Other £unknown at this stage	
2.4	<b>Any ongoing costs:</b>	Storage of signage, equipment, any stock items £100 per annum.  Most of the main costs above will be repeated each year except for signage which will likely be replaced every 3-4 years.	
2.5	<b>Details of <i>confirmed</i> match funding include source</b> Cash:  In kind:	None to date	
2.6	<b>Resources needed:</b>	Financial support as requested. Plus any other publicity as may be offered in Town council publications, Tourist office etc would be greatly appreciated. We aim to get as many local participants as possible.	
2.7	<b>Estimated timescale of project from start to finish:</b>	Race one day obviously. But approximately 4 months in total. To include planning 3 months and completion / close off 1 month	

## Part 3: Potential Benefits / Outputs

3.1	<b>What are the potential benefits/outputs to residents of Congleton</b>	Promotes Congleton as a place to live and set up business to a wider audience. Promotes running as a means to stay fit and healthy for all ages and abilities. Introduces local running clubs to the community and encourages membership. Promotes community participation in the organisation of events Provides support to local charities Promotes local businesses who get involved in the event.	
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3.2	<b><i>Are there similar services/projects provided in the area</i></b>	No other local events on the same day as far as we are aware and certainly nothing as unique or charismatic as the 'Cloud 9'.
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#### Part 4: Evaluation

4.1	<b><i>How will the project be evaluated?</i></b>	A full profit and loss account will be prepared A formal post race review meeting will be held A press report will be written From direct emails and feedback that appears on the Fell Runners Association and Runners' World forums, and via various other publications.
4.2	<b><i>Who will carry out the evaluation?</i></b>	Congleton Harriers 'Cloud 9' race committee

Signature:     *Phil Dawson*

Date: *15 December 2015*

## Jackie Potts

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**From:** Philip Dawson  
**Sent:** 16 December 2015 14:04  
**To:** Jackie Potts  
**Cc:** ; 'Bryan Lomas'; Jo Moss  
**Subject:** Cloud 9 Hill race : Application for Financial support  
**Attachments:** Cloud 9 2016 Congleton Council financial-assistance-application-form (1).doc  
**Importance:** High

Hi Jackie, Hope you're ok and ready for Christmas. It's been a good year for the Harriers with membership increasing and a thriving social scene.

With this year almost done we're already looking forward to the next, and the next Cloud 9 race which as you know raises money for local charities as well as providing a great day out for local runners and those in the surrounding areas !

I realise I'm probably too late for this year's Council Financial committee meeting but could you please put our application on the agenda for approval at the next.

Before you ask though not yet confirmed we plan to donate to East Cheshire hospice, Visyon, and Congleton Scouts and Guides.

Best regards, Phil Dawson (Cloud 9 organising committee)

[Redacted]





# Town Council Grant

Was the Grant Reference Number

## Activities Monitoring Form



### 1. Contact Details

Organisation name:	Team Congleton Ltd
Address:	John Doe 25 Walnut Drive Congleton Cheshire, CW12 4JY

### 2. Grant Information

Grant Reference Number:	GR20-1415		
Total project cost:	£10,000		

Receipts Attached? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Receipt Amount: £ 1815.26
Please list receipts below:  The £1815.26 grant was paid into a Congleton Town Council account, and the attached Congleton Town Council ledger specifies the expenditures incurred.	

### 3. Project Information

When did the project commence?	May 2015	
Did you make a profit from the project? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
If yes, how will this be used?  Not applicable		

Please explain how the grant money was used:

**The grant money was used to purchase the following articles and services**

- 1. Design of and production of banners**
- 2. Design and printing of flyers**
- 3. Advertising the "Every Step Counts" project in the Bear Necessity publication**
- 4. Advertising the "Every Step Counts" project in the Congleton Chronicle**
- 5. The hire of facilities in connection with the project**

Please explain what difference the project has made to your organisation/local people:

- 1. Improved the participation of the targeted group in regular, healthy, physical activity.**
- 2. Established a core team of experienced administrators /volunteers/organisers able to take similar activity projects forward into the future.**
- 3. Created productive relationships/alliances with many community groups (clubs, associations, societies, etc.) willing to take similar projects forward.**
- 4. Generated widespread community awareness of the importance of taking regular moderate exercise**
- 5. Provided the means for individuals within the targeted group to address their own priorities.**
- 6. Hopefully demonstrated that community walking can improve the environment by reducing traffic flow and pollution.**

#### 4. Promotion

Please send an electronic photograph of your project/activity. Is this attached? Yes ☒ No ☐

Do you give permission for these photographs to be used on the Council's web site and in newsletters?  
(Please ensure that you seek permission for anybody photographed). Yes ☒ No ☐

Was the grant funding from Congleton Town Council acknowledged in any way? Yes ☒ No ☐

Please state how (i.e. on your website, event programme, tickets, etc)

**The Congleton Town Grant grant contribution was highlighted on the Team Congleton website, in regional and local newspapers, during press conferences, public relations launches and presentations to community groups.**

#### 5. Feedback

What is your experience of using the Town Council Grant Scheme? Are there any comments or suggestions for improvements that you would like to make?

- a) **I have been impressed by the Congleton Town staff responsible for the administration of grants, and their promptness in dealing with queries and issues.**
- b) **I suggest when grants are made to applicants, the conditions include the obligation for the recipient (if required) to attend or contribute to a Town Council organised event.**

How did you apply? Online ☐ Email ☐ Post ☒

Do you feel that you understood the process? Yes ☒ No ☐

Please rate the following elements:

	Excellent	Good	OK	Poor
Completing the application form	X			
Relevance of guidelines	X			
Length of the process from submitting an application to receiving notification		X		
Advice given from the Town Council Grants Team (if applicable)	X			



## Management Accounts November 2015

See attached Income and Expenditure sheet. These figures are for eight months so would be 67% of the annual budget if the expenditure was regular monthly.

Central overheads reallocated is an accounting mechanism to apportion the administration costs over all other cost centres containing staff, in line with the audit and accountancy regulation guidance.

### Variance Analysis

#### Finance and Policy Committee

##### Corporate Management

- Reception TIC is an amount that the Town Council pays to Cheshire East to prevent a reduction in the TIC's opening hours during October to March as they act as the Town Council's reception.
- Subscriptions and Publications include annual charges to SLCC and ChALC and also membership of CVS Cheshire East for the first time which was not included in the budget.
- Insurance is the full year figure.
- Photocopy charges is for 2 quarter invoices – the current month figure is for recharges to the Partnership.
- Recruitment advertising - the cost of recruiting for a new CO was not included in the budget.
- Legal and Professional fees include the £1,500 charge by BDO, the external accountants for the complaint made by a member of the public. Although there is not a budget for this, there is an earmarked reserve for legal fees so the overspend has been offset by taking from the reserve.

##### Democratic/Civic

- Website expenditure includes the annual hosting fee and an independent consultant to assist in the specification for the website upgrade. The cost of the website upgrade will be met from an earmarked reserve.
- The Mayor has received her annual allowance for the civic year.

##### Grants

- Out of our initial grants budget of £65,983 a considerable amount has already been allocated e.g. Citizens' Advice Bureau; Congleton Community Projects, Christmas Lights. £6,733 is available for grant applications to March 2016.

#### Community, Environment and Services Committee

- The Paddling Pool is overspent by £991. Maintenance of the pool surface was more than budgeted.
- Public Toilets – the full year business rates bill is included in the expenditure.
- Public Realm CCTV is showing the full year cost for the 5 CCTV cameras around the town monitored and maintained by Cheshire East Council.
- PCSO's – this is showing the full year cost.
- Christmas Fayre/Lights is showing income from craft/charity stall holders and shop Christmas tree income, however all the corresponding expenditure invoices have not yet been received.
- Neighbourhood Plan expenditure is taken from an Ear Marked Reserve.
- Streetscape – No budget for agency staff
- Streetscape – Insurance is a full year cost.
- Property maintenance includes £7,650 for painting the bridge over the Dane – although this is showing as an overspend on the expenditure heading, a grant of £15,000 was received from Cheshire East (shown in "income") to pay for improvements around the town which includes this work.
- Streetscape – Horticultural supplies are showing an overspend – if this is combined with the Floral displays budget the total overspend is reduced to £1,436 over a combined budget of £25,500, so 6% overspend.

- Streetscape – Vehicle fuel and oil is showing an underspend but this is counteracted by the overspend on Vehicle maintenance/servicing etc. It is suggested that £2,000 is vired from the fuel budget to maintenance.
- General Expenditure includes a payment of £177,000 to Cheshire Pension Fund which is the cost to the scheme for the streetscape employee retiring early on ill health grounds. Fortunately insurance was taken out to cover this situation which has paid out and is included in Misc Income.

#### Town Hall Committee

- A detailed trading account is provided to the Town Hall committee – Income and expenditure together slightly under budget.

Recommendation: To accept the management accounts to November 2015 and to approve a virement of £2,000 from the budget Vehicle fuel to Vehicle maintenance.

Jackie Potts  
Support Manager 07/01/16

## Congleton Town Council - Management Accounts - November 2015

	Current Month Actual	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	% of Budget
<b>Finance and Policy</b>					
<b>101 Corporate Management</b>					
Staff Costs (re-allocated)	9,058	72,521	113,562	41,041	1
Travel	70	186	1,000	814	0
Training / Conferences	0	1,987	2,500	513	1
Rent Payable	1,163	9,300	13,950	4,650	1
Reception - TIC	0	2,772	2,730	-42	1
Miscellaneous Office Costs	23	218	400	182	1
Telephone/Fax/Internet	276	909	2,000	1,091	0
Postage	432	1,448	3,000	1,552	0
Stationery & Printing	68	825	2,500	1,675	0
Subscriptions & Publications	0	2,609	2,100	-509	1
Insurance	0	7,352	7,250	-102	1
Computer/IT Costs	562	4,679	7,000	2,321	1
Photocopy Charges	-41	1,009	2,500	1,491	0
Recruitment Advertising	156	2,697	500	-2,197	5
Other Advertising	0	147	200	53	1
Bank Charges	4	60	100	40	1
Audit Fees - External	0	0	2,000	2,000	0
Audit Fees - Internal	0	0	1,230	1,230	0
Accountancy Support	0	1,951	3,750	1,799	1
Legal & Professional fees	275	3,003	1,500	-1,503	2
Trf from EMR Legal fees	-275	-1,503	0	1,503	#DIV/0!
HR & H&S support	213	1,704	3,560	1,856	0
Central Overheads reallocated	-1,815	-33,487	-49,263	-15,776	1
<b>Corporate Management:-Expenditure</b>	<b>10,169</b>	<b>80,387</b>	<b>124,069</b>	<b>43,682</b>	<b>1</b>
CEC Grant	0	-49,890	-49,890	0	1
Interest Receivable	-5	-2,101	-4,000	-1,899	1
<b>Corporate Management :- Income</b>	<b>-5</b>	<b>-51,991</b>	<b>-53,890</b>	<b>-1,899</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Net Expenditure over Income</b>	<b>10,164</b>	<b>28,396</b>	<b>70,179</b>	<b>41,783</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>102 Democratic Rep'n &amp; Mgmt/Civic</b>					
Staff Costs (re-allocated)	1,951	15,223	22,500	7,277	1
Training / Conferences	0	241	1,000	759	0
Stationery & Printing	0	23	400	377	0
Marketing/Promotions	41	450	800	350	1
Council Newsletter	0	2,424	5,230	2,806	0
Council Website	0	750	1,000	250	1
Mayor's Allowance	0	3,000	3,000	0	1
Members Expenses	0	0	360	360	0
Civic Expenses	511	3,717	4,500	783	1
Civic Regalia	0	96	100	4	1
Hall & Room Hire	664	3,304	6,000	2,696	1
Civic Artefacts and Treasures	0	255	500	245	1
Central Overheads reallocated	77	1,502	2,082	580	1
<b>Democratic Rep'n &amp; Mgmt/Civic:-Expenditure</b>	<b>3,244</b>	<b>30,985</b>	<b>47,472</b>	<b>16,487</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Grants</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>59,250</b>	<b>65,983</b>	<b>6,733</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>F&amp;P Income - Expenditure Totals</b>	<b>13,408</b>	<b>118,631</b>	<b>183,634</b>	<b>65,003</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Community, Environment &amp; Services</b>					
Paddling Pool	151	26,675	25,684	-991	1
Propogation Unit	0	0	1,000	1,000	0
Floral Displays	1,017	6,317	9,500	3,183	1
Allotments	30	271	240	-31	1
Public Toilets	27	4,668	5,800	1,132	1
Public Realm CCTV	0	9,975	12,600	2,625	1
Congleton Partnership	2,739	21,913	32,870	10,957	1
Community Development	3,920	29,311	53,250	23,939	1
Police Community Support Officers	47,200	47,200	47,200	0	1
Christmas Fayre/lights	3,802	-71	4,000	4,071	0
Neighbourhood Plan	0	0	0	0	0
Tourism	150	450	3,000	2,550	0

# **Congleton Town Council - Management Accounts - November 2015**

	Current Month	Actual Year	Current	Variance	% of
	Actual	To Date	Annual Bud	Annual Total	Budget
Youth and Young People	239	590	2,000	1,410	0
Fellowship House	370	2,935	6,030	3,095	0
	<b>59,645</b>	<b>150,234</b>	<b>203,174</b>	<b>52,940</b>	<b>1</b>
<b><u>Streetscape</u></b>					
Staff Costs	28,918	229,532	374,297	144,765	1
Agency Staff	0	4,337	0	-4,337	#DIV/0!
Protective Clothing\H & Safety	271	2,952	2,500	-452	1
Office rent	256	2,045	3,067	1,022	1
Janitorial	190	2,993	4,000	1,007	1
Telephones	0	0	1,200	1,200	0
Insurance	0	5,663	5,500	-163	1
Property maintenance	16	11,278	500	-10,778	23
Horticultural etc Supplies	10,267	20,619	16,000	-4,619	1
Vehicle maintenance/Serv etc	988	5,040	5,000	-40	1
Vehicle fuel and oil	736	8,383	19,500	11,117	0
Vehicle rental charges	2,968	23,744	37,676	13,932	1
General expenditure	213	179,394	1,000	-178,394	179
Central Overheads Reallocated	1,275	23,541	34,632	11,091	1
	<b>46,098</b>	<b>519,521</b>	<b>504,872</b>	<b>-14,649</b>	<b>1</b>
Streetscape Expenditure					
Cheshire East Street grant	0	-15,000	0	15,000	#DIV/0!
Streetscape - Income	-29,873	-239,583	-358,475	-118,892	1
Misc Income	-764	-179,078	-900	178,178	199
Net Expenditure over Income	<b>15,461</b>	<b>85,860</b>	<b>145,497</b>	<b>59,637</b>	<b>1</b>

## **C,E &S Income - Net Expenditure Totals**

<b>75,106</b>	<b>236,094</b>	<b>348,671</b>	<b>112,577</b>	<b>1</b>
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## **Town Hall**

Town Hall - Expenditure	95,764	153,273	57,509	1	
Town Hall - Income	-66,309	-101,050	-34,741	1	
Net Expenditure over Income	0	29,455	52,223	22,768	1

## **Total Net Expenditure**

<b>88,514</b>	<b>384,180</b>	<b>584,528</b>	<b>200,348</b>	<b>1</b>
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## **Personnel**

Staff Costs - Reallocated	<b>49,582</b>	<b>405,148</b>	<b>645,986</b>	<b>240,838</b>	<b>1</b>
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## **Reserves as at 31/11/15**

General Reserve	164,803
Capital Equipment Fund	34,242
Capital Contingency Fund	167,376
EMR Elections	15,000
EMR Carnival	7,500
EMR Crime Prevention/Traffic cal	3,779
EMR Ancient Treasures	3,000
EMR Website	8,317
EMR Training	5,000
EMR Streetscape	57,250
EMR Loan Repayments	1,375
EMR Toilets	38,223
EMR Play Areas	6,000
EMR Public Realm	12,000
EMR Legal Fees	8,497
EMR Congleton Neighbourhood F	37,263
EMR Cenotaph	10,000
EMR Christmas Lights	4,344
	<b>583,969</b>

Date: 16/12/2015

Congleton Town Council 15/16

Page No: 1

Time: 11:45

User: JP

## Bank Reconciliation Statement as at: 30/11/2015 for Cash Book 1 RBS Current/I Access Acct

<u>Bank Statement Account Name (s)</u>	<u>Statement Date</u>	<u>Page No</u>	<u>Balances</u>
RBS Current Account 11411170	30/11/2015	960	566.89
RBS High Interest A/c 11411162	30/11/2015	611	90,878.81
			<u>91,445.70</u>

<u>Unpresented Cheques (Minus)</u>	<u>Amount</u>
06/11/2015 007617 Cong Musical Theatre	500.00
10/11/2015 007646 The Catering Shop	1,320.00
10/11/2015 007647 K G Loach	178.16
24/11/2015 007653 Cheshire East Council	20.00
24/11/2015 007654 Cheshire Electrical Supplies L	20.76
24/11/2015 007657 Congleton High School	61.44
24/11/2015 007658 The Forum Chinese Restaurant	612.85
24/11/2015 007660 JAF Graphics	174.00
24/11/2015 007661 Light Shop Ltd	7.10
24/11/2015 007663 Maxigiene Enviromental Service	45.00
24/11/2015 007666 O H Medical Ltd	275.20
24/11/2015 007667 Posh Nosh Parties Ltd	1,941.18
24/11/2015 007669 The Stationery Cupboard	75.96
24/11/2015 007671 Talke Chemical Company Limite	700.41
	<u>5,932.06</u>
	85,513.64

Receipts not Banked/Cleared (Plus)

0.00

85,513.64

Balance per Cash Book is :-

85,513.64

Difference is :-

0.00

# Congleton Town Council 15/16

## RBS Current/ Access Acct

### List of Payments made between 01/11/2015 and 30/11/2015

Date Paid	Payee Name	Cheque Ref	Amount Paid	Transaction Detail
02/11/2015	Cheshire East Council	DD	£2,268.00	Town Hall business rates
02/11/2015	Cheshire East Council	DD	£384.00	270815A/6117/rates 4 toilets
03/11/2015	Partnership Minibus	007613	£5,005.70	Partnership Minibus balance transferred to them
03/11/2015	St Peter's Church	007614	£258.00	Grant St Peter's Church Clock
03/11/2015	Our Gang	007615	£500.00	Grant - Our Gang
03/11/2015	Petty Cash	007616	£156.37	Reimburse Petty cash
06/11/2015	Accounting Solutions from DCK	007618	£654.30	TPC6728/6234/Budget setting
06/11/2015	Broxap Ltd	007619	£262.80	181270/6235/Bollard
06/11/2015	N Calvert	007620	£57.06	1847/6236/uniform
06/11/2015	Cat Social Media	007621	£60.00	0286/6237/Twitter training
06/11/2015	Cavern Protective Clothing	007622	£918.00	17581/6241/Staff Uniforms
06/11/2015	Cheshire Electrical Supplies L	007623	£17.16	C1692788/6242/Town Hall Bulbs
06/11/2015	Chubb Fire & Security Ltd	007624	£3,496.73	5414626/6244/new extinguishers £1303; Repairs to Alarm £2193
06/11/2015	City Plumbing Supplies Holding	007625	£3.37	1168AAA107/6245/cistern leaver
06/11/2015	Congleton Garden Machinery Ltd	007626	£131.58	31038/6246/mower repairs
06/11/2015	Heatons Office Supplies Ltd	007627	£61.08	V10130325/6247/paper
06/11/2015	IBD internet Business Director	007628	£75.00	1609/6248/P/ship website maint
06/11/2015	JAF Graphics	007629	£78.00	19216/6249/giant presentation cheque
06/11/2015	LAC Autoparts	007630	£31.80	5299241/6251/WVD40 spray
06/11/2015	Landscape Supply Company	007631	£164.22	54948/6252/winter tools
06/11/2015	MPH Services	007632	£339.65	100094/6253/service mower
06/11/2015	Mrs P Pinto	007633	£54.20	CP003/6254/antrobush gardens
06/11/2015	Pitstop	007634	£176.00	211015/6256/MOT cctv
06/11/2015	Posh Nosh Parties Ltd	007635	£1,131.36	429/6258/Recharges £1030.86; N/hood plan £34.80; P/ship £34.80; Youth £30.90
06/11/2015	Readesmoor Medical Centre	007636	£35.00	231015/6268/medical letter
06/11/2015	Talke Chemical Company Limited	007637	£368.35	64534/6269/Dog bag dispensers
06/11/2015	Threadfast Engineers Ltd	007638	£50.00	SIN084317/6271/lead fast tubes
06/11/2015	United Utilities	007639	£3,297.57	00414047/5686/Paddling Pool Water
06/11/2015	Cong Musical Theatre	007617	£500.00	Grant - Cong Musical Theatre
09/11/2015	T Mobile	DD	£22.45	V01147978441/6270/JM phone
10/11/2015	Angel Springs Ltd	007642	£4.27	2826660/6275/enviro charges
10/11/2015	Cheshire East Council	007643	£7,000.00	41072229/6276/P/ship Antrobus St gard
10/11/2015	Brown Recycling Ltd	007644	£192.00	627896/6277/skips
10/11/2015	Chubb Fire & Security Ltd	007645	£2,160.00	5488810/6278/Fire Alarm works
10/11/2015	The Catering Shop	007646	£1,320.00	1009/6279/2 door fridge
10/11/2015	K G Loach	007647	£178.16	25072/6280/compost
10/11/2015	Maximeyes Security (Midlands)	007648	£42.00	6847/6281/alarm call out
10/11/2015	Porters Service Station Ltd	007649	£1,085.51	311015/6282/Fuel for vans
10/11/2015	Bromley Farm Comm Trust	007640	£380.00	Grant -Bromley Farm Comm Trust
10/11/2015	Cheshire Comm foundation	007641	£5,000.00	Grant-Cheshire Comm foundation
10/11/2015	Pitney Bowes Finance PLC	DD	£43.94	BD106903/6255/toner cartridge
12/11/2015	TomTom Telematics	DD	£106.92	6496589/6323/webfleet
13/11/2015	West Mercia Energy	DD	£1,422.47	1239089/6233/Elec charges
16/11/2015	Wirehouse Employer Services	DD	£102.00	H&S Support months
16/11/2015	Pitney Bowes Finance PLC	DD	£264.98	Franking machine rental
17/11/2015	RBS Credit Card	DD	£147.00	031115/6311/in bloom expenses
18/11/2015	RBS Autopay	AUTOPAY	£50,182.85	Payroll November 2015
19/11/2015	West Mercia Energy	DD	£601.14	1242839/6273/Town Hall Gas
19/11/2015	Wirehouse Employer Services	DD	£153.60	HR Support Monthly
24/11/2015	Chris Booth	007650	£100.00	351/6284/Sound for remembrance
24/11/2015	Burns Garage Ltd	007651	£342.12	01105805/6285/Wing mirror
24/11/2015	Mr John K Carter	007652	£792.27	191115/6333/P/ship Cenotaph Prof Services
24/11/2015	Cheshire East Council	007653	£20.00	101115/6287/licence
24/11/2015	Cheshire Electrical Supplies L	007654	£20.76	C1693551/6288/light bulbs

24/11/2015	Cheshire Turf Machinery Ltd	007655	£396.17	138251/6289/mower repairs
24/11/2015	Heads (Congleton) Limited	007656	£386.88	96329/6291/facilities officer advert £110.40; xmas lights £176
24/11/2015	Congleton High School	007657	£61.44	5101671/6293/In Bloom certific
24/11/2015	The Forum Chinese Restaurant	007658	£612.85	071115/6334/Remembrance meal Princess Irene
24/11/2015	Four Oaks Nurseries Ltd	007659	£6,798.86	67259/6295/Winter bedding
24/11/2015	JAF Graphics	007660	£174.00	19232/6300/dog waste stickers
24/11/2015	Light Shop Ltd	007661	£7.10	1244/6304/bulbs
24/11/2015	LITE Limited	007662	£2,388.00	800954/6303/xmas lights
24/11/2015	Maxigiene Enviromental Service	007663	£45.00	19762C/6305/legionella testing
24/11/2015	R.J. & J. Moore	007664	£1,470.00	43/6306/98 xmas trees
24/11/2015	MPH Services	007665	£212.75	11013/6307/toro mower service
24/11/2015	O H Medical Ltd	007666	£275.20	041115/6308/consultation fee
24/11/2015	Posh Nosh Parties Ltd	007667	£1,941.18	431/6309/Recharges £595; Remembrance £999; Youth £81.30; Internal £131.76; Internal £188
24/11/2015	Moonscape Media Ltd	007668	£180.00	15354/6310/advert
24/11/2015	The Stationery Cupboard	007669	£75.96	142/6312/stationery items
24/11/2015	Stringer & Pickford	007670	£468.00	1261/6341/Surveying work
24/11/2015	Talke Chemical Company Limited	007671	£700.41	64550/6313/Cleaning materials
24/11/2015	Threadfast Engineers Ltd	007672	£43.68	SIN084686/6322/screws xmas tre
24/11/2015	Vibrant Graphics Ltd	007673	£1,370.00	027368/6325/xmas brochure
24/11/2015	Visyon Ltd	007674	£301.00	15043/6326/water charges p/pool
24/11/2015	West Wallasey Contract Hire	007675	£3,561.53	WAL218927/6328/lease vehicles
25/11/2015	EE	dd	£25.44	V01156037806/6294/JM Phone
25/11/2015	RBS autopay	AUTOPAY	£4.00	Autopay chgs
25/11/2015	Prism Bus Developments	DD	£674.01	IT support monthly
30/11/2015	Sita UK Ltd	DD	£247.52	30003345/6283/waste disposal
30/11/2015	Allpay - Plus Dane	DD	£36.08	Allotment garage rental
Total Payments			£114,676.80	

**Brian Hogan**

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**From:** WHITTAKER, Lawrence <Lawrence.Whittaker@cheshireeast.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 14 December 2015 14:51  
**To:** Brian Hogan  
**Subject:** Council Tax Support Grant advice

**Congleton Town Council**

Dear Town / Parish Clerk,

As you know from previous correspondence, Cheshire East Council issued its Pre-Budget Report on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2015 with draft budget proposals for the next financial year.

This addressed the financial challenges facing the Council and included the proposal to remove payment of the Council Tax Support Grant to Town and Parish Councils from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016.

Many of you have provided feedback that this full reduction would be difficult to accommodate in one financial year.

Therefore, further discussions took place last week at Cabinet and at the Town and Parish Council Conference based on these concerns.

As a result I can confirm that the recommendation to Council to cease the Council Tax Support Grant next year will be changed.

The recommendation will now be to phase the reduction in Council Tax Support Grant over two years; this would mean a 50% reduction for 2016/17 and no payment in 2017/18.

The final amount of grant payable to Congleton Town Council is therefore expected to be:

**£24,945.00**

You should expect to receive payment in April 2016.

Please note that the final decision will not be made until Council on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2016.

However, this provides the most up to date information for your budget setting work.

The deadline for return of your completed precept notification remains at **Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> January 2016**.

Yours faithfully,

*CLlr Peter Groves*

CLlr Peter Groves  
Finance and Assets Portfolio Holder  
Cheshire East Council

\*\*\*\*\*  
Confidentiality: This email and its contents and any attachments are intended only for the above named. As



## Brian Hogan

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**From:** WHITTAKER, Lawrence <Lawrence.Whittaker@cheshireeast.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 18 December 2015 15:21  
**To:** Brian Hogan  
**Subject:** Council Approval of Taxbase

Congleton Town Council  
Town Hall  
High Street  
Congleton  
Cheshire  
CW12 1BN

Delamere House  
Delamere Street  
Crewe  
Cheshire  
CW1 2JZ

Tel: 01270 685872

DATE: 18/12/2015      OUR REF: Taxbase  
Please contact: [lawrence.whittaker@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:lawrence.whittaker@cheshireeast.gov.uk)

Dear Town / Parish Clerk,

### Approval of Taxbase 2016/17

Please be advised that Cheshire East Council approved the Taxbase for 2016/17 as **9,658.51** on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2015. This confirms the estimated figure in my letter of 1<sup>st</sup> December.

May I also take the opportunity to remind those Town or Parish Councils that have not yet advised of their precept requirement, that the closing date for submission is **Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> January 2016**.

If you have any queries relating to the above, please contact **Lawrence Whittaker**, in the Council's Strategy and Reporting Team, either by email or telephone as shown above.

Yours faithfully,

*Alex Thompson*

Alex Thompson  
Corporate Manager Strategy and Reporting  
Cheshire East Council

\*\*\*\*\*

Confidentiality: This email and its contents and any attachments are intended only for the above named. As the email may contain confidential or legally privileged information, if you are not the above named person or responsible for delivery to the above named, or suspect that you are not an intended recipient please delete or destroy the email and any attachments immediately.

## **Report to Congleton Town Council about the Vale Allotments:**

Congleton Town Council offered £2000 towards the campaign to keep Vale Allotments as allotments. Congleton Sustainability Group welcomed this support and together with public feelings about losing this land to development or just waste space put a charitable trust mechanism in place to secure the land for the town in perpetuity.

Congleton Sustainability Group and Congleton Green Space Trust appreciate the Town Council's support, confirm that they no longer have need for the £2000 offered and look forward to continued future support in expanding the town's currently rather poor provision of allotments.

The words that follow are taken from the Congleton Chronicle of 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015; they are as good a record of how the campaign unfolded.

The battle to preserve Congleton's Vale Allotments as a community space has been lost after a u-turn by the landowner.

Congleton Sustainability Group chairman Peter Aston said this week that the site, between Moody Street and Waggs Road, would become a "wasteland" after Rob Minshull refused the group's £55,000 bid to buy it.

However, Mr Aston added that he would still fight any plans to develop the land, something he believes Mr Minshull intends to do.

He said: "We've lost this battle but the war to stop development of the Vale Allotments site continues."

In September, Mr Minshull announced that he had agreed to sell his land for £50,000 following a bid made by Mr Aston's new organisation The Congleton Green Space Trust.

A dispute then followed between Mr Minshull, Mr Aston and the Congleton Horticultural Society – which had until recently leased the allotments.

This culminated in a letter being printed in the Chronicle by Mr Minshull laying out his terms that due to the "dishonest and underhand actions" of people involved, he would increase his price to £55,000.

Mr Aston explained the trust emailed Mr Minshull to offer that much and added: "We were then waiting a long time and eventually had an email saying he was no longer selling the land."

"I then went back and asked if Congleton Green Space Trust could lease the land on rolling 12 months' contracts, so every 12 months he could end it whenever he wished. But he wrote back that this held no interest for his company Nortek."

The trust had asked for residents to help raise funds to make an offer for Vale Allotments in April and three anonymous donors came forward with funding amounting to the original sum.

This followed fears that Mr Minshull, who owns furniture for education company Nortek based at the nearby Vale Mill at Priestly Fields, would sell off his land for development.

All the funding received for the bid has now been returned to the donors.

Mr Aston added: "There's a great deal of people who have put in an enormous amount of effort into this and all this has left very bitter feelings which I'm sure will show if he puts development proposals in. "And frankly everything that's happened now points to the fact that he plans to develop the land."

Mr Aston said that members of Congleton Green Space Trust would now look for other areas of green space in Congleton to buy as community allotments. "The town is quite poor in allotments and I would like to think there are a lot of people who would want allotment space," he said.

Congleton Horticultural Society's lease on the Congleton allotments ran out at the end September. The group, which had been growing produce on the land for 39 years, then had to vacate the site.

In a statement to the Chronicle, Mr Minshull said he was sorry that he had changed his mind regarding the sale of the allotments site, and that there were "no plans to develop the site at present".

He said his change of heart had come because the campaign had become a "personal attack on my reputation". He said his original offer to sell "was made under duress" and that the campaigners had not, in his view, always acted honourably.

He said: "If the sale had gone through, I would in effect be rewarding (this), which is itself wrong and a bad example to set." He described as "nonsense" the claims that the allotments had been "taken away from the local community and turned into a wasteland".

He said the lease with the horticultural society "simply came to an end", and the local community had never been allowed to use this site, which was "restricted to 18 privileged members of the C&DHS".

He added: "The land looks no different than it always looks this time of year and to call it 'a wasteland' is ridiculous. It will eventually be cleared. There are no plans to develop the site at present but no doubt I will be subjected to a similar campaign should that happen."

Peter Aston

December 2015.



# CONGLETON SHOPMOBILITY

Municipal Offices, Market Square, Congleton. CW12 1EX

The Chief Executive/Town Clerk  
Congleton Town Council  
Congleton Town Hall  
Congleton  
CW12 1BN




Dear Sir

I am writing to you for two reasons.

1. You supported Congleton Shopmobility when we started it 2012 and we are very grateful for that. From just a few members when we started we now have over 100. We are looking for new premises as we are being evicted by Cheshire East in April from our current premises (Municipal Offices, Market Sq). Our core funding is very low and we are asking if you could let us have £3000 while we look for new premises. We believe that Shopmobility is a great asset to Congleton which has an increasing population of people with mobility problems.
2. Secondly we ask if you can speak to the Cheshire East Council on our behalf. The shopmobility facilities in both Crewe and Macclesfield are funded totally by Cheshire East. Again Congleton has missed out as they currently do not fund us, we seem to be "the poor relation". The transport dept say they have not budgeted for us but surely we could come under help for the housebound, disabled or elderly.

We are aware that money is tight and budgets being cut but if you could look positively on these two points we would very much appreciate it.

Yours faithfully

  
Janet Gross-Niklaus  
Funding officer.

18/12/2015



## Increase in National Insurance following the introduction of the New State Pension – April 2016

### Background

You may have seen in the media that the new State Pension is being introduced on 6 April 2016 for those reaching State Pension age after that date. This reform means that the current, complicated, multi layered system of basic and additional State Pensions will ultimately be replaced with a clearer, single pension amount. In the long run, the new State Pension will mean that people will be clearer from a younger age about what they are likely to get from the state towards their overall pension income helping them to plan how best to save for their retirement.

As a consequence of the reforms, contracting-out of the additional State Pension for Defined Benefit schemes will come to an end. Contracting-out meant that employees and employers paid a lower National Insurance (NI) rate and gave up entitlement to additional State Pension in return for a broadly similar amount as part of their occupational pension. Currently most public sector defined benefit pension schemes are contracted-out. The main implication of this reform for scheme members is that from 6th April they will no longer receive the NI rebate. This will mean an increase in employee NI contributions of around 1.4% of earnings between the relevant NI thresholds, set each year by HM Treasury.

The reforms are being introduced on 6th April 2016 and employees will see the change in NI Contribution payments after that date.

### Action

As a public service employer, who currently offers a contracted-out defined benefit pension scheme, your employees will be affected by this NI change. To assist you in communicating these changes to your employees we have produced a number of products.

We have worked with departmental colleagues who lead on the main public sector pension schemes to ensure they are aware of these changes and the legal requirements relating to occupational pension schemes. Scheme administrators are required by law to notify members that their scheme is no longer contracted-out, but the requirement does not extend to include notifying them of the implication of this, i.e. the increase in NI contributions following the removal of the NI rebate.

It is worth confirming that this change will not impact upon an individual's occupational pension.

Indeed, the individual's occupational pension will in most cases include an amount that is equivalent to the additional State Pension they would have received if they had paid the higher standard rate of NI.

We suggest that you co-ordinate the communications you plan for your employees with your scheme administrators to ensure a joined up message is delivered to scheme members.

The materials attached include the things you need to know, plus some practical materials for you to use – or if you want to know more details then this pack will point you in the right direction. We've created emails, articles, posters, videos and images – and you're free to use them in whichever way suits you. We have included a factsheet specifically for public sector employees that you could use as a standalone product or you can use the messages in your own communication products to individuals. The key products are available on GOV.UK as part of the new State Pension toolkit at [www.gov.uk/government/collections/state-pension-toolkit](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/state-pension-toolkit).

The recommendation from the Cabinet Office is that you begin communications to staff after the Autumn Statement, once NI bandings for 2016/2017 are announced.

If you have any feedback on the products please let us know by contacting [state.pensioncomms@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:state.pensioncomms@dwp.gsi.gov.uk).

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# **Congleton Town Council**

*Internal Audit Report 2015-16 (First Interim)*

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*Prepared by Adrian Shepherd-Roberts*

*Stuart J Pollard*

*Director  
Auditing Solutions Ltd*

## **Background and Scope**

The Accounts and Audit Arrangements introduced from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2001 require all Town and Parish Councils to implement an independent internal audit examination of their Accounts and accounting processes annually. The Council complied with the requirements in terms of independence from the Council decision making process appointing Auditing Solutions Ltd to provide the function to the Council at the outset. This report sets out those areas examined during the course of our first visit to the Council for 2015-16, which took place on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2015.

## **Internal Audit Approach**

In commencing our review for 2015-16, we have again had regard to the materiality of transactions and their susceptibility to potential mis-recording or misrepresentation in the year-end Statement of Accounts and Annual Return. We have commenced our review of the Council's financial control systems and procedures, undertaking appropriate testing as deemed necessary to afford assurance as to the soundness of those systems for their intended purpose and to ensure reasonable accuracy in the disclosure of information in the Council's detailed year-end Statement of Accounts, as summarised in the Annual Return that now forms the statutory accounts.

As the Council's Internal Auditor and under the revised audit arrangements, we have a duty to complete the internal audit report in the Council's Annual Return, which covers the basic financial systems and requires assurances in ten separate areas: this will, as previously, be undertaken at our final visit for the year.

## **Overall Conclusion**

We are pleased to confirm that, in the areas examined to date, the Council continues to have effective systems in place to help ensure that transactions are free from material misstatement and will be reported accurately in the Annual Return and detailed Statement of Accounts for the financial year.

We are also pleased to acknowledge that members and officers continue to operate a sound, pro-active approach to risk management and corporate governance issues, together with the continued development and management of effective internal controls and procedural documentation.



# Detailed Report

## Review of Accounting Arrangements & Bank Reconciliations

Our objective here is to ensure that the accounting records are being maintained accurately and currently and that no anomalous entries appear in cashbooks or financial ledgers. To that end, we have: -

- Ensured that the ledger remains in balance at the present date;
- Verified the opening trial balance for 2015-16 to the Statement of Accounts and Annual Return for 2014-15 to ensure that the closing balances have been brought forward accurately and completely;
- Checked and agreed transactions in the Council's main bank account cashbook to the relevant RBS Bank statements for April and October 2015;
- Checked and agreed, for the same months, all inter account "sweep" transfers between the current and high interest bank account;
- Examined and verified the accuracy of transactions in the Council's two mayoral charity bank account cashbooks for the year to October 2015; and
- Verified the accuracy of the bank reconciliations for the combined current and deposit accounts and Mayoral Charity accounts as at 30<sup>th</sup> April and October 2015 to ensure that no long-standing uncleared cheques or other anomalous entries exist.

### Conclusions

*We are pleased to report that no issues have been identified in this area warranting further comment. We shall undertake further work in this area at future visits including verifying the accurate disclosure of the combined cash and bank balances in the Annual Return.*

## Review of Corporate Governance

Our objective is to ensure that the Council has robust corporate governance documentation in place; that Council and Committee meetings are conducted in accordance with the adopted Standing Orders and that, as far as we are able to ascertain, no actions of a potentially unlawful nature have been or are being considered for implementation. We noted previously that an updated Corporate Business Plan had been prepared and have examined the content accordingly.

We note that the Standing Orders (SOs) were last re-adopted in March 2013, with an amended version of the Financial Regulations (FRs) approved in July 2015.

We have commenced our review of the minutes of the Full Council and Standing Committees, excluding Planning, to ensure that no actions of an ultra vires nature are being either considered or have been actioned, whilst also ensuring that the Council's finances remain at a healthy level to provide appropriate funds for future planned development and current revenue spending plans. We also note that, as previously, various grants have been approved for payment during the current year.

## Conclusions

*There are no matters requiring formal comment or recommendation in this area of our review process. We would, however, draw the Clerk and members' attention to the revised EU Regulations in relation to contracting and tendering, specifically in the need to formally advertise any contractual work in excess of £25,000 in the Government's "Contract Finder Website". To assist the Council in this respect, we have provided the Clerk with copies of recently published NALC Procurement Guidelines and other related documents, which provides further clarification on the subject.*

*We are also aware that a further revision of the NALC model FRs, to that published in 2014, is due for imminent publication and suggest that the Clerk obtains a copy, once available, and uses it as the basis for the update of the Council's FRs, also ensuring that the SOs reflect the necessary actions to be taken in relation to these regulations.*

*We shall continue to review the Council's approach to governance at future visits.*

## Review of Expenditure

Our aim here is to ensure that: -

- Council resources are released in accordance with the Council's approved procedures and budgets;
- Payments are supported by appropriate documentation, either in the form of an original trade invoice or other appropriate form of document confirming the payment as due and/or an acknowledgement of receipt, where no other form of invoice is available;
- We have also reviewed a sample of the grants awarded and the acknowledgement for receipt of the funds.
- An official order has been raised in each and every case where one would be expected;
- All discounts due on goods and services supplied are identified and appropriate action taken to secure the discount;
- The correct expense codes have been applied to invoices when processed; and
- VAT has been appropriately identified and coded to the control account for periodic recovery.

We have commenced work in this area examining a sample of payments individually in excess of £3,500 plus every 35<sup>th</sup> payment processed in the year to October 2015 totalling £420,020 and equating to 66% by value of all non-pay related expenditure to date.

We have also examined the periodically prepared and submitted VAT returns to HMRC agreeing detail to the underlying Omega control account detail.

## Conclusions

*We are pleased to report that no issues have been identified in this area warranting formal comment or recommendation. We shall extend our test sample of processed payments at future visits applying the same criteria, also ensuring the accurate disclosure of the year-end VAT debtor balance in the Accounts and Annual Return.*

## Assessment and Management of Risk

Our aim here is to ensure that the Council has put in place appropriate arrangements to identify all potential areas of risk of both a financial and health and safety nature, whilst also ensuring that appropriate arrangements exist to monitor and manage any such risks identified in order to minimise the opportunity for their coming to fruition.

We have noted previously that risk assessment registers were in place using the LCRS software, with detail subjected to routine annual review and update, with detail being incorporated subsequently into the Council's Corporate Plan: we note that an external agent (Wirehouse Limited) has been contracted to undertake assessments in relation to HR and Health / Safety issues. We also note that the Corporate Business Plan and Risk Assessments were approved by Full Council in January 2015.

Zurich Municipal continues to provide the Council's insurance cover: we have examined the current year's schedule (to May 2016) and consider it meets the current needs of the Council appropriately with Employer's liability set at £10 million and Public Liability cover set at £15 million and Fidelity Guarantee cover at £1 million.

### Conclusions

*We are pleased to report that no issues have been identified in this area warranting further comment currently. We shall continue to monitor the Council's risk management process at future visits, also ensuring compliance with the now mandatory requirement for risk assessments to be subjected to at least once annual review and formal re-adoption by the full Council.*

## Precept Determination and Budgetary Control

Our objective here is to ensure that the Council has a robust procedure in place for identifying and approving its future budgetary requirements and the level of precept to be drawn down from the District Council; also that an effective reporting and monitoring process is in place. We also aim to ensure that the Council retains appropriate funds in general and earmarked reserves to finance its ongoing spending plans, whilst retaining appropriate sums to cover any unplanned expenditure that might arise.

We are pleased to note that members continue to receive regular budget monitoring reports with over/under-spends and the level of earmarked reserves the subject of regular review.

### Conclusions

*This interim visit occurred too early for Full Council to have formally approved its budget and precept requirements for 2016-17: consequently, we shall consider this area at a future visit accordingly to ensure that a proper and appropriate exercise has been undertaken and that the levels of closing reserves for the year remain "fit for purpose".*

## Review of Income

In considering the Council's income streams, we aim to ensure that robust systems are in place to ensure that all income due to the Council is identified and invoiced in a timely manner and that effective procedures are in place to pursue recovery of any outstanding monies. We have: -

- Reviewed the hall hire procedures including examination of the schedule of fees and charges; the booking system (maintained on Windows Outlook); the administration of the hire agreements; the accurate charging and collection of fees due and their subsequent banking;
- Also inspected a sample of Sales Ledger invoices issued and posted to the Omega control account to ensure their completeness; and
- Examined the "Aged debtors schedule" generated by the accounting software and are pleased to record that there are no significant issues arising with regard to long-standing debts of which officers and members are unaware.
- Also reviewed the nominal ledger detailed income transaction reports for the year to October 2015 to ensure that no obvious coding errors or other anomalous entries are apparent and are pleased to record that none are in evidence.

### Conclusions

*We are pleased to record that there are no significant issues in this area. We shall continue to undertake further work in this area at future visits.*

## Petty Cash Account

The Council operates a limited petty cash account at the Town Hall on an imprest basis with reimbursement of expenditure incurred at regular intervals topping the cash balance back to the approved level of £200.

We have, by reference to a sample of recent transactions: -

- Verified that all payments were suitably supported by a traders invoice or till receipt,
- Noted that sound "internal" vouchers, sequentially numbered and signed by the claimant, are attached to the receipts;
- Verified that VAT is correctly identified with a journal entry made to the Omega control account for periodic recovery;
- Verified and balanced the petty cash to the holding of £200; and
- We have also checked the Credit Card statements and receipts.

### Conclusions

*No matters arise in this review area.*

## Salaries and Wages

In examining the Council's payroll function, we aim to confirm that extant legislation is being appropriately observed as regards adherence to the Employee Rights Act 1998 and the

requirements of HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) legislation as regards the deduction and payment over of income tax and NI contributions, together with meeting the requirements of the local government pension scheme, as further revised from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 in relation to employee percentage bandings. To meet that objective, we have: -

- Checked and agreed the computation of staff gross pay for November 2015, also verifying that the net payments corresponded to the data produced for the month following tax, NI and pension deductions;
- Ensured that the Council has approved staff pay rates for the financial year, based upon the relevant NJC scales;
- Checked to ensure that appropriate tax codes and national insurance tables are being applied in the year and that the correct deductions / contributions have been applied and paid over to HMRC in a timely manner;
- Ensured that the appropriate revised superannuation contribution rates have been applied, also ensuring that the deductions have been paid over to the County Council in a timely manner; and
- Examined a sample of the time sheets and travel expenses supporting payments made through the November 2015 payroll to ensure that they have been approved for payment and processed appropriately.

### **Conclusions**

*We are pleased to record that no issues have been identified in this area.*

## **Investments & Loans**

Our objectives here are to ensure that the Council is “investing” surplus funds, be they held temporarily or on a longer term basis, in appropriate banking and investment institutions, that an appropriate investment policy is in place, that the Council is obtaining the best rate of return on any such investments made, that interest earned is brought to account correctly and appropriately in the accounting records and that any loan repayments due to or payable by the Council are transacted in accordance with the appropriate loan agreements.

The Council holds no specific investments and, as previously noted, has replaced the use of Treasury term deposits with a straightforward reserve account at RBS given the current low rates of interest returns.

We have verified the first half-yearly loan repayment to PWLB and the interest free loan from Cheshire East BC by reference to their “invoice” advices as part of the aforementioned expenditure testing.

### **Conclusions**

*We are pleased to report that no issues have been identified in this area at present; we shall undertake further work in this area at future visits, also ensuring the accurate disclosure of the year-end residual loan liability in the year’s Annual Return.*

Finance and Policy Committee Meeting

Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2016

The Accounts and Audit Arrangements introduced from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2001 require all Town and Parish Councils to implement an independent internal audit examination of their Accounts and accounting processes annually. The Council complied with the requirements in terms of independence from the Council decision making process by appointing Auditing Solutions Ltd to provide this function to the Council

As the Council's Internal Auditor and under the revised audit arrangements, the Internal Auditor has a duty to complete the internal audit report in the Council's Annual Return, which covers the basic financial systems and requires assurances in ten separate areas as shown below.

The current internal auditor is Accounting Solutions Ltd. The Town Council has used this auditor for a number of years and has a good relationship with the auditing firm. As external audit is still in a state of flux and will be until 2017, an internal auditor who understands the council business is appropriate at this time. The cost for Accounting Solutions is circa £1300 p.a., the daily cost is £400 which includes travelling.

Chief Officer and RFO's recommendation:

That the P&F Committee resolve to approve continuing with Accounting Solutions for internal audit provision for the next financial year 2016-

17

AREA FOR REVIEW	EXPECTED ACHIEVEMENTS	ACHIEVED YES/NO	AREAS COVERED	AREAS STILL TO BE DEVELOPED
Scope of internal audit	Terms of reference approved by council	Yes	Internal Audit covers: Risk arrangements, Security of Assets, review of minutes, insurance, security of assets, expenditure, income, accounting records, year end	Long term financing for life cycle issues to be considered.

			accounts,			
	Internal audit work takes into account risk assessment	Yes	Covered by financial risk assessment review and H & S safety review annually. Insurance risk assessed annually.		New long term financial risk to be considered.	
	Internal audit work takes into account wider control arrangements	Yes	Financial authorities now in place for staff especially as new purchasing policy has been issued clarifying levels of authority.  Project budgeting process in place.  Monthly variance reports in place and considered by P&F committee.			
	Internal audit work covers anti-fraud and corruption arrangements	Yes	Cash handling procedures reviewed by internal auditor. Two staff handling all purchasing, and cash transactions.			
<b>Independence</b>	Internal audit has direct access to those charged with governance	Yes	Chief Officer and internal audit discuss governance. Interim and annual audit reports discussed at meetings.			
	Internal audit has no other role within the council	Yes				
<b>Competence</b>	There is no evidence of a failure to carry out internal	Yes	Internal auditor works with other councils.			

	audit work ethically, with integrity and objectivity.				
<b>Relationships</b>	The proper officer and the responsible financial officer are consulted on the internal audit plan.	Yes	A five year plan in existence and now considered by Council		
	Responsibilities for officers and internal audit are defined in relation to internal control, risk management, fraud and corruption by means of a job description, engagement letter.	Yes	Chief Officer's Key Performance Areas show this, as do RFO's.		
<b>Audit Planning and Reporting</b>	The annual internal audit plan properly takes account of all risks facing the council and has been approved by council.	Yes	Financial Risk review completed annually. Internal audit monitors against identified risk.		
	Internal audit has reported in accordance with the plan	Yes	Internal audit investigation is thorough, and provides sound reports,		
	Reports are received by council	Yes	Reports acted upon as shown by minutes.		
	Planned internal audit work is based on risk assessment and designed to meet the	Yes	Largest risks covered by insurance i.e. loss of income.		



	council's needs			
<b>Understanding the whole organisation, its needs and objectives</b>	The annual audit plan demonstrates how audit work will provide assurance for the council's Annual Governance Statement.	Yes	Internal Auditor now fully updated on any new issues	
<b>Be seen as a catalyst for change</b>	Internal audit supports the council's work in delivering improved services to the community	Yes	Auditor now assessing work done by council on levels of risk.	
<b>Adds value</b>	The council makes positive responses to internal audit's recommendations and follows up where action is needed	Yes	Audit reports scrutinised by P&F and acted upon.	
<b>Be forward looking</b>	National agenda changes are considered.	Yes	Vision, Asset transfer, neighbourhood plan, growth of council, projects undertaken all indicators of change.	
	Internal audit is aware of new developments in council services, risk management and corporate governance arrangements	Yes	Staff constantly update training	
<b>Be challenging</b>	Focuses on risks and encourages development of own responses to risk	Yes		

	management				
<b>Right resources</b>	Adequate resources are made available for internal audit's work	Yes			
	Internal audit understand the council	Yes	Internal auditor has been working with the council for a number of years.		

## **Public Contracts Regulations 2015 - impact on the standing orders and financial regulations adopted by councils**

Local Councils Explained (© 2013 NALC), published in October 2013, includes a set of model standing orders for councils.

Model standing order 18f on page 196 of Local Councils Explained makes reference to the requirements of the Public Contracts Regulations 2006/5 ("the 2006 Regulations"). The 2006 Regulations were repealed by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015/102 ("the 2015 Regulations") on 18 February 2015. Legal Topic Note 87 – Procurement provides detailed guidance about the application of the 2015 Regulations.

As explained in Legal Topic Note 87, the 2015 Regulations are engaged when (a) local councils in England are procuring a public works, public service or public supply contract with an estimated value of £25,000 or more and (b) local councils in England and Wales are procuring (i) a public works contract with an estimated value of £4,322,012 or more or (ii) a public service or public supply contract with an estimated value £172,514 or more. The procurement requirements in respect of (a) are light touch. The requirements in respect of (b) which will affect very few councils are lengthy and complex.

The 2015 Regulations impose detailed statutory obligations on councils when procuring and awarding the types of contracts above. It is recommended that the standing orders and financial regulations adopted by councils incorporate or at least refer to the requirements of the 2015 Regulations.

Councils in England that have adopted model standing order 18 a(v) and 18c on page 195 of Local Councils Explained are advised to amend them to confirm that the procurement and award of contracts covered by the 2015 Regulations which have an estimated value of £25,000 or more must satisfy the requirements of the 2015 Regulations which include use

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of the Contracts Finder website. Councils in England and Wales that have adopted model standing order 18f on page 196 are advised to amend these to reflect the relevant thresholds in the 2015 Regulations (which may vary from time to time).

In due course, NALC's Audit and Accounts Adviser, Derek Kemp will update NALC's model financial regulations for councils in England and Wales (e.g. Regulation 11.1 b, f, h and k) so that they make reference to the requirements of the 2015 Regulations .

**This briefing was issued by Meera Tharmarajah, Solicitor and Head of Legal Services**

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# A guide to understanding procurement

April 2015

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# Introduction

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In order to ensure the best use of public money we need to be smarter in how we procure the things we need. Where another public body has a contract we can use, it meets our requirements and offers value for money we should use it. Where there is none then we may need professional advice on how to let our own.

This toolkit is designed to give general advice and provides signposts to other public buying organisations who have contracts we can use and bodies that can provide professional procurement services and tendering support.

A simple checklist highlights the common issues and pitfalls we need to address and there is also advice on preparing specifications and complying with legislation.

Parishes should make sure they also consider more formal advice as set out in NALC's Legal Topic Notes (including LTN 35, Local Council's Explained, model standing orders and financial regulations and JPAGs Practitioners Guide).

NALC is committed to supporting its members in achieving value for money contracts whilst minimising the resources needed to do so.

This toolkit is a beginning and we will develop it in the light of feedback from you. The toolkit was overseen by NALC's Larger Councils' Committee and drawn together with the help of Shar Roselman, Town Clerk, Newport Pagnall, Catherine Southern, MKSP, Sandra Sewell, ESPO and Tina Holland, LGA.

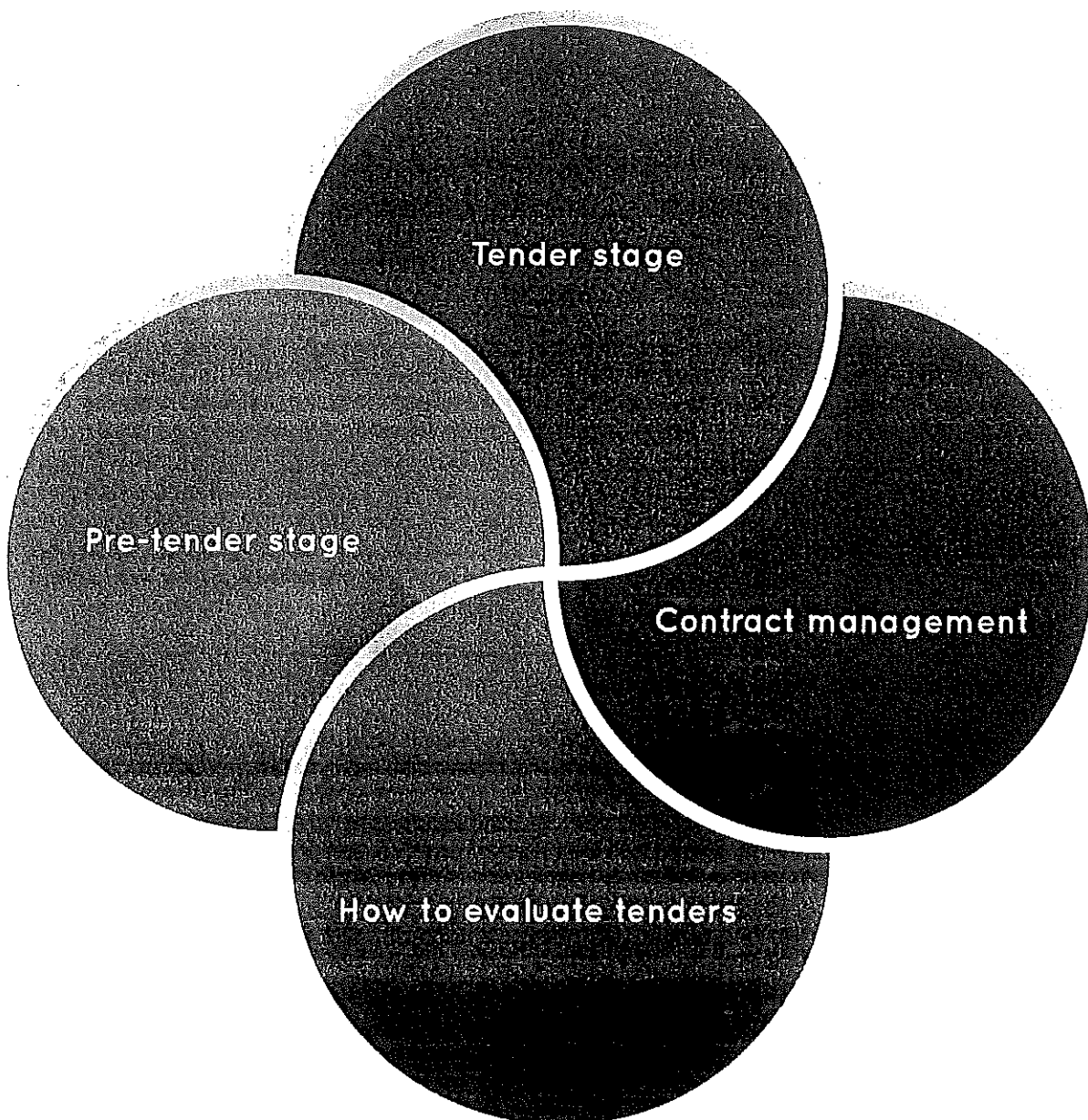
**Jonathan Owen**  
Chief Executive, NALC

# Understanding procurement

## **procurement**

noun

1. the act of procuring, or obtaining or getting by effort, care, or the use of special means
2. the act of obtaining equipment, materials, or supplies





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## Pre-tender stage

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Before starting any procurement ask yourself the following questions:

1. Am I clear on the outcome/output I want to achieve?
2. What do the financial regulations/standing orders or Procurement legislation say I need to do? (Also don't forget that the Public Contracts (Social Value) Act of 2012 requires you to consider social value in all services contracts over the EU threshold. It is also good practice to consider social value in all contracts.)
3. Have I got the budget for the purchase and ongoing costs?
4. What would happen if I did nothing?
5. Could I do this in stages?
6. Am I clear on the outcome/output I want to achieve?
7. Can I achieve this by borrowing from someone else or buying it together with others to share costs? Or by recycling something you already have or use elsewhere?
8. Could residents/voluntary groups help me to deliver part of it at no cost?
9. Could I rent or lease it instead?
10. How much time will it take to run a compliant tender process to attract sufficient quality bids?
11. How can I encourage small businesses and voluntary sector to bid for this work, at the very least how can I make the tender process 'SME friendly'?
12. What are the risks and opportunities associated with purchase of a product or the long term risks of a service provided to you over a period time? Risks come in many shapes and sizes, and can include risk to Council reputation, financial risk such as loss of income, health and safety risk, significant time loss, difficulty of replacement if things go wrong, insurance risk, and risks associated with people such as the need to take on contract staff at the end of a contract term, under TUPE legislation (Transfer of Undertakings)

Consultation with residents and service users is essential to make sure you are clear on what is needed, who will use it and what the essentials are. Time must be built into the procurement project plan to allow for engagement and feedback. Consider if residents should be on the project team and provide help in evaluating part of the tenders but you retain ownership of the project overall.

Find out what other parishes have paid and find out how their procurement went to build that learning into your project. Did they get any extra external funding to contribute to the

costs and if so where from? Could you slip the timing of your project to enable you to access extra funds? Could you break down the project into affordable pieces without any significant risk?

In the pre-tender stage you can do market research and speak to suppliers as long as you do not then discriminate in their favour once the procurement starts by specifying something that only one company can provide, or give them information that you do not then share with all suppliers at tender stage. You should take care not to do anything that may give the perception that you are treating one supplier more favourably than any other and should avoid accepting hospitality or free gifts/trials etc during your research. If your project is over the EU threshold, the new PCT 15 Regulations for OJEU procurement make the assumption you have broken your project down into 'lots' which encourages small and medium size enterprises to bid. If you don't use 'lots' for a large project, you need to provide an explanation as to why you have not.

You also need to decide on how you will advertise any tender. Would a procurement portal be of use to you, where you can advertise your tender as widely as possible? Do you just need to advertise in the local paper? At the very least, your tender should be advertised on your own parish website. You may also need to consider advertising on Contracts Finder anything over £25k which

will be a new rule in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. You can enquire whether there are any expressions of interest instead of simply submitting the tender, and hold 'market' days for those interested bidders to discover what the issues may be that you have not thought of.

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# Tender stage

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You must ensure that everything you do as part of a tender is fair, transparent and does not discriminate for/against any supplier. This applies to all procurement, whatever the value. Your actions are subject to scrutiny under the Freedom of Information Act as well as your own financial regulations.

The following is a short summary of the key requirements of a tender. Please get advice if you feel unsure or lack experience.

## **Calculate the contract value**

This will either be the actual standalone cost if a one-off purchase of goods or the four year value if there are ongoing costs or it is a service contract. If the term is known, such as a ten year term, then you should use this value instead (Annual value x the term). Terms over 10 years are regarded as unacceptably long for Council contracts, as they prohibit new tenderers from entering the market. This will include all maintenance, licensing, upgrades, consultancy, training and anything else associated with that purchase. If this value is approaching the OJEU thresholds of £172,000 for supplies or services or £3.5 million for works then you must get professional support as you are required by procurement regulations to do a full tender according to the EU/UK regulations. (These figures are subject to change in 2016 and every two years thereafter. Failure to fully comply with the Public Contract Regulations can incur

unlimited fines and prevent you from awarding the contract at all. At the very least you may have to use precious resources to start the process all over again.

## **Establish project plan**

If this is an EU tender process (known as OJEU) the timescales are set out in the regulations (get professional advice) and can be lengthy if a PQQ (pre-qualification questionnaire stage) is needed to make sure you get suppliers with the right technical and financial standing. If it is below the threshold then you must allow sufficient time for suppliers to prepare and submit quality tenders - no less than two weeks for a lower value requirement, but up to a month if it is technical, riskier or more complicated. You must establish a project team and identify who will sign off final documents before publication. You will need to block diaries out for the evaluation phase and also establish a mechanism for responding to questions from suppliers whilst it is out to tender. If you are consulting on the specification with residents before tendering you will need to build extra time in for this.

## **Write the specification and evaluation criteria and legal terms and conditions of contract**

Write a comprehensive specification detailing what outcomes are required, what the essential requirements are, how you will

measure performance, how you will manage the contract and most importantly what evaluation criteria and weighting you will use when you get the tenders back. You must tell suppliers how you will conduct the tender exercise, what criteria they will be measured against (price and quality or other factors such as their health and safety record) and the rules around canvassing officers or councillors during the tender period.

Do not be led by smart sales advertising that may lead you to specify a specific brand or product/provider. Advertise the requirement as widely as possible (if OJEU you must advertise using the EU tender portal). You will also need your own set of legal terms and conditions drafting specific to what is being procured.

Consider how the contract will be managed at this stage, who will be the key contact points, what performance management process will be used, will there be any opportunity for suppliers to provide you with innovative solutions that may add further value to the procurement you are undertaking. It is very important that suppliers understand how you will measure their bids, because it is more often than not that this is the issue that results in a legal challenge. Do not have any 'hidden' criteria, or unpublished sub-criteria.

When considering evaluation of your contract, price, product quality, durability and other

factors may be important to you. However, if the tender is for a service provision, don't forget to include performance indicators, that will tell you whether the organisation is doing a good job or not. For this you might use references from other companies as an important component of your evaluation criteria.

Contact others to see if they have any documents you can use or engage with a professional advisor – list to be identified.

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# Evaluating tenders

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During the period the tender is out awaiting bids, various questions may arise. If you answer a question for one bidder, then you should ensure that all the other known bidders receive the question and the answer you have provided. No bidder should be able to claim that someone else had additional knowledge before the tender submission period.

Conversely, there will be some information that bidders provide you with that they regard as confidential. They may for example have given you an added value option that other tenderers may not have thought of. This information should not be shared between bidders. It is the Council that must determine whether an issue is deemed confidential or not (as bidders will always say that everything is commercially confidential.)

If you are undertaking an OJEU tender then the regulations give direction as to how you conduct your pre-qualifying questionnaire (known as the PQQ stage) and evaluation stage. If you are doing a two stage OJEU (called a restricted procedure under the regulations) then you need to build in extra time for these stages. PQQ's may not be used for tenders below the OJEU threshold. Please see the standard PQQ provided by the Crown Commercial Services, as this is now a requirement of the OJEU process (see: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/crown-commercial-service](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/crown-commercial-service)).

A two-stage tender involves a PQQ stage. The PQQ stage is used where the value is likely to be high, there is a large and active

market, there are concerns about the ability of the various bidders to meet long term requirements, where you have very specific technical requirements that must be met by bidders or where there is a degree of financial risk associated with the contract.

You must set out the scoring methodology in the PQQ and Tender documents and must not replicate criteria in both stages. A typical PQQ might enquire about the long term financial viability of a bidder by asking for financial accounts, might include information about the health and safety Record of the bidder, might establish how long the bidder has been in business, might request public liability insurance details and/or might wish to understand the levels of staffing of the bidder would aim to offer towards the contract, the questions must be proportionate to the procurement being undertaken. If for example you are allocating a percentage to each of these aspects with the aim of scoring the bidders PQQ submissions against this percentage, you need to ensure that when developing your PQQ questionnaire, you clearly set out how these will be scored.

This is an area where there have been a lot of successful court challenges by suppliers as public sector buyers have not complied with the rules so please get professional advice on this if at all unsure.

You can only apply those evaluation criteria you put into the tender documents. You cannot use other criteria or introduce something new or different after tenders have been

received. Equally you cannot accept tenders or amendments after the published deadline unless there are very special reasons for doing so - you could be challenged by other suppliers.

You should not evaluate alone - ensure you do it with at least two, preferably three people, or at a formal council meeting, which may need to be a part two meeting, excluding the public and the press. If this is an OJEU tender then you must ensure that the panel are suitably technically qualified and experienced to evaluate; though the same applies for lower value ones too to make sure you evaluate properly.

Score individually then come together to produce a moderated score. Do not use a mathematical average of scores because some factors will clearly be more important than others, and bidders with high scores in a number of low importance areas could override a bidder with a single high score in a most important consideration such as quality, longevity, durability, etc. You should do all this in writing and use a pre-agreed scoring template that allows you to record comments on each bid.

### **Award stage**

Once the evaluation is completed you will be ready to award the contract. If this is an OJEU then you cannot just tell the winning bidder and start the contract as there is a mandatory standstill period of ten days. This is to allow unsuccessful bidders the time to challenge the

anticipated award (get professional advice on this).

The contract award should be in writing and reference the terms and conditions of contract issued at the tender stage. The full contract will include the specification, the bid and the terms and conditions of contract. If you are letting an OJEU or high value/sub OJEU contract you should seek legal advice on the documents at the pre tender and award stages.

Good practice is to provide all unsuccessful bidders with feedback on their bids, you should do this as soon as possible after the winning bidder is decided. This is mandatory for OJEU tenders and you must provide details of the relative characteristics of the winning bid. Actual pricing or any other commercial in confidence information must not be disclosed amongst bidders but you must tell them their position relative to the winning tender.

# Contract management

Often forgotten in the rush to buy something is the process for actually making sure you get what you specified for the price you have agreed in the contract, hence the need to consider this at pre-procurement and tendering stages. This is the stage where things can go wrong and where costs can increase if not managed carefully. Your specification and terms and conditions of contract should have a direct reference to who is responsible for doing what, when payments are triggered, what happens when it goes wrong and what standards/performance indicators the supplier must meet.

## Pre-contract start

Before the contract starts sit down with the supplier and reach a common understanding of the contract so there are no surprises later on!

Whatever the length of the contract agree a delivery plan, with dates, outcomes and owners of activity. Set dates for regular meetings/updates, make these relevant to the contract and the risks and opportunities associated with it.

## Contract delivery phase

All contract managers require good communication skills, a shared understanding of what is to be delivered and clear standards of performance.

Service contracts require ongoing management and some degree of flexibility from both parties as the situation may evolve over a longer period of time. Supplier relationship management skills are more important in ensuring the contract continues to deliver to the standard needed to avoid disputes and a switch to adversarial behaviour. What to monitor at contract meetings should have been built into your contract, and may include volumetrics, (i.e.

number of times service used) number of complaints by residents, number of health and safety issues raised, quality improvements logged, etc. It is important to not only hold regular contract meetings, but also to take formal minutes at these meetings. Any contract changes should be signed, and added to your signed service contract.

Short term contracts such as minor works, installation of play equipment or street furniture may require a short burst of scrutiny focussing on ensuring that health and safety matters are covered, the public is safe and the materials used are as specified. You may need to engage professionals such as a clerk of works or project manager experienced in delivery to ensure you adequately manage these contracts. Ensure you complete a snagging list in time to point out to the organisation all those areas which you are not happy with. The contract should have a built in period for snags to be reported.

## Change control

Things do not always go to plan so your contract should have a clause that sets out how you will manage change and the resulting costs/savings. All contract changes must be agreed in writing, and only by the persons named as responsible in the contract documents.

## Contract end

Make sure you have copies of all the relevant warranties/insurance relating to any goods/works contracts so you can recover costs if needed in the future. Build in retention money if this is a works contract to cover the costs of any defects that arise when they have left site. Ensure that if things do not go to plan, you have the ability to levy a schedule of contra-charges, against those components of the contract that were not met.

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# Frequently asked questions

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## **Do I have to advertise tenders and quotes?**

Your Financial rules will set out exact details. However if you do not advertise you are unable to demonstrate you have value for money and could potentially give the appearance of having favourite contractors which may put you in breach of your rules and or legislation.

## **Can I just ring suppliers I know for verbal quotes?**

Your financial rules will set out exact details, and if the value is very low (under £1000) then this may be appropriate but you must always ring more than one supplier and keep a written record. If your requirement involves any warranties/guarantees then you should get quotes put in writing so you fully understand what is provided, covered and where liability sits for faults etc.

## **What happens if I tender and do not have anyone to help me?**

Ring around other parishes who may have experience in what you are procuring, look at pre-established contracts/frameworks to understand if they meet need and allow for a shorter process. If a tender exercise is essential then consider engaging a third party to provide support, advice and templates.

## **What's the worse that could happen if I just buy something direct from a supplier and do not get any other prices?**

You could be held in breach of your employment contract, your financial rules and potentially the EU/UK law if the value exceeds the OJEU threshold. You could lose your job, be prosecuted and/or face unlimited fines from the courts. But most importantly you could be wasting public funds and bringing your Council into disrepute.

## **Can I use other contracts set up by other parishes/councils?**

If the contract was advertised for use by others and the terms and conditions allow - then yes. Professional Buying Organisations (PBOs) exist to tender on behalf of the wider public sector and have hundreds of contracts that you can use. [\[Link to later page with CJC, ESPO/YPO etc\].](#)

## **What if the tenders come back well over budget?**

Clarify with bidders that they understood the requirement and have not priced for extras not specified. If the value is below the OJEU threshold then you could amend the specification and ask all bidders to resubmit pricing - if above then get professional advice.

## **Why do I have to follow EU regulations?**

They are part of UK law and are non-negotiable. English courts can, and do, issue judgements, stop contract awards and can issue unlimited fines in relation to breaches of the rules.

## **Do you already know what you want?**

Go direct to a buying portal. If you are know what you want, have a specification and the budget then you may want to take advantage of an existing National/Regional contract/framework agreement already set up by the Professional Buying Organisations. They provide a vast array of compliant contracts to choose from covering categories for everyday suppliers to specialist equipment. They have all been set up in compliance with UK and EU regulations and are ready for you to use. You can contact them directly and they can also run mini competitions for you from their contracts.



# Case study

Plythwiddy Parish Council are faced with a problem. Play areas in their parish are old, and are designed as Local Area Play provision (LEAPs) with no Neighbourhood Area Play provision (NEAPs). Each has only a few pieces of poor value play equipment, and all are geared towards very young age groups (toddlers up to age five). The principal authority manages play areas, but has offered these to parishes under the community asset transfer scheme. Below is the process this parish follows:

## PRE-TENDER STAGE

### PROBLEM AND FEASIBILITY STUDY

**Issue:** What is the problem? Define the problem carefully – it's not simply that you need to get a good price for services or goods.

**Action:** Our Principal authority has said it will not replace old play equipment and will gradually remove facilities. We have too many LEAPs, many of poor quality, and not enough NEAPs.

**Issue:** What could we do about it?

**Action:** 1. Parish could take on ownership and management of play areas A, B, C, D and E.

2. Parish could try to open negotiations to replace facilities providing principal authority maintains.

3. Parish could work with community groups to take ownership of facilities.

4. Parish could avoid anything to do with this.

5. Parish could offer to make an annual contribution to principal authorities to keep play areas open.

6. Parish could develop a play area strategy either in agreement with principal authority if they continue to maintain the assets, which closes down least useful play areas, and improves others, turning them from LEAPs into NEAPs.

**Issue:** Refine options.

**Action:** Principal authority won't agree to two or five above.

Option one - Possible, but parish must decide whether it can fund long term capital refurbishment plus revenue costs with existing precept, or whether it needs to increase precept.

It would be possible take on only some of the play areas allowing the principal authority to close others down as they become unfit for purpose.

Option three - Early discussions with community groups indicate a willingness to become involved, but not to take full ownership of project.

Survey undertaken indicates play areas most valued by community are A and C.

### PROJECT STRATEGY

**Issue:** How could we do it?

- Consider user groups
- Consider who can help delivery the outcomes
- Consider funding sources
- Consider options for project:
  - Close down
  - Restructure/re-organise
  - Make internal efficiency improvements
  - Benchmark service against others
  - Test the market
  - Outsourcing or insourcing
  - Privatising
  - Joint Ventures
  - Can technology be improved?
- Define outcomes or service requirements you want the project to achieve
- Do you need a business plan?

**Action:** Parish pins down local residents who use play groups as to exactly what they could provide to project – e.g. security, maintenance of area, litter picking, grass cutting, weekly play inspections etc. Determines lifecycle of existing facilities including paths, bins,

benches, playground surfacing and extends capital costs into the future to provide replacement.

Reviews what quick wins could be gained – e.g. immediate improvements to areas concerns.

Reviews whether immediate capital improvements can be made.

Decides on whether any portion of the work can be done internally by existing staff, or whether it must all be done externally.

Insourcing vs outsourcing or privatising versus fully supported by precept revenues. Joint venture options.

Takes the temperature on what on-going revenue costs are likely to be by doing research on typical grass cutting, litter picking, maintenance costs are likely to be. Price up various types of play equipment. (Parish seeks expression of interest from potential bidders.) Draws up business plan.

## PROJECT PLAN

**Issue:** What is our plan?

**Action:** Takes a decision that Council is willing to take on ownership and management of play areas A, C and D. Advises principal authority there is no interest in play area B or E. Asks residents if a contribution of and extra £1.32 on their precept per D band is acceptable to keep these play areas open and regularly refurbished.

Applies for transfer of Play Areas A, C and D from principal authority.

Applies for grant funding opportunity with waste recycling.

Agrees refurbishment plan with residents.

Works out who will undertake play area inspections, (handyman) and ensures he get appropriate training.

Agrees to replace certain items of equipment

and to put new items in place in one of the play areas.

Agrees to refurbish another play area, using a combination of community volunteers and contractors.

## TENDER STAGE

### TENDER ONE

**Issue:** Write out specification – input or output standards?

Decide on whether you need a PQQ process – depends on size of tender.

Decide on evaluation process – panel, checklist, weighting to various factors, etc.

Do you wish to only go to people on approved contractors list or go to open tender?

Decide whether you need to advertise tender on a tender portal, your own website, or simply send to local suppliers?

Is this an EU Tender over the threshold?

**Action:** Ground and playground maintenance

Decides on contract period (term of 10 years to allow contractor to ensure depot near sites).

Advertises on website, and contacts all known ground maintenance contract providers.

Decides on risk allocations – ensures insurance risk is covered on playground maintenance routine, and that insurer is happy with number and type of inspections.

Gets quote for new public liability issues, and determines who carries which public liability risk.

Decides on payment schedule.

Decides on dispute process and how to measure dissatisfaction levels with playground and ground maintenance.

Decides on Termination process.

Decides on contract monitoring process, reporting to council, etc.

Clerk to meet monthly with contractor, and to report quarterly to the Policy and Finance Committee.

Reviews personnel related issues (e.g. structure to manage contract). Understands whether at the end of Ground Maintenance contract there are ongoing TUPE obligations. In this case, when the contract ends, it does not.

## **TENDER TWO**

**Issue:** Write out specification

Decide on whether you need a PQQ process – depends on size of tender.

Decide on evaluation process – panel, checklist, weighting to various factors, etc.

Do you wish to only go to people on approved contractors list or go to open tender.

Send out invitations to tender.

**Action:** Play area refurbishment/replacement

Advertises on website and on national portal for government contracts. Seeks out an opportunity to advertise alongside others advertising at the same time for play equipment at a national level, to gain bulk buying opportunity.

Requests known discount in tender for undertaking one playground or more than one.

Also contacts all known play equipment providers to ask if they have seen the tender.

Procurement for this new equipment is not an EU Tender, but is a high value item, so PQQ process is built in to evaluate financial status and previous contracts undertaken by bidders.

Decides on broad product type but not specifics of product (e.g. asks for swing suitable for disabled and able body use, but does not specify product name). Specifies

type of under-surface material – e.g. Rubber under-surface, grass matting, mulch, etc

Decides on risk allocations (assesses at what point does risk of site accidents transfer to contractor, then return to council).

Decides on payment schedule (25% up front then 75% on completion of contract, following snagging period of 6 weeks after completion).

Decides on dispute process and how to measure dissatisfaction levels with pieces of play equipment.

Decides on termination process.

Decides on contract monitoring process, reporting to council, etc.

Advises insurance company of new type of equipment and gets provisional quote.

## **EVALUATING TENDERS**

### **PQQ**

**Issue:** Pre-screening of bidders to determine whether they should become approved contractors.

Decide on criteria that will rule out bidders.

**Action:** Considers long term financial accounts of bidders.

Considers H&S record and procedures of bidders.

Considers references.

Considers whether org. structure of bidder meets requirements.

Considers location of tenderer as this is important to service delivery in ground maintenance contract.

Decides that only five out of eight interested parties who have submitted PQQ's on the ground maintenance contract will go forward to next stage of tendering as one has failed to produce two years of accounts, and two have not submitted references that are of good calibre.

Decides that all bidders on play equipment will go forward to next stage of tender, as all bidders are well established companies, with good financial track record, and two good references each.

## RECEIVE QUOTES/TENDER BIDS

**Issue:** Opening evaluation process.

What criteria – price, service level, standard of build, local service, added value?

Notification to bidders.

Transparency of information to public.

**Action:** Evaluates in a panel consisting of all members of policy and finance committee as agreed earlier.

Decides on whom to appoint.

Notifies successful bidder and unsuccessful bidders.

Issues letter of appointment on play equipment refurbishment.

Issues contract to contractor for playground maintenance.

Advises public of who successful bidder is on website, and when the contract will start.

## CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

### MOBILISATION PERIOD AND INITIAL STARTING DATE

**Issue:** Does the contractor need time for mobilising prior to start date?

Review how on-going communications will work.

Define sticking points.

Consider health and safety implications.

**Action:** One-month built into tender as a mobilisation period for the ground maintenance contract, and start date before end of financial year for play equipment installation with completion date six weeks

thereafter.

Sets up meeting between affected staff and contractor.

## MONITOR PROJECT

**Issue:** On-going or project end date?

Is a Service Level Agreement required?

Who will monitor?

What will be the reporting mechanism to council?

Snagging list review.

What are the criteria for a successful project?

**Action:** E.g. grounds maintenance and playground inspection and repairs are on-going. Installation of play equipment has a fixed end. Agrees clerk will meet monthly with ground maintenance contractor on site, to discuss issues of quality, out of spec job rate work etc. Reports snag list to contractor dealing with play area refurbishment. Ensure snag list is fixed.

E.g. use of playground increases number of complaints/complements on ground maintenance. Work always meets standard on ground maintenance (in this case set by council as an output standard rather than an input standard (e.g. grass always no longer than 2.5 centimetres rather than cut eight times a year).

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# Resources

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## CATEGORY BUYING GROUPS AND CONTACTS (CBC)

[www.hants.gov.uk/cbc](http://www.hants.gov.uk/cbc)

CBC can offer a full range of appropriate frameworks through any one of the CBC member-authorities, with Hampshire, Hertfordshire and Kent in particular well placed to assist. CBC has links with parish councils in Hampshire.

The CBC website has a full overview of their work and information on CBC contracts. Additionally, the website will reveal full details of the local authorities in CBC and their contact details.

## EASTERN SHIRES PURCHASING ORGANISATION (ESPO)

<http://www.espo.org>

ESPO is offering over 27,000 catalogue products and 150 frameworks. Providing vast framework opportunities to a wide number of customer sectors including:

- Education (nursery through to university)
- Local and central government (parish, borough and county councils)
- Emergency services and NHS
- Charities and social enterprises
- Wider public sector

Frameworks on offer include:

- Building and facilities management
- Energy
- Environmental services
- Food and catering
- Highways and vehicles
- ICT
- Hardware
- Professional services
- Social care and health

## CROWN COMMERCIAL SERVICES (CCS)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/crown-commercial-service>

Providing a range of innovative procurement solutions via category frameworks including:

- Communications
- Construction
- Energy
- Facilities management and property
- Fleet
- Learning and development
- Office solutions
- Print
- Professional services
- Research
- Travel

## YORKSHIRE PURCHASING ORGANISATION (YPO)

[www.ypo.co.uk](http://www.ypo.co.uk)  
[procurement@ypo.co.uk](mailto:procurement@ypo.co.uk)  
01924 834 812 (David Bemrose)

YPO is a national public sector buying organisation providing customers easy access to over 30,000 catalogue products and free access to around 100 OJEU compliant framework contracts. YPO Procurement Services provides dedicated expertise for each of the contract categories to help you achieve better value for money in all areas of your expenditure and is also able to provide a comprehensive and flexible procurement support service.

Key categories include:

- Building maintenance
- Business services
- Education and learning
- Energy and energy solutions
- Facilities management
- Professional and financial services

- Fleet
- Food and catering
- Furniture and design service
- Highways
- HR services
- ICT
- Social care
- Waste management
- Work wear and PPE

#### **NORTH EASTERN PURCHASING ORGANISATION (NEPO)**

<https://www.qtegov.com>

Delivering nationally available frameworks to the public sector, which includes:

- Construction
- Corporate and professional services
- Facilities management
- Social Care

#### **PORTAL**

Portals work if you know exactly what you need. However, if you:

- are not clear on your exact procurement needs
- need help in writing a tender
- want advice and templates
- need help on working with EU regulations
- want to set up more professional procurement practices in your parish or get feedback on your existing practices
- or don't have time and want someone to source comparative quotes on any item

Further help is available from a number of sources. In addition, many principal authorities have procurement expertise that they may make available to parishes.

#### **MILTON KEYNES SERVICE PARTNERSHIP**

Milton Keynes Service Partnership can help whatever your tender requirements. If you have to deal with an OJEU contract, or just want to advertise locally, need help drawing up a specification or access to an e-tendering portal, or you simply need advice and help with your own tendering process.

<http://www.mksp.org.uk>  
[contracts@millton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:contracts@millton-keynes.gov.uk)  
 01908 254 688 // 01908 254 000

#### **PRIVATE SECTOR COMPANIES**

There are also some private sector companies that can provide advice and access to contracts for a fee.

**Parish Council Purchasing Group**  
<http://pcpg.co.uk>

#### **LEARN ABOUT HOW PUBLIC SECTOR PROCUREMENT OPERATES**

**Society of Procurement Officers**  
<http://www.sopo.org>

**Local Government Association-National Procurement Strategy**  
[www.lg-procurement.org.uk](http://www.lg-procurement.org.uk)

**Crown Commercial Services**  
<http://ccs.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/i-am-buyer>

# CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL

## ***Corporate Business Plan 2016 - 2017***

## **Background**

Congleton received its first charter in 1272, with civic government developing gradually until the ancient Borough was dissolved under the Municipal Corporations Act 1835. The reformed Congleton Borough was a non-county borough, responsible for a range of local government functions within the geographical area of Congleton Town. It served as a principal authority within a two tier local government system, sharing duties with Cheshire County Council. It continued until March 1974, when its powers transferred to the new District (Borough) of Congleton, formed in April 1974 by the merger of 5 former urban and rural authorities including Congleton BC. Both Congleton Borough Council and Cheshire County Council ceased to exist from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009, being replaced by the new Cheshire East Council as a unitary principal authority.

Congleton Town Council is one of the largest of 108 local councils within East Cheshire. It was inaugurated in 1980 to provide the local council tier of local government for the town of Congleton. It became fully operational in April 1981 and exists to serve as a vehicle of local opinion; to provide an effective link between the local residents and council tax payers with Cheshire East Council; to express local feelings and interests and to keep watch on all developments within the Town. It has the statutory responsibility to examine plans due for consideration by the Cheshire East Council as planning authority. It also manages a range of local services and facilities.

The Council is composed of 20 Councillors, representing 2 Town Wards. Council elections take place in May every 4 years, when a new Council is elected. The next full elections will be held on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

This, the tenth Business Plan, is a management tool intended to identify how the financial, human and technological resources available are to be used to achieve declared objectives as set out in the Council's Corporate Strategy.

The Plan concentrates on the current year but some actions stretch beyond this period. It is a living document which will be modified as situations develop or be adapted to support different funding applications, and builds upon the considerable experience and success of the Council.

## **Introduction**

The Council adopted its first Corporate Strategy "Making Localness Count: 2006-2008" in April 2006 which enabled it to transform its role in the Town, its services and the way it was managed. In April 2009, the Council adopted its current Corporate Strategy following public and stakeholder consultation, which builds on strengthening the Town Council whilst placing greater priority on regeneration, the economy and sustainability. It sets out how the Council will respond to issues identified either by a strategic analysis of the Town's needs or identified in recent reports prepared as part of the processes to develop both the Town Strategy and Public Realm Strategy. The Strategy recognises the priorities of the council and Community



encompassed within the Council's Medium Term Corporate Strategy. It commits the Council to work with Cheshire East Council and will remain committed to working in partnership with other public bodies as well as the voluntary and community organisations for the good of our Town.

Working with Cheshire East Council on local governance and future service devolution will continue to be a key priority. Cheshire East Council's Strategies and Policies will inevitably have an impact on the Town and it will be important that the Town Council is able to influence their development and direction.

## **VISION**

**A flagship town, vibrant, enterprising  
and sustainable, which remains as**

## **MISSION**

**To deliver the strong governance and  
community leadership required to**

## **OUR CORE VALUES**

The principles by which we will operate the Council are:

- **Democracy and openness**
- **Equality**
- **Working with others**
- **Value for money**

## **STRATEGIC GOALS**

Community facing:

### **GOAL 1: AN ACTIVE AND ENGAGED COMMUNITY**

1. To support, develop and empower the community & voluntary sector
1. To promote community cohesion

3. To promote health and fitness amongst our residents and workforce
4. To engage with the Town's present and future generations

**GOAL 2: A SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT**

1. To protect and enhance the local environment
2. To work to make our Town safer

**GOAL 3: A CELEBRATED AND PROTECTED HERITAGE**

1. To protect our heritage
2. To promote our heritage

**GOAL 4: A STRONG AND DIVERSE ECONOMY**

1. To lead the development of a re-vitalised Town Centre as set out in the Public Realm Strategy
2. To identify Congleton as the "enterprise hub" of Cheshire East
3. To improve access and communications to and within the Town
4. To continue to promote Congleton and the completion of the Link Road
5. To develop the Fairground site
6. To support Cheshire East in refurbishing the Leisure Centre

**GOAL 5: OPERATIONAL QUALITY**

1. To develop capacity and a diverse skill base within the Council
2. To deliver excellent services according to both need and consumer choice
3. To achieve high performance by taking a more integrated approach to management.

**An overview and analysis of the Town**

Congleton Town covers an area of 2255 hectares (22.55 sq. km or 8.7 sq. ml), with a population of almost 26,500 (49% males, 51% females) and an electorate of 21,717. There are 11,902 households.

**UK Economy**

Whilst manufacturing output has increased by 2.9% this year, it has increased by 0.4% over the previous month. Retail sales have increased annually by 4.3% with an increase over the previous month of 0.8%; similarly GDP is running at 2.4% annually.

Raw material and fuel have fallen annually by 7.4% and factory gate prices reduced by -0.4%. RPI though is 2.3%, with average earnings up by 1.4%.

Whilst inflation is close to zero at 0.1%, the UK economy has slowed a little in 2015, but, domestic demand remains relatively strong helped by lower oil prices. Nonetheless the global economy remains mixed with a gradual pick up during the year in the US and Eurozone, but, a slowdown in China and recessions in Russia and Brazil

UK Growth is expected to average around 2.4% in both 2015 and 2016 with consumer spending and business investment the main drivers of UK growth.

### **Congleton Town profile<sup>1</sup>**

Adults' qualifications compare well with the regional and national figures, with 29.2% of residents aged 16 and above being qualified at or above degree level at the time of the 2011 Census. This exceeds the averages of 24.4% and 27.2% for the North West and England & Wales respectively, but is lower than the Cheshire East average of 32.0%. 22.1% of the Town's 16+ population have no qualifications: this is below the averages for the North West (24.8%) and England & Wales (22.7%), but is a greater proportion than in Cheshire East as a whole (19.6%).<sup>2</sup>

The median annual household income of people living in the Town (£31,300 in 2014) is below the median for Cheshire East (£33,100), but higher than that for Great Britain (£28,500).<sup>3</sup>

According to the Government's most recent Index of Multiple Deprivation (2010), Congleton Town has just one Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) in the top (most deprived) 20% of England's LSOAs. This LSOA (code E01018400) is east of the town centre and has a percentile value of 13.17% (i.e. it is among England's top 14% of LSOAs, but outside the top 13%). Among Cheshire East's LSOAs, it is the 10<sup>th</sup> most deprived.<sup>4</sup>

Of the current population in the Town (26,700), some 60.2% (16,100) are aged 16-64.<sup>5</sup>

Of those in the slightly wider 16-74 age group, 69.4% are economically active, which is a similar rate to those for Cheshire East (70.6%), the North West (67.8%) and England & Wales (69.7%).<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Except where stated otherwise, the statistics in this profile relate to Congleton Town (defined as the area covered by the current wards of Congleton East and Congleton West, or, equivalently, Lower Layer Super Output Areas E01018395 to E01018410 inclusive).

<sup>2</sup> Source: Key Statistics Table KS501EW, 2011 Census, ONS. Crown Copyright 2014. Office for National Statistics licensed under the Open Government Licence v. 1.0.

<sup>3</sup> Source: Median household income, Pay Check 2014, © Copyright CACI Limited. This Report shall be used for academic, personal and/or non-commercial purposes. Note: The figure for Congleton Town is a pseudo median, rather than a true median. The pseudo median is calculated by creating an array for each area. The array is a multiplication of the average median income at postcode level by the number of households, repeated for each postcode within an area. The median is then the median figure of this array. A true median would be calculated using a separate household income figure for each household; however, only median figures at postcode level are available.

<sup>4</sup> Source: English Indices of Deprivation 2010, DCLG (published in March 2011).

<sup>5</sup> Source: ONS mid-year population estimates for 2013. ONS Crown Copyright 2014. ONS licensed under the Open Government Licence v. 1.0.

<sup>6</sup> Source: Key Statistics Tables KS601EW to KS603EW, 2011 Census, ONS. Crown Copyright. Office for National Statistics licensed under the Open Government Licence v. 1.0.

The traditional Manufacturing areas of textiles and engineering have been affected by globalisation: for example, in 2001, Manufacturing accounted for 25.2% of the town's employment (3,200 jobs), but by 2011 this had fallen to 14.8% (1,900). However, the Manufacturing sector's employment share is still well above the England & Wales average (8.9% in 2011, down from 15.0% in 2001). Wholesale & Retail (15.9% share in 2011) and Human Health & Social Work (12.1%) are the other two sectors that account for more than a tenth of the Town's employment.<sup>7</sup>

Congleton has a relative shortage of jobs and is, therefore, a net exporter of labour: in 2011, 12,400 of its residents were in employment (including those commuting out of the town), but only 9,600 people (including inward commuters) worked in the town. Hence there was a net commuting outflow of 2,800.<sup>8</sup>

As of October 2014, 0.9% of Congleton Town's 16-64 year-olds were claiming Jobseeker's Allowance. This claimant unemployment rate is below those for Cheshire East as a whole (1.2%), the North West (2.2%) and the UK (also 2.2%).<sup>9</sup>

In 2014, the town had an estimated 1,300 private sector businesses (including non-profit businesses and mutual associations).<sup>10</sup>

Key issues facing Congleton are:

- an aging population
- Higher than average mortality rates when compared to CEC
- a competitive environment for business and attracting external funding
- retention of young people
- danger of becoming a commuter town
- need to diversify the Town employment structure
- need to stimulate enterprise
- current economic and market conditions
- need to revitalise the Town Centre
- need to attract high tech-high value business and raise wage levels
- Congleton's development will be constrained without the delivery of sufficient quality employment land the Local Plan should though address this issue
- need to address climate change
- traffic congestion
- need for more housing in general and in particular affordable housing

- Preventing unwanted and unplanned development
- Production and completion of a Neighbourhood Plan

### **A little history of the Town Hall & its management**

Congleton Town Hall embodies Italian and French Gothic design influences. The building is two storied at street level and has a central machicolated and battlemented tower rising flush with the façade. The building to the frontage has a steeply pitched roof pierced by sharp dormers. The main hall being two storeys vaulted with exposed hammer beam roof trusses under a mansard roof with clerestory lighting.

The building is currently listed under the Town and Country Planning Acts and is graded 2 star. Although the 2 star grading includes the interior, it is generally accepted the internal listing mainly reflects the qualities of the main hall space and the internal stonework.

The Town Hall was subject to a major re-furbishment of significant investment (£975k) in 1996, which saw much of its interior, brought back to its original design with the aid of a Single Regeneration Budget Grant. Mechanical and electrical installations were upgraded together with essential repairs to the external fabric. Although some essential repairs and electrical upgrades were undertaken to the second floor areas within the scope of this study, no other works of improvement were undertaken, the area remaining is originally as built.

The Market Square Chambers were let to The Museum Trust on a 25 Year lease, commencing May 2002, although the Museum may shortly vacate the premises and move to Bradshaw House.

In the late 1990s, major external fabric repairs were undertaken by the Borough Council. Prior to April 1974, the building was owned and managed by the original Congleton Borough Council, and transferred to the post April 1974 Borough Council on reorganisation. Following the internal works, Congleton Town Hall Trust was established in 1998 to operate the facility at community level. Financial resources and local politics conspired against it and management soon reverted to the Borough Council.

Congleton Town Council took over the freehold and management in June 2008 and spent the first few months learning and integrating the operation into the Council culture.

During 2009, all external backlog maintenance work was undertaken along with outstanding disabled access works and a new boiler. Further work completed in 2010 included removing the suspended ceiling and renovation of the Bridgestones Suite; provision of a Restroom and a new disabled toilet on the First Floor; and provision of a cafe/restaurant and a First Aid Facility on the Ground Floor. New security arrangements were also put in place in 2011. Additional capital works were completed in 2012 which included a new bar and increased kitchen area. Whilst this year extensive refurbishment of the 13 Town Hall roofs has been undertaken including the refurbishment of the roof of the Grand Hall.

## Situational Analysis for the Town Hall

The Town Hall had been a low priority, non-statutory service for Congleton Borough Council, which has received minimal investment since the 1990s and had become run down. It looked jaded and in parts dirty. As one walked up the High Street, on the majority of occasions, one was faced with large closed wooden door. The building was under used and un-welcoming.

The important main architectural features of the building such as the hammer beams in the main hall are in good condition but the facility badly needed upgrading if it was to attract the high value commercial businesses which will be necessary to reduce the annual revenue deficit. A major capital works programme was approved, which took place over a period of two-three years. This included 6 years backlog maintenance, DDA compliance, conversion of the Brassiere to a café with a High Street frontage, energy conservation and improvement works which opened up new areas and restored the Bridestones Suite (Conference Room) to its former glory. The works were disruptive, but, the programme has been completed. Works for this year included outstanding electrical and other services work, but, a major issue which was successfully tackled was the repairs to the various roofs around the Town Hall which after many years of experiencing leaks are now sound.

The Town Hall is a valuable community asset; however it has not yet become the vibrant civic centre or the natural choice of venue for prestige events. It has car parks close at hand but no dedicated parking for the public. There are some 8 parking spaces at the rear for staff and certain High Street businesses have an informal access to their parking spaces.

Staff has now built up considerable experience in the operation of the building and working with the commercial partner has provided commercial experience, but, this too is the subject of change as we go through the process of recruiting a new commercial partner. Nonetheless, the Council will in future, provided it identifies the right partner, be able to capitalise on catering success and key corporate events and weddings. The Town Hall also requires more imaginative and better marketing and promotion, which is currently being undertaken in order to attract more corporate customers.

## Policies

The Council has an Equalities Policy which sets out its commitment to equal treatment of both clients and staff irrespective of ethnic origin, gender, religion, disability, age, marital status, or sexual orientation. It contains a section "Positive about Disability" which makes a firm commitment about adaptation of premises now and in the future. A full disabled audit of all premises has been undertaken some time ago and substantial compliance works were carried out to the Town Hall in 2009-10. The Policy was reviewed in 2011 and strengthened in the areas of its Gender Equality Scheme and Age Discrimination Statement.

The Safety Policy, which was endorsed by full Council, states a firm commitment to health, safety and welfare. It clearly allocates responsibilities and states how hazards will be tackled. A

risk assessment has been undertaken of all premises and services and a programme of improvement is currently being implemented with the assistance of our Health and Safety Advisor, Wirehouse.

Personnel Policies have been approved by the Personnel Committee and an Employee Handbook issued to all staff, which will need to be reviewed from time to time because of legislative changes and as a consequence of amendments initiated by Wirehouse. A comprehensive set of operating procedures have been developed as part of the Integrated Management System which has also been reviewed and amended in conjunction with Wirehouse. During this review, the relevant employees were consulted and fully involved in the process.

The Council's Community & Social Policy is a commitment to strengthening the Town's communities and to recognising their diversity and development. The Customer Care policy makes a commitment that the Authority will treat all members of the public in a courteous and professional manner whilst recognising their needs as an individual or as part of a local community.

The Quality Policy confirms the Council's belief that its commitment to continuous improvement will guarantee the success of the Council by fulfilling its strategic objectives. The Environmental Policy is linked to the Council's Quality Policy, and is intended to ensure environmental considerations are central to the ethos of the organisation.

The Council adopted both a Child and Vulnerable Adult Policy and Marketing & Communications Strategy in 2008 and adopted a Volunteers Policy for the first time in 2009.

### **Stakeholders and Clients**

The main stake holders in the activities of the Council are the electors, residents and businesses of the Town, all of which benefit from an improved town environment and protected heritage, better services and an improved civic centre at the Town Hall. Other stakeholders are our partners such as the Cheshire East Council, voluntary and community groups, local trusts and other public and private organisations who work for the good of the Town.

Our clients are the individuals, organisations, visitors, tourists and users of the Council's facilities and services or who benefit from its financial support. Of particular importance will be to identify and attract new users to the Town Hall, as well as considering service standards when evaluating taking over additional local services.

### **Capability Analysis**

Appendix 1 sets out the SWOT analysis which examines the strengths and weaknesses within the organisation and the opportunities and threats which it faces. The Business Plan has built

on the strengths and opportunities and developed a response to the identified weaknesses and threats. This appendix also includes a summary of the Pest Analysis which uses the four headings of Political, Economic, Social and Technological factors to assess the wider environment in which the Organisation operates.

Appendix 2 sets out a SWOT analysis specifically related to the Town Hall, as it currently remains the Council's single largest service and a significant risk.

Appendix 3 summarises the key business risks which have been taken from a more in depth exercise using a new model developed in house, as the former LCRS system had become less relevant as the Council's services become more complex. A number of risks have been lowered over the last year, particularly around staff training/ continuity, the Town Hall, Paddling Pool and IT. Many of the more significant risks now revolve around the Streetscape Services devolved from Cheshire East Council and implementation of the soon to be completed Neighbourhood Plan, Town Centre Plan and Public Realm Strategy.

The self-assessment element of the "Chamber Assure" Integrated Quality Management System is on-going and it continues to be a considerable influence on the development of this Business Plan.

It is clear from these analyses; the Council has a number of experienced and active Councillors many of whom also play other key roles in their communities. Together they muster an array of skills, and show a passion for the Town. The Council has a well established Member Training and Development programme to ensure councillors are well prepared for the challenges ahead.

The officer establishment remains relatively small, but capacity has been built up considerably during the last five years. There is a full time Chief Officer and the Support Manager is appointed as RFO and acts as Deputy Town Clerk. Employee conditions are regularly reviewed with the intention of further helping staff become more fully engaged. A staff training plan is implemented each year based on priorities identified during the employee development reviews. Consultancy support has continued to be used during 2015-16 via a low cost vehicle, Wirehouse, who provide a range of services, including health and safety and HR. This consultancy has provided to be invaluable once again this year as there have been a range of personnel issues to deal with emanating from Streetscape.

The Council are determined to maintain operational efficiency and will welcome the regulation of both auditors and other accreditation bodies. The Council have "quality town status" and in 2012 were re-assessed and gained reaccreditation. This accreditation though has now expired and a new scheme is in place, and the Council has determined to seek accreditation at the Gold level of the Local Council Award Scheme.

The Council has built on its governance arrangements which include adopting a Constitution and revising its controlling policies and regulations. It will review its Information Policy to ensure that as much information as possible is available publically but that sensitive and



confidential information is properly protected. The Volunteers Policy will ensure that the maximum advantage is gained from volunteers and that in turn they benefit from the experience and are treated fairly.

Like all local councils, Congleton Town Council is restrained by limited powers and the “ultra vires” doctrine with the power to spend up to £7.36 per elector in 2015-16 under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, in the interests of all or some of the inhabitants of the local area. Looking ahead, the General Power of Competence which is now available and has been adopted by Council will provide greater flexibility to the Council in determining what areas to support in and around the locale. The Council will develop its services to the public gradually, allowing capacity and economies of scale to be achievable for the future. It has the financial robustness to deliver policies and aims and its Medium Term Financial Plan looks forward 5 years and is designed to resource its Corporate Strategy .

The detailed Risk Analysis has identified that Town Hall development and maintenance remains a significant, but, lower risk, and that the viability of the new commercial partner will need to be monitored. A considerable advantage is the enthusiasm, local appreciation and determination to succeed by town councillors, the Town Hall is seen as a “jewel in the crown” service.

Although the transfer of the freehold of the Town Hall came at a notional cost, there was no legacy from the Borough Council to help with community use, development or long term maintenance. (The Borough Council made a £360k interest free loan available over 10 years to enable the disabled access works to be completed). This together with a loan from the public Works Loan Board of a further £k360 to undertake improvements in the Town Hall including repairs to the roofs have now been exhausted.

The Town Council has had a long held ambition to take on more local services currently provided by the principal authority, where it can add value and it is these which may now present the highest risks. Whilst this has now become a reality it has always expected funding to follow functions, in the main this has happened, but, there was no provision for overheads. But, the Council has made budget provision over the last four years to raise standards and cover some of these costs which have been kept to a minimum. Indeed in this financial year despite losing a member of staff suffering from long term sickness problems and having to utilise one agency worker, the overall budget is set to be exceeded by just £k4 which is remarkable bearing in mind the sickness problem and other unknown variables when the budget was originally set.

CEBC has stated its intention to cease many non-statutory services, particularly where local councils have concurrent powers. These included Christmas trees, Christmas lights, hanging baskets which the Town Council financed in 2013. Functions such as public toilets were transferred to the Town Council in January 2014, but, without funding and we continue to have to finance the provision of such functions from our own resources. Indeed the current state of the public toilet in Market Street is a source of frustration both to the Council and residents

alike. Thus in 2016-17 the Council needs to determine a way forward with public toilet provision one way or another, be that by refurbishing the existing facility or introducing a Town scheme with other businesses.

Congleton Town Council is a willing and able partner to Cheshire East Council (CEC) and is a significant Town Council in terms of budget, population and functions, and has an excellent skills base and management structure. It was more able to take on these services than almost any other local council in Cheshire East, but, they are still significant services compared with those previously operated and will present a higher level of both business and safety risk. Nonetheless, in a relatively short time the Streetscape and Grounds Maintenance services have integrated well into the Town Council and we have continued to receive some very positive feedback from Councillors and public alike who have commented on the excellent service they have received from the team.

The other area of work is regeneration and economic development. Whilst CEC has the statutory duty and more resources, it is clear that unless the Town Council and Partnership drive local initiatives, Congleton will get squeezed out within the Borough. The Public Realm Strategy, Employment Site Review, Town Strategy and robust responses to the LDF consultations have helped to promote Congleton's strong case and such lobbying has resulted in the Link Road and economic development of Congleton becoming a key focus area and priority within Cheshire East. Indeed CEC has recently announced that Congleton is to get £1m to construct the first two priorities in the Public Realm Strategy and is to have the Leisure Centre refurbished. However there are a number of important matters over which the Town Council has no direct control. It will stretch its resources to encourage the Scarborough development proposals to finally result in the site being constructed, to gain support for the development of the Fairground site, ensuring a high value employment sites becomes a reality as set out in the Local Plan and that Section 106 and/or CIL money is directed to the Town Centre and completion of the whole range of Public Realm Projects.

### **Marketing & promotion**

Congleton Town Council's main areas of promotion are:-

- The Town -     Promotion of the Town to attract day visitors, shoppers and tourists  
                      Promotion to attract people looking to live in the Town  
                      Promotion to businesses looking to invest in the Town
  
- The Council-   Statutory and other information to help residents and businesses to understand its decision making.  
                      Marketing of its services to ensure accessibility for all and to maximise income.

The Council will promote the Town on its Web-site, by improving signage, by supporting local events, by supporting local tourism and business initiatives and by helping local organisations

with media articles and press releases. In fact a key initiative for 2016 will be the introduction of a new website to meet the needs of a variety of users and electronic devices

The Council will market its services and promote local governance through its website, by providing a newsletter and notice boards and by supporting promotions of other public bodies and the voluntary and community organisations.

### **ICT Plan**

Congleton Town Council considers e-business as vital to its efficiency. It will ensure it keeps abreast with technology, and will adopt it where it delivers a proven benefit.

The Council's small but, networked facility had a central server and increased capacity renewed during 2013. It has an IT maintenance & support contract with a local company Prism and launched a new website in 2011. During 2014 some older PC based systems were replaced and this process of upgrading has continued in 2015.

### **Staff Development**

Congleton Town Council has adopted the collective agreement known as the "Green Book" issued by the NJC for Local Government Services (comprising representatives of employers & employees). The Green book contains four parts. Part 1 is Principles and Part 4 joint advice. It divides terms and conditions into key national conditions (Part 2) and national provisions which may be modified locally (Part 3). The Council's Employee conditions of service as set out in the Employee Handbook, build on the Green Book. The handbook also sets out the Council's approved Personnel Policies and Rules of Employment and was revised in March 2009.

The Council sets out to reward the commitment of its staff, consistent with its financial resources and to provide a satisfying and flexible working environment in which all staff has the opportunity to develop.

The Council has a core team of 14 internally, supplemented now by 11 Streetscape Operatives including an apprentice and a Streetscape Supervisor. This is supplemented by casual Paddling Pool Attendants during the summer season and casual facilities officer. Within the internal Team, all are part-time with the exception of the Town Clerk, Facilities Manager and Handy Person who are full time. This enables the growing Council to retain a considerable body of skill and experience, and a range of professional disciplines without incurring excessive overhead costs.

Brian Hogan became Town Clerk on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2009 and brought considerable private sector senior executive experience and was formally Town Clerk at Poynton. Brian will retire in the early part of 2015 and will be replaced by David McGifford who will become Chief Officer. Jackie MacArthur took up the role of Town Centre and Marketing Manager in February 2008, having held both administrative and marketing posts previously. Chris Jones took up what was a

new post of Facilities Manager in April 2009 and is responsible for managing the Town Hall, Handy Person Service, Paddling Pool allotments. Chris has also assumed day to day responsibility for the street cleaning and grounds maintenance services of Cheshire East based at Brunswick Wharf. Chris joined the Authority in November 2006 and has held posts of Handy Person and Facilities Officer. Jacqui Potts took up her current role as Support Manager from April 2008, having previously held the position of Finance Officer. She is responsible for financial and support services and is the Responsible Financial Officer and holds the CiLCA qualification as does the Town Clerk.

Linda Minshull started her role of Civic Administration Officer in April 2008, leading on Mayoral support, Youth Committee, planning support and grants. Linda is the longest serving employee having been in administration since 2002. Linda also holds a CiLCA qualification. Andrea Morris-Wild joined the Administration Team in 2012 and amongst other things leads on getting the committee paperwork out on time. Sue Trow who started at the Council 3 years ago has amongst her duties the responsibility for keeping the award winning website up to date. Martha Hayes joined the team in September 2014 as Junior Administration and Marketing Assistant with the Town Council. Melvyn Hulme, who transferred from the Borough Council in June 2008, became a Facilities Officer in the New Town Hall structure, where he has ten years' experience. He is joined by Tim Muston as Caretaker, Al Shaw as a Facilities Officer has just retired and is about to be replaced, whilst Pete Forster is another of our Facilities Officer. Chris Banks and Mark Worthington are the two Handy Persons; Chris Banks though is currently seconded to Streetscape duties. Mike Smith joined the staff in April 2010 as Communities Officer and is employed to provide support to Congleton Partnership. Mark Worthington has recently been promoted to Town Hall Supervisor, but, still retains his role as Handyman. Ruth Burgess is the Streetscape Supervisor who joined in January 2014; she has taken on many of the administrative tasks as well as managing the team and has made the transfer of the function seamless.

All of the Team work to personal and team targets, related to Business Plan objectives. An appraisal system is now well established and staff takes part in regular team meetings.

The Council have developed an annual training plan based on the needs identified from appraisals. All staff have undergone basic Health and Safety training and training on the Chamber Assure Quality Management System and has undergone training on the IT network along with a range of individual requirements.

### **Member Development**

Members bring a vast range of skills and experience to the table, however both local government and the business world are fast changing. The Council in recognition of this introduced a formal Development Programme for Members in 2006, based on the following approach:

- Seminars & Workshops to raise general awareness of topical issues.

- Training or awareness raising prior to making a key decision or policy
- Skills development for individual members or groups of members.

### **Committee Structure**

The Council has well defined terms of reference for and delegation to its Finance & Policy; Personnel; Town Hall; Planning; and Community, Environment & Services Committees, and has a Strategy Working Group to develop future ideas and direction.

### **Financial Appraisal**

This Corporate Business Plan is intended to be read alongside the 2016-17 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The 2016-17 Budget is obviously structured to deliver the Corporate Strategy, however its greatest pressure will come from the earlier decisions to re-vitalise the Town Hall, low interest rates for the Council's investments and a need to invest in the regeneration of the Town. Provision is again made to continue the build-up of capital reserves for future use and the General reserve in accordance with best practice. Over the last eight years the Council has set in place an ambitious programme of service enhancement and community leadership, which has necessitated its capacity, skill levels and inevitably its costs to be increased. Whilst continuing to make provision for the next stages, regeneration of the Town and building a sustainable agenda. The 2016-17 Budget has had to recognise the adverse effects of the recent recession on the Town, the pressure on family budgets, but, also to take into account general inflation running at about 1.0%.

### **2015-16 Outturn**

The projected expenditure to March 2016 is anticipated to show a variance of approximately £k4 against income. Although there have been minor variations to both income and expenditure during the year, the main variations are summarised below, a number of which will affect the 2016-17 Budget.

- A negative variance on corporate management costs of £k8 primarily due to the overlap and handover of the Town Clerk to Chief Officer in the early part of 2016.
- A saving on HR& HS support costs of £k1.2.
- Interest received on income is less than expected by £k1 because of continued low interest rates and a reduction in reserves held.
- Increased costs of operating the website and hosting of £k3.3, which consisted primarily of the first payment of £k3 for the new website which is being constructed, this will be matched by the release of £k3.3 from an earmarked reserve to offset this cost.
- Overspend on maintenance for the paddling pool of £k2.9 due to repairs being carried out to monitoring of chlorine levels in the pump room system.

- An overspend on public toilets of £k3.4 due to rates being higher than forecast and greater use of janitorial items.
- Streetscape staffing had saving of £k21 primarily due to less overtime working and the second apprentice not being recruited to date. This was offset by £k8.7 of unplanned expenditure on temporary staff to cover for the long term sickness of one member of the Streetscape team in the summer.
- Streetscape also showed a further negative variance of £k8.5 which was the cost of painting the bridge in Town over the River Dane, but, this was offset by a grant of £k15 from Cheshire East Council.
- There was also savings on fuel usage in Streetscape of £k6.5 partly arising because of lower fuel costs and efficiency savings derived from the use of the trackers to control vehicle movement and usage.
- Savings on gas and electricity of £k4.
- Expenditure of £k179 shown in Streetscape which was primarily for the ill health early retirement payment made to Cheshire Pension Fund for one of our employees, which was offset by a payment from our insurers of £k177.5 who refunded the cost.

### **Town Hall**

Expenditure on the Town Hall is expected to be about £k3 less than budget, however, total income is £k7 below budget, but this is offset by savings on gas and electricity of £k4. This has meant that this year the deficit has increased by £k4.

### **Budget Format**

The budget is divided into its main spending committees and within each cost centre and income/expenditure codes.

### **Reserves**

The General Reserve at the yearend is anticipated to be £156k, General Capital contingency £169k, Public Toilets £k38, Capital Equipment £k31, Elections £15, Devolved Services £k6, Play Areas £k6, Legal Fees £k10, Public Realm £k12, Cenotaph £k10 and Neighbourhood Plan £k37

The Council is recommended to have a minimum of 3 months General reserve equal to net revenue expenditure, which equates to £170,741 whilst actual reserves for 2016-17 are projected to be £k161,722.

To enable reserves to return to the recommended level, they are being replenished over a two year period to at a rate of £4,600 p.a.

## **General Budget Assumptions**

The Medium Term Financial Strategy had originally indicated an anticipated Precept increase of 3.0 % for 2016-17, mainly to accommodate some modest increase in costs of some devolved functions and some increases in office capacity. However the actual total increase is 6.7%, primarily because of additional costs emanating from Cheshire East Borough Council as a consequence of the continued reduction of the rate support grant which is assumed will reduce from £49,890 to zero, an additional cost of £49,890.

The increase though requires further explanation and understanding in terms of how it has been derived.

First of all, the funding emanating from Cheshire East Borough Council is now broken down into two elements, the precept and the Council Tax Support Grant. Prior to this change the precept was in 2013-14, £693,826, however, with the introduction of the support grant this reduced the precept to £618,472 thus changing the base on which any future increases are based.

## **Key Achievements in 2015-16**

During the past year the Council has tackled an ambitious agenda, amongst its achievements:-

- High Street facing office facilities maintained
- Four Police Community Officers supported for the Town
- Continued operation of the Paddling Pool
- Maintained allotments at Hillary Avenue
- A quarterly Town Council and Community Newsletter (Bear Necessities)
- Maintained Town Handy Person Scheme and integrated into Streetscape Team
- Christmas Fayre and Christmas Lights
- Replaced many Xmas light decorations
- Town events including a Food Festival
- Young Council continued for all Junior Schools
- An Active Youth Committee for the Council
- Floral displays for the Town, winning RHS gold standard in North West in Bloom and entry into Britain in Bloom in 2016
- High Profile Congleton Partnership & liaison with businesses
- Town Centre Management
- Grants for the voluntary and community sector
- Completed Environmental Audit
- Link Road becoming a reality
- Secured £1m for Public Realm Strategy
- Set up Neighbourhood Planning Team to deliver plan in 2016

## The Way Forward

The key actions for 2016-17 are set out below in Priorities and Targets. The direction set out in previous sections of this Business Plan, will largely continue. The Business Plan really is about ensuring the goals and actions set out in the Corporate Strategy “Backbone of the Community is delivered and properly resourced as we move forward.

The Town Council had up to 2005-6 concentrated on helping the Town’s development by giving financial support to organisations which contribute towards its aims. Its only major directly delivered service was the Paddling Pool, now we are providing Streetscape Services which have been well received by Councillors and the public. The Council is now providing strong community leadership, strengthening its local governance role in anticipation of increased powers and a working partnership with Cheshire East Council. It has also provided an increased number of services either directly or in partnership.

The Council has set itself another ambitious, but realistic agenda for 2016-17. The services offered in the building will continue to be developed and promoted in partnership with the new catering partner. All supply contracts have been identified, and re-let. These will be reviewed over time to ensure good value.

The Town Centre Plan, Town Strategy and Public Realm Strategy are on-going projects which will require considerable resource to bring about their complete implementation, but securing finance for the first two priority projects is a major step forward. Whilst the Town Council can lead a number of projects, in other areas they will need a partner or facilitator. The current economic uncertainty has made it essential to help local businesses and this will be undertaken in a number of ways including promotion of the Town via Town Centre Management, supporting the traders forum, supporting a Congleton enterprise centre, funding training and lobbying for adequate housing and employment land growth in the Local Plan.

Sustainability and energy reduction are also of growing importance both for the Council directly and for the Town as a whole. The Council will support the Congleton Partnership’s Sustainability Group in preparing to become a Transition Town.

The Council has adopted a keen performance management approach, and will continue to report on progress against the Business Plan and maintain both its status as a quality town council and its accreditation with Chamber Assure.

Brian Hogan





Lead Officers: ChO= Chief Officer, SM=Support Manager, TCen&MM=Town Centre &Marketing Manager, FM=Facilities Manager CO=Communities Officer, CAO=Civic Administration Officer, Administration Assistants			
<b>GOAL 1</b>	<b>AN ACTIVE AND ENGAGED COMMUNITY.</b>		
	Conceptual Indicators A. No decrease in active community and voluntary organisations B. Improved play facilities during year C. Increased no. of affordable houses D. 10 young people engaged in a youth committee		
	<b>ACTIONS &amp; OUTPUT TARGETS</b>	<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>DATE</b>
	<b><u>TO SUPPORT, DEVELOP &amp; EMPOWER THE COMMUNITY &amp; VOLUNTARY SECTOR</u></b> 1. Administer the Grant Scheme to forward the Council's strategic aims 2. Maintain essential support to Cheshire East CAB 3. Support Community Projects as a Key Partner 4. Encourage more Town Centre activities for the Town Centre 5. Encourage greater public participation in Congleton in Bloom 6. Support Congleton Partnership as a key partner	SM SM/ ChO /Cllrs ChO /Cllrs TCen&MM ChO /Cllrs ChO /Cllrs	On going On going On going On going On Going On Going
	<b><u>TO PROMOTE COMMUNITY COHESION</u></b> 1. Produce 4 editions of the Council/Community Newsletter 3. Make the Town Hall available for community, social, leisure & educational pursuits 4. Produce regular media releases to share information about the Town Council 5. Lobby for increased housing including affordable and low cost houses in Cheshire East	TCen&MM ChO /FM TCen&MM ChO	On going On going On going On going
	<b><u>TO PROMOTE HEALTH &amp; FITNESS AMONGST OUR RESIDENTS AND WORKFORCE</u></b> 1. Support sport and leisure activities which promote healthy life style in particular promote the notion of improved facilities at Congleton Leisure Centre 3. Lobby for improved primary health care facilities in the Town to tackle high mortality rates 4. Maintain an Allotment Site & improved facilities 5. Have offered improved facilities at the Town Hall for organisations which will promote health & fitness	ChO / Cllrs/TCen ChO FM ChO /FM ChO	On going On going On going On going On going
	<b><u>TO ENGAGE WITH THE TOWN'S PRESENT &amp; FUTURE GENERATIONS</u></b>		

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support youth organisations and facilities both practically and financially</li> <li>2. Maintain a Youth Committee &amp; hold replacement elections if necessary</li> <li>3. Work with businesses to develop the skills of young persons</li> <li>4. Increase the use of the Town Hall by young people</li> <li>5. Support Cheshire East Youth Committee/Parliament</li> <li>6. Attempt to engage elder generations to apply their skills and knowledge within the local work-force and the voluntary sector</li> <li>7. Maintain the Mayor's Cadet Scheme</li> <li>8. Support Partnership Youth and Senior Forums</li> </ol>	<p>ChO CAO ChO /CO TC/FM CAO ChO  CAO ChO /Cllrs</p>	<p>To March 17 To March 17 To March 17 To March 17 To March 17 To March 17  On going To March 17</p>
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<p><b>GOAL 2</b></p>	<p><b>A SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT.</b></p> <p><u>Conceptual Indicators</u></p> <p>E. Tangible improvements in the public realm F. More alternative energy produced G. Reduced carbon emissions H. Reduced crime/ anti-social behaviour I. Increased urban green areas</p>
<p><b>ACTIONS &amp; OUTPUT TARGETS</b></p>	<p><b>LEAD OFFICER</b></p> <p><b>DATE</b></p>

<p><b><u>TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maintain the Town Handy Person Scheme in conjunction with Streetscape Team</li> <li>2. Support &amp; develop the activity of the Clean Teams for the town and encourage more volunteers</li> <li>3. Lead on the Town's Floral displays by provision of labour &amp; plants</li> <li>4. Update environmental audit on the Council's operation &amp; revise action plan</li> <li>5. Enhance or create at least one area of green open space</li> <li>6. Support the quality maintenance of public footpaths, bridleways &amp; cycle-ways</li> <li>7. Continue to enhance the Town Hall energy improvements</li> <li>8. Protect and enhance areas of our natural environmental assets, directly or through lobbying</li> <li>9. Lower Carbon footprint by at least 5%</li> <li>10. Enter "North West In Bloom" competition and Britain in Bloom</li> </ol>	<p>FM ChO /FM ChO /FM ChO ChO /CO ChO /CO FM/TC ChO ChO /FM ChO /TCen&amp; MM/FM</p>	<p>To March 17 To March 17 August 17 February 16 April 17 On going To March 17 Local Plan March 17 August 16</p>
<p><b><u>TO TAKE STEPS TOWARDS BECOMING A TRANSITIONAL TOWN</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support the Congleton Sustainability Group</li> <li>2. Re-Measure the carbon foot print of the Town Council</li> </ol>	<p>ChO &amp; CO ChO</p>	<p>To March 17 April 16</p>
<p><b><u>TO WORK TO MAKE THE TOWN SAFER</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support anti-social behaviour initiatives such as "Archangel", with the Police &amp; other partners</li> <li>2. Support 4 Police Community Support Officers</li> <li>3. Comment on, lobby for, or support road safety improvement schemes. Link Road</li> <li>4. Support and add values to the safer community initiatives on the Town</li> <li>5. Work with Cheshire East to support Emergency Planning &amp; the Flood Plan for the Town</li> <li>6. Support Shop and Pub watch.</li> <li>7. Support Cheshire East with adverse weather gritting, via Streetscape Team</li> <li>8. Fund CCTV in the Town</li> <li>9. Support Street Pastors</li> </ol>	<p>ChO ChO ChO ChO ChO TCen&amp;MM FM ChO ChO /Cllrs</p>	<p>On going To March 17 On going To March 17 To March 17 To March 17 To March 17 On going On going</p>

GOAL 3	A CELEBRATED AND PROTECTED HERITAGE. <u>Conceptual Indicators</u>		
	J. Increase in number of people having access to Town Treasures & records K. Arts & Culture Centre for the Town. L. Architectural features of Town Hall restored M. Increased no. of people attend Museum		
ACTIONS & OUTPUT TARGETS		LEAD OFFICER	DATE
<u>TO PROTECT OUR HERITAGE</u>  1. Actively support the conservation area management plan. 2. Support reviews and maintenance of both listed buildings and local list buildings. 3. Proactively support at least one local heritage scheme.(Cenotaph renovation) 4. Support the development of Congleton Park, with the aim of it being a future devolved service. 5. Proactively Support an Arts and Culture Centre. 6. Maintenance and refurbishment of the War Memorial & surrounding area. 7. To lobby CEBC for a Shop Front Design Supplementary Planning Document 8. Support Museum's acquisition of Bradshaw House		ChO ChO ChO ChO ChO FM ChO ChO /TCen & MM	To March 17 To March 17 On going To March 17 To March 16 To Dec 16 To March 17 On going
<u>TO PROMOTE OUR HERITAGE</u>  1. Make representations on regeneration projects and new development to ensure it reflects the heritage and traditional architecture of the Town including regeneration of Fairground site 2. Promote access to Town Treasures and Ancient Records 3. Promote our civic role through Mayoralty and Town Crier. 4. Be an active partner of Congleton Museum and support its development. 5. Hold an open day for Town Treasures and arrange 150 <sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the Town Hall		ChO  ChO ChO /CAO ChO ChO	To March 17  On going To March 17 To March 17 July 16
GOAL 4	A STRONG AND DIVERSE ECONOMY.		

Conceptual Indicators		ACTIONS & OUTPUT TARGETS		LEAD OFFICER	DATE
A. No increase in unemployment levels B. New development in Town Centre C. Increased tourism D. More people using leisure facilities E. Increased number of businesses F. Reduction in empty shops					
		<b><u>TO LEAD THE DEVELOPMENT OF A RE-VITALISED TOWN CENTRE</u></b>			
		1. Lobby Cheshire East to develop the whole of the Public Realm Strategy 2. Provide active Town Centre Management to support existing businesses and new business. 3. Work with partners to deliver the priorities from the Town Centre Plan and Town Strategy. 4. Lobby for the development of the Fairground site 5. Be an advocate for improved leisure facilities. 6. Lobby for use of Section 106 & CIL money for Town Centre Strategy & regeneration projects. 7. Actively support good quality, sympathetic and innovative redevelopment. 8. Work with retailers to maintain trade group(s). 9. Hold a Christmas Fayre event and Xmas Promotions 10. To maintain the Town Hall as the recognised civic hub of the Town. 11. To facilitate the Christmas lights & renew where appropriate 12. Lead the Congleton input into Big Data for Small Users Project 13. Complete the Neighbourhood Plan		ChO TCen&MM ChO /TCen&MM ChO ChO ChO ChO TCen & MM TCen & MM ChO TCen & MM TCen&MM CHO	To March 17 To March 17 To March 17 On going To March 17 To March 17 On Going To March 16 To December 16 On-going To December 16 On going June 16
		<b><u>TO IMPROVE ACCESS AND COMMUNICATIONS TO &amp; WITHIN THE TOWN</u></b>			
		1. Support the development group for Congleton Station/rail services. 2. Continue to lobby for sustainable & fair parking facilities and enforcement with Cheshire East Council. 3. Help develop safe routes to Schools. 4. Lobby for more link ways for pedestrians and cycle movements from new developments through Public Realm Strategy 5. Support highway schemes which help disabled access.		ChO /CO ChO ChO ChO ChO	To March 17 March 17 March 17 January 17 March 17
		<b><u>TO PROMOTE CONGLETON</u></b>			

1. Launch and market the new responsive Council Website and keep Twitter Feed with up to date information.	To March 17
2. Provide current information on the Town Council and community groups on notice boards.	SM/FM To March 17
3. Work with partners to promote the Congleton through the Bear Town Brand	TCen & MM To March 17
4. To contribute to promote the Visitor Economy.	TCen & MM June 16
5. Support the Food Festival	ChO /TCen & MM June 16
6. Support the Music Festival (Jazz and Blues)	TCen & MM On going
7. Support the TIC.	ChO To March 17
8. Support Congleton Carnival	CTC To March 17
9. Support Open Spaces Art Festival	TCen/CO To March 17

GOAL 5	OPERATIONAL QUALITY.	ACTIONS & OUTPUT TARGETS	LEAD OFFICER	DATE
	<u>Conceptual Indicators</u> N. Excellent audit reports O. Maintenance of Quality Town Status P. Maintaining Accreditation of an integrated quality system Q. Reduced accidents R. Increased number of staff with key skills			
<b><u>TO DEVELOP CAPACITY AND A DIVERSE SKILLS BASE WITHIN THE COUNCIL</u></b>				
1. Update the Member training & Development Programme with the introduction of the new Council in May 2015 and support ongoing training and support			ChO	March 17
2. Have completed Employee Development Reviews.			ChO	April 16
3. Have revised and implemented a Staff Training Plan.			ChO	June 16/Mar 17
4. Have undertaken a business risk assessment as part of Business Planning.			ChO	December 16
5. Have updated the safety risk assessments and action plan.			FM/TC	March 17
6. Have implemented H&S action plan.			FM/TC	On going
7. Have reviewed the Safety Policy against legislation			TC	On going
8. Have fully developed & commenced use of electronic files			TC/SM	To March 17
9. Have established Archive files & reviewed document retention policy			SM	October 16

<b><u>TO DELIVER EXCELLENT SERVICES ACCORDING TO BOTH NEED AND CONSUMER CHOICE</u></b>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maintain the Allotments and review its operation.</li> <li>2. Continue operation of the Paddling Pool &amp; enhance service.</li> <li>3. To develop and enhance the Streetscape &amp; Grounds Maintenance Service</li> <li>4. Maintain the Handy Person Service.</li> <li>5. Maintain and manage Propagation Unit Agreement</li> <li>6. Refurbish and enhance public toilet provision in Market Street or provide alternative scheme</li> </ol>	<p>ChO FM FM ChO /SM/FM ChO /FM ChO /FM</p>	<p>October 16 On going To March 17 To March 17 On going June 16</p>
<b><u>TO ACHIEVE HIGH PERFORMANCE BY TAKING A MORE INTEGRATED APPROACH TO MANAGEMENT</u></b>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Make best use of the general power of competence and review operations accordingly</li> <li>3. Have updated the Constitution</li> <li>4. Have carried out the necessary audits for Chamber Assure &amp; instigated corrective action.</li> <li>5. To continue the continuous improvement element of Chamber Assure Integrated Quality System.</li> <li>6. Have completed the Corporate Business Plan for 2017-18</li> <li>7. Have maintained Performance Management System</li> <li>8. Have completed all VAT &amp; Internal Revenue returns</li> <li>9. Produce monthly Management Accounts and associated reports</li> <li>10. Have reduced the Town Hall Operating Deficit</li> <li>11. To have reviewed Personnel Policy/ procedures under changing legislation</li> <li>12. To have reviewed data protection compliance</li> <li>13. Gain Gold accreditation for Local Council Award Scheme</li> </ol>	<p>ChO ChO ChO ChO ChO ChO SM SM FM/ ChO ChO &amp; all mgrs ChO CHO</p>	<p>On going On going March 17 On going To March 17 March 17 To March 17 To March 17 To March 17 On going On going July 16</p>



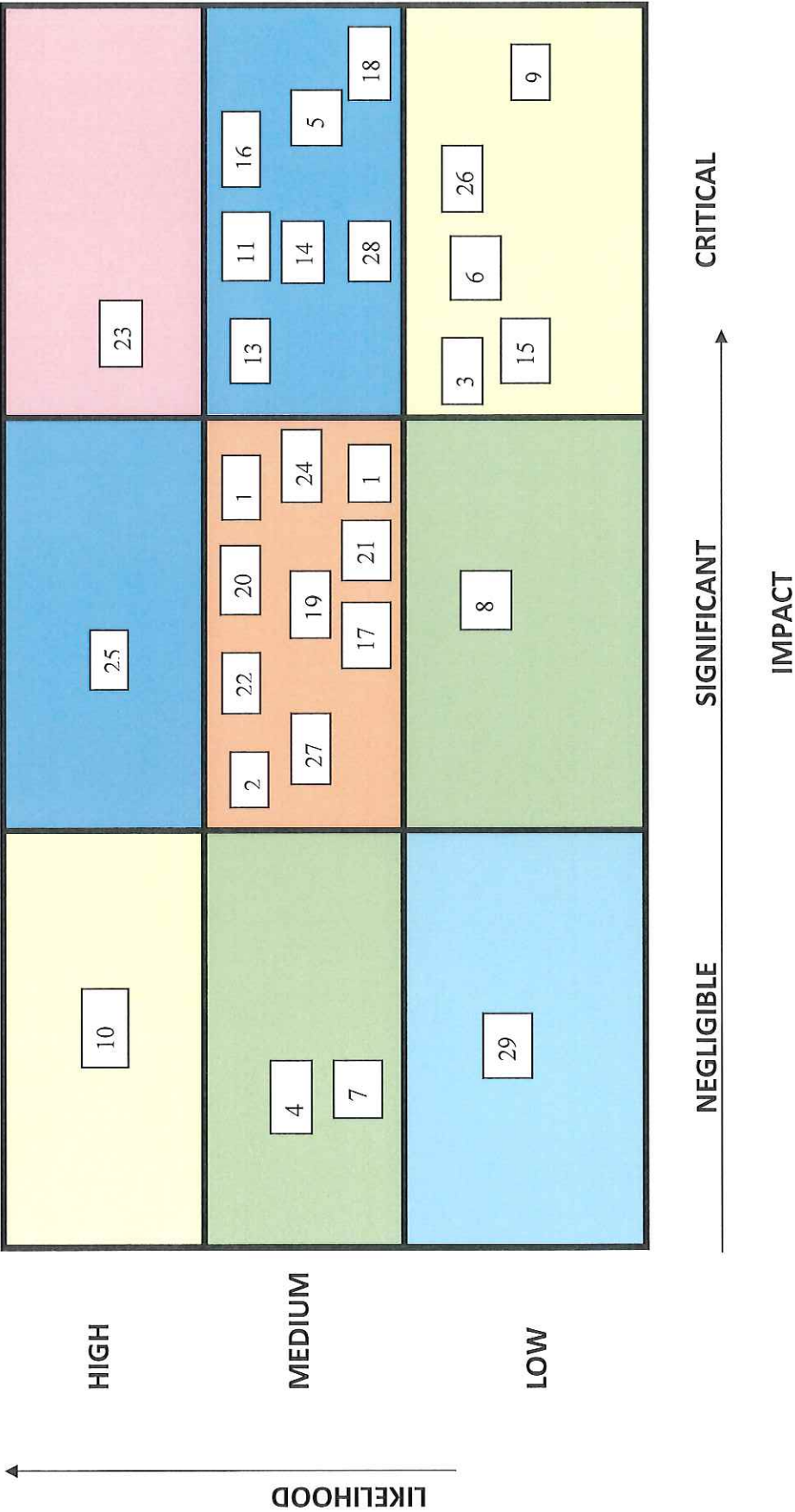
Appendix 1 SWOT Analysis	
<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <p>Committed Members with range of skills Support from key community &amp; public partners Considerable skill &amp; experience in staff &amp; advisors Dedicated staff Addition of Streetscape Robust Vision &amp; Strategy Achievable but challenging objectives Council prepared to make necessary financial commitment Adequate financial reserves &amp; medium term financial plans Developed strong business like ethics Developed strong community links &amp; empowered voluntary sector Continuously developing capacity to expand Centrally located offices Improving IT capability General Power of Competence enhances flexibility of decision making Strong partnership with Cheshire East</p>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <p>Loss of experienced councillors at last election Limited financial capacity Limited but developing IT capacity Limited opportunity for grant funding Potential loss of skills &amp; support during year Considerable number of initiatives, could outstrip capacity Uncertain partnership funding Uncertainty over Local Development Framework Current economic climate adversely affecting businesses &amp; limiting development Delay in Town Centre redevelopment Lack of funding to continue to develop Public Realm Strategy Loss of income through change in tax base and uncertainty over Cheshire East funding Lack of Local Plan</p>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <p>Increased local services to improve standards Possibility of Community Infrastructure Levy Devolution of powers from Cheshire East Council Build capacity of organisation Further improve marketing &amp; promotion Long term regeneration of Town through Regeneration Strategy Implement Town Centre Plan Implement Public Realm Strategy Complete Neighbourhood Plan Further improve operating efficiency of Streetscape Develop Fairground site Develop Town Hall potential General power of competence Establish Link Road</p>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <p>Lack of match funding for projects Cost of transferred/Streetscape services Services expanding faster than capacity Loss of professional expertise Loss of Quality status or decline in Quality system Devolution to neighbourhoods not Council Public apathy Reduced Cheshire East funding High cost of Town Hall Managing expectations Upheaval following local government reorganisation and outsourcing of services Current economic climate adversely affecting funding</p>
<p><b>Political</b></p> <p>Government funding cuts to local government &amp; communities Capping of precepts Uncertainty of approach of new government to local councils Cheshire East Council policies unclear Cheshire East Council cuts services Uncertainty over new LEP effectiveness</p>	<p><b>Economic</b></p> <p>Continuing weak national economy Consumer spending is low Effects of global economy Demand for grants outstrips availability Reduction in public spending in some critical areas Local wage rates low in Town</p>

<p><b>Social</b></p> <p>Pockets of deprivation in a prosperous community  Recession &amp; public sector cuts biting residents &amp; businesses  Strong community spirit in Town  Low interest in local government  High mortality rates</p>	<p><b>Technological</b></p> <p>Fast developing e-technology  More E-business as a method of trading  IT soon becomes obsolete</p>
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Appendix 2 SWOT Analysis of the Town Hall	
<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <p>Architecturally valuable building  High Street location  Town Council presence  Community Hub  Acknowledged community asset  Huge support from Town Councillors  Public support for improvement  Free asset  Good disabled access  Staff dedicated and now experienced  Commercial partner gaining experience</p>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <p>High maintenance liability  Will always be remaining maintenance &amp; improvement works outstanding  Still under utilised  Not yet attractive to prestige business or as renowned wedding venue  Little client car parking  Only limited marketing so far  Limited market research  Operational financial deficit</p>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <p>Complete maintenance &amp; improvements to facilities  High standards of upkeep  Involve &amp; empower staff  Improve marketing &amp; promotion  Develop further with new commercial partner  Improve operating efficiency &amp; management  Continue to lower business &amp; safety risks  Attract grants  More exciting events  Further develop use of premises  Long term extension  Enhance public realm with new team  Provision of more space when Museum moves</p>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <p>Loss of income from Museum moving  Lack of external funding for development  Loss of experienced staff &amp; untrained new staff  Competition from other venues  Risk of unforeseen maintenance costs  Uncertain market  Uncertain viability of commercial partner  Antisocial behaviour  Delays in capital works</p>

Appendix 3

Summary Map of Risks to Congleton Town Council



KEY

1	Computer –Crash of IT system & recovery	18	Regeneration & Economy
2	Loss & damage to ancient records	19	Town Centre Development delays
3	Employment-equality & succession	20	Highways-maintenance of street furniture
4	Risk of obligation for closed churchyard	21	Paddling Pool-Vetting & Barring rules
5	Cost of taking on Bus Shelters	22	Planning-cost of responding to LDF
6	Committee Services	23	Public Conveniences-Cost & service provision
7	IT-Data Protection	24	Town Hall Building security
8	New Members/ loss of experience	25	Play areas-transfer service
9	New ethical framework	26	Entertainment at Town Hall
10	Financial Banking Services	27	Allotments-Associations safety standards
11	Financial investment spread	28	Allotments-Financial provision if further demand
12	Increased demand for grants	29	Retaining quality Town status
13	Local delegated functions-Grounds Maintenance		
14	Local delegated functions-Street cleaning		
15	War memorial		
16	Town Hall-Maintenance		
17	Town Hall-Commercial risk		

## CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL

### MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY- 2016-20

In accordance with good practice, the Medium Term Financial Strategy sets out the financial projections, considerations, pressures and issues for the Council over the next five years. Each year the forecast will be updated, taking into consideration any new issues emerging and the continual alignment of funding with corporate priorities. The forecast is based on the Corporate Strategy and policies of the Council, being particularly linked with the Investment Policy.

#### 1. The objectives of the Strategy are:-

- To enable the Council to allocate resources to achieve the Corporate Strategic Objectives
- To enable the Council to understand its key financial pressures and likely long term implications of its decisions
- To identify future financial impacts of both policy decisions and external factors so that risks can be managed
- To control precept rises and look for external funding, where appropriate.
- Support the delivery of value for money services
- To ensure good use is made of assets
- To maintain the General Reserve at a prudent level
- To provide for future financial demands
- To facilitate good financial management

The Medium Term financial position will be effected by decisions that may be taken in respect of the growth of Streetscape and Grounds Maintenance Services. It is assumed that a number of regeneration projects will require capital contributions which will be taken from the Capital Reserves, which will continue to be built up when the opportunities arise.

#### 2. The Risk Assessment Process identifies risks associated with:-

- Any inaccuracies in the forecast
- Difficulty in predicting costs for new services, particularly the regeneration of the Town and Cheshire East's contribution
- Low and uncertain investment income which is exacerbated by the current economic downturn

#### 3. The following guidelines are at the Core of the Strategy:-

- Maximise external funding opportunities in all areas
- Maximise the benefits of partnership working
- Review income from chargeable services

- Join with others where possible for procurement
- Maximise service efficiency to keep costs down
- Maximise letting income for the Town Hall
- Enhancing service provision of Streetscape
- Taking due cogence of the possibility of a cap on the precept
- Dealing with the continuing reduction of the Rate Support Grant

#### 4. Economic Position

##### Key projections

	2015	2016
Real GDP growth	2.6%	2.4%
Inflation (CPI)	0.3%	1.7%

##### Main economic projections

- The UK economy slowed a little in early 2015 but domestic demand growth remained relatively strong, helped by lower oil prices. Net exports continued to subtract from UK growth, reflecting sluggish growth in early 2015 in both the US and the Eurozone.
- UK GDP growth is expected to average around 2.6% in 2015, which could again be the fastest in the G7, before easing slightly to around 2.4% in 2016. Consumer spending and business investment will be the main drivers of UK growth in these years.
- Risks to growth are weighted somewhat to the downside in the short term due to international risks, including uncertainties relating to Greece and the recent turbulence in the Chinese stock market. But there are also upside possibilities in the medium term if the global environment improves and real wage and productivity growth rates accelerate in the UK.
- London and the South East continue to lead the recovery, with growth of around 3% in 2015, but all other UK regions should also register positive real growth of around 1.8% - 2.5% in 2015.
- Inflation seems likely to rise back towards its 2% target by the end of 2016, so the MPC may start to raise interest rates gradually from early next year. Businesses and households should plan for rates to be back to around 3-3.5% by the end of the decade.
- The July Budget confirmed plans for significant further fiscal tightening to eliminate the budget deficit before the end of this decade, but with a somewhat slower and smoother profile of public spending cuts and around

£7 billion per annum of net tax rises to be phased in by 2020. The impact of £12 billion of welfare cuts will be offset for some lower earners by the new National Living Wage.

Services sector remains key driver of growth and trade

- The services sector will remain the main engine of UK growth for both output and employment, with manufacturing and construction growth having slowed since last summer.
- Productivity growth has been relatively weak since the crisis in financial services and also remains subdued in the public sector. But it remains stronger in other non- financial private services sectors, where we estimate the long-term trend productivity growth rate at around 1.7% per annum.

## 5. Reserves

The Council is projected to have the following reserves on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016:

	£k
General Reserve	161
Capital Contingency Reserve	158
Elections	15
Devolved Services	7
Capital equipment	34
Toilets	38
Play Areas	6
Legal Fees	10
Public Realm	12
Cenotaph	10
Neighbourhood Plan	37
Website	8
Carnival	7.5

The projected reserves at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 do not meet the minimum recommended reserve which equates to 3 months net revenue expenditure, therefore for a period of two years £4,600 will be budgeted to add to reserves to meet the minimum requirement.

The refurbishment, improvement and continued maintenance of the Town Hall, in particular the repairs to the roofs, which had been in a poor state are now all complete and the capital borrowed from the former Congleton Borough Council and the Public Works Loan Board is now fully spent as a consequence of the completion of these works.

Any further improvements to the Town Hall will have to be funded from existing reserves and include outstanding upgrades to the heating system and internal toilets all need to be completed.

During the year, the fees and charges to hire the Town Hall have continued to be assessed against other similar establishments and the Town Hall hire charges have been found to be competitive. Part of our strategy to improve letting income will be to continue to target corporate customers and to continue to work in partnership with the new catering partner to make the Town Hall the wedding venue of choice in the locale

6. The following assumptions have been made in preparing this Forecast:-

- Fixed costs over which the Council have little control such as business rates etc.; will be inflated at national rates, probably ahead of inflation.
- Provisions such as contributions and grants will remain at fixed sums unless Council decides to change them.
- General inflation effects and anticipated increases in other costs have been provided for in the Inflation affect line.
- Staffing costs have been inflated at 1% in the light of employees receiving nil increases for 2 years and 1% in this financial year, 2015. Any re-grading required as a consequence of additional responsibilities arising from incremental increases has been treated separately.
- The most significant increases that could be included in the medium term forecast revolve around additional staff for Streetscape services, with the notion of improving service levels to the residents in and around the Town being the driving force as well as building in some resilience for the workforce due to an ageing staff. The increased costs were included in the 2015 budget to cover one apprentice and this has been carried over into 2016.
- The Council Tax Support Grant provided by Cheshire East would appear to have been removed in its entirety for 2016 and this will continue to put pressure on our cost base and precept needs as the Town Council will have to fully fund this cost.

A 5 year projection of year on year changes in costs and income, net expenditure levels and precept requirements, is set out in the table enclosed, based on the above assumptions.

It can be seen, that the increase in the Budget over the next four years is still relatively modest in line with the current economic climate and the concern about precept capping, but increases in the main are emanating from the removal of the Rate Support Grant.

Brian Hogan  
30.11.15



Medium Term Financial Forecast 2016 -2020					
		2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
		£k	£k	£k	£k
101	Investment income	-1.5	-1	-1	0
101	Office capacity	-9	1	1	1
101	HR & HS Support	0	0	1	0
101	Insurance	1	1	0	1
101	Legal & Professional Fees	1.5	0	0	0
101	Rate Support Grant	50	0	0	0
102	Miscellaneous Income	0	0	0	0
109	Loan Interest Payable	0	0	0	0
109	Office equipment/computers	0.5	2	1	1
109	Public Realm contribution	0	0	0	0
215	Floral Displays	0	0	2	0
221	Town Hall expenditure	1.5	0	1	0
221	Town Hall –Additional income	-3	0	0	2
241	Allotments	0	0	0	0
263	Public Toilets	2.5	0	2	0
280	Streetscape Services expenditure	19	6	6	5
280	Streetscape Services income (inflation)	-4	-4	-3	-3
300	CCTV	2	0	1	0
302	Community Development	4	2	1	1
303	Community Safety-PCSOs	0	2	0	0
321	Tourism	0	1	1	1
341	Youth Council-Projects	0	0	0	0
351	Fellowship House	4	0	1	1
	Net effect on previous Yr baseline precept	68.5	10	14	10
	% increase	4.9	0.8	1.1	0.8
Illustrates increase in budget versus budget year on year					

## BUSINESS RISK ASSESSMENT JANUARY 2016

Risk Assessment is an essential part of Business Planning and the attached table is intended as an aid to identifying and evaluating business risks. Each risk area is assessed under 4 risk categories: Administration/Legal; Financial; Environmental and Physical/Professional. Each category is scored High (3), Medium (2) and Low (1) for both **Likelihood of the risk occurring** and the **Severity of Impact** if it does. The two scores are then multiplied together to produce a risk score. Any risks of 4 or more will require some action to minimise the Risk (see Operating Procedure 10) which is included within the annual Business Plan. The major risks are then summarised in the Risk table contained in the Business Plan.

The following are examples of possible risks in each area, but are not an exhaustive list.

Risk Area	Admin/Legal	Financial	Environmental	Physical/Professional
Allotments	Lack of lease to tenants/ions Lack of tenancy rules	Demand for additional allotments Failure to collect income or review charges	Poor maintenance Bonfires, composting, water supply	Health & Safety, vandalism, equipment provision & maintenance
Burial Services	Duty to take on closed churchyards	Demand to take over closed churchyards Failure to review charges	Maintenance, grass cutting, dog fouling, vandalism	Safety of headstones, water supply Maintenance of buildings/equipment
Bus Shelters	Highway licence/insurance	Cost of maintenance & replacement Advertising income	Design & position	Maintenance & cleaning Inspection & safety Vandalism
Car Parks	Failure to meet statutory requirements, parking orders Failure to enforce	Failure to review charges, collect income. Ticket control Failure to recognise operating/maintenance costs	Cleaning & litter control. Noise and emissions Travellers	Maintenance & surface repairs Equipment Safety Staff training Vandalism & theft from cars
Committee Services	Lack of procedure for summons to meetings, meeting papers, recording minutes/action Defamation	Unidentified meeting costs	Not reporting environmental implications of recommendations	Security at meetings Risk of injury Public abuse
Crime Prevention	Lack of liaison with Police, and Community Safety Partnership	Inadequate budget provision Increased PCSO costs or withdrawal of PCSO's	Link between good environment and crime levels	Vandalism, security of equipment Maintenance of CCTV
Economic Development & Regeneration	Lack of/out of date Regeneration Strategy/Town Centre Plan/Neighbourhood Plan Lack of Planning powers (Sec 106, Area Action Plan)	Lack of finance for regeneration and Neighbourhood Plan Long term budget allocation Cost of Congleton Partnership	Clean & attractive environment Air Quality Mgt areas Traffic flow/congestion	Public Realm improvements Trading estate improvements Town Centre development Neighbourhood Plan

Employment	Lack of contracts, Job description, conditions of service, Procedures Failure to comply with employment law Streetscape TUPE contracts	Non identification of costs National pay awards	Poor working environment Increased risk of additional Streetscape staff	Lack of training Loss of key staff/inability to recruit Protection of staff
Entertainment & the Arts	Absence of key staff/training Insurance Performance licences Agreements re local events & partnerships	Costs of services & box office control Ticket sales & income Contacts with artists, film provider etc Specific insurances	Noise pollution Vandalism	Health & Safety. Specific Risk Assessment Security Control of public
Financial Management	Lack of asset register Failure to comply with VAT or Audit Regulations	Not identifying Sec 137 spend Lack of financial records, payment systems Poor budgeting Inadequate bank/investment arrangements	Ethical purchasing & investment	Security for Cash
Governance	Lack of outdated Standing Orders, policies, strategy or Business Plan Ethical/Code of Conduct Election Issues	Lack of outdated Financial Regulations, Standing Orders for Contracts Full insurance cover for all risks and activities	Lack of acceptance of environmental responsibilities	No back-up copies Document security Confidentiality
Grants	Condition imposed on recipients Giving added value to Council's objectives	Cost of provision & value for money Grant applications Maintaining consistency	Environmental benefits	Administration of Scheme
Grounds Maintenance	Service level agreements & standards Insurance & public liability	Operating budget v income from CEC	Composting of waste Vandalism	Organisation of manpower Maintenance/lease of equipment
Highways	Highway management orders Street naming Maintenance Contracts Approvals for signage Approvals for street furniture Public Realm renewal	Cost of services Liability claims Claims for damage from third parties Cost of Public Realm Strategy	Cleaning Pollution	Maintenance Weeds Vandalism of signs, furniture
IT & Data Protection	Date protection registration & confidentiality Freedom of information &	Cost of maintenance, replacement or a crash	Suitable operating environment	Security of equipment and data Emergency plans, back-up IT maintenance contract

	publication schemes Liability of Web Site contents Licences for Software			
Land Holdings, Parks & Open Spaces	Power to purchase/maintain Security of deeds/lease & Asset Register	Budget, operating cost v income from CEBC & events	Vandalism, fly tipping Maintenance and disposal of waste Toilet provision	Health & Safety Maintenance & operation of manpower Maintenance of equipment Unauthorised access
Leisure Services	Leases for premises Service level agreements Refurbishment of existing facility	Cost of service & minimal income from CEBC Cost of wet side Future maintenance & modernisation of building & facilities User Income	Public health standards	Safety of users Operation of facilities Maintenance of equipment
Management Systems	Compliance with legal duties and returns Proper delegation/authorisation of functions Action planning, decision implementation	Lack of Performance Management	Environmental duties or responsibilities Transition Town	Health & Safety Quality system administration
Markets	Lease/service level agreements Agreements with stall holders Insurance	Cost of service provision/lease v income from stallholders & CEBC Review of charges Declining markets nationally	Hygiene standards & litter	Operation & maintenance Safety and public liability Occupation of vacant stalls Encroachment of stall holders Security of equipment Lack of expertise Moving market to new temporary location
Newsletter	Quality of publication Defamation Obligation for non political content	Cost of production & delivery	Failure to deliver Litter	Non production of newsletter Delivery
Paddling Pool	Lease & services contracts Vetting & Barring & Discrimination legislation	Budget Provision Implications of not charging Possible trade concessions Level of supervision	Pollution Vandalism	Health & Safety Maintenance & cleanliness Security Staff training
Play Areas	Lease, legal agreement with CEBC Maintenance of records	Add to Asset Register Cost of services as a consequence of transferring to CTC from CEBC Insurance	Maintenance of standards & vandalism Nuisances from misuse	Safety inspection & maintenance Opening & closing

Public Health/Nuisance	Legal administration of dealing with nuisance	Cost of delivery services	Matters prejudice to health	Cleaning drains/ditches etc Public Safety
Planning	Agreement with CEBC & statutory deadlines Maintenance of records/register Statutory consultee only Compliance with policies & guidelines	Cost of statutory Consultee & committee Cost of minor planning functions/income from applicants/CEBC	Environmental consideration of planning	Security of records Crime reduction consideration Operation of service Professional advice
Property, Treasures & Records	Legal liability as a result of asset ownership	Cost of maintaining & displaying	Controlled environment	Security & public access Loss or damage
Public Lighting	Contracts with service providers Asset maintenance	Operating & maintenance costs Cost of liability Insurance	Community safety Standards of lighting	Inspection & maintenance Dealing with complaints
Public Toilets	Public health legislation Public liability & asset registers	Operating costs with no income from CEBC Long term maintenance, refurbishment and operating of buildings Closure of Capitol Walk	Maintaining standards Vandalism	Contracts with cleaners Organisation of manpower & equipment Opening & supervision, security Water supply
Public Transport	Risks from community transport schemes/contract with providers Taxi concessions, Bus, train services	Full cost of services & insurance Misuse of concessions	Cycle paths/promotions Coordination of public transport	Control of tokens/vouchers etc Safety risks assessment
Street Cleaning	Legal standards & service levels Enforcement provisions	Operating budget v income from CEBC Insurance cover Overhead costs	Complaints re cleanliness Fly tipping/fly posters	Organisation of manpower Maintenance of equipment
Town Hall	Lack of leases, licences & service agreement Inadequate management	Failure to collect or maximise income Inadequate budget, financial Contracts Loss of Commercial Partner	Noise, Pollution, Flooding	Security, health & safety, building condition, particularly the roof, stock control
Tourism	Agreement with CEBC Partnership Arrangements	Grant applications Adequate budget provision		
War Memorials	Asset register Public liability & insurance	Cost of maintenance and refurbishment	Keeping tidy Vandalism/graffiti	Inspection and maintenance

# BUSINESS RISK ASSESSMENT TABLES

Risk Area	Administration/Legal		Financial		Environmental		Physical/Professional		Observations	Actions for Business Plan
	Likelihood	Impact	Likelihood	Impact	Likelihood	Impact	Likelihood	Impact		
Allotments	L	M 2	M	M 4	L	L 1	M	M 4	Possible demand for more allotments, statutory duty. Lack of H&S by Association. Loss of Vale Allotments	Assess demand & costs Press for standards
Burial Services	L	H 3	M	H 3	L	L 1	M	M 2	Obligation for Closed Churchyard passed to CTC	Included in Streetscape operations
Bus Shelters	L	L 1	M	H 6	L	M 2	M	M 2	Possible cost of transferred service	Evaluate cost & negotiate funding
Car Parks	L	L 1	L	L 1	L	L 1	L	L 1	Changes to car park charges	Effect on business activity in Town
Committee Services	L	H 3	L	L 1	M	L 2	H	H 3	-----	-----
Crime Prevention	L	M 3	L	M 2	L	M 2	M	M 4	New Town Hall security procedure	Review Town Hall security procedure
Economic Development & Regeneration	M	M 4	M	H 6	L	H 3	M	M 4	Lack of planning powers & finance will hinder regeneration.  Town Centre redevelopment and public realm strategy delays	Finalise Neighbourhood Plan. See 106 Community & CIL Infrastructure Levy. Encourage developers in the right areas
Employment	L	H 3	L	L 1	L	L 1	L	H 3	New Equality Act	Amend Personal procedure Succession Planning
Entertainment & the Arts	L	L 1	L	M 2	L	M 2	H	H 3	-----	Review security & safety at Town Hall events
Financial Management	L	L 1	M	H 6	L	M 2	L	L 1	Investment income/bank service Need to keep Precept	Review investment & tender banking. Careful evaluation of

Governance	L	H	M	H	L	M	M	M	4	increases & cost of transferred services	service costs
		3								Possible new ethical framework and removal of Code of Conduct	Continue to train new council members in appropriate skills Build up Partnership
										Encourage Neighbourhood Plan to be adopted by CEBC and approved by Planning Inspector	
Grants	L	L	M	M	L	L	L	L	1	Possible increased costs of grants	Monitor Grant Scheme
Grounds Maintenance	L	H	M	H	L	M	M	M	4	Risks from taking on grounds maintenance	Monitor costs
Highways	L	M	M	L	L	M	M	M	4	Some risk from non maintenance of street furniture	-----
IT & Data Protection	M	M	L	M	L	L	M	M	4	Data protection implication	Review practices
Land Holdings, Parks & Open Spaces	L	L	L	M	L	L	L	L	1	-----	Monitor situation at Congleton park
Leisure Services	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	1	-----	-----
Management Systems	M	L	L	L	L	M	M	M	4	Maintenance of quality system Lack of progress with Wellbeing-possible general power of competence Renewal of Quality Town Council 2016	Review how will be maintained. Need to progress
Markets	M	H	H	H	M	L	M	H	6	Higher risk service when transferred to temporary location	Review costs, benefits of transfer
Newsletter	L	M	L	L	L	L	L	L	1	-----	-----
Paddling Pool	M	M	L	M	M	L	L	M	2	Risk of non compliance with vetting & barring	Monitor procedure adherence
Play Areas	M	M	M	H	M	M	M	M		Risk if transferred to	Proper evaluation

			4		6			4			4	Council.	
Public Health/Nuisance	L	L	1	L	1	L	L	1	L	M	2	-----	
Planning	L	L	1	M	4	L	M	2	L	M	2	Capacity to respond to LDF	
Property, Treasures & Records	L	M	2	L	2	M	M	4	M	M	4	Poor environment. & security for ancient records	Need to speed through records to Museum
Public Lighting	L	L	1	L	1	L	L	1	L	L	1		
Public Toilets	M	H	6	M	6	M	M	4	M	M	4	Risks from additional cost And public dissatisfaction with service	Evaluate & make adequate provision
Public Transport	L	M	2	L	2	M	M	2	L	M	2		
Street Cleaning	L	H	3	M	6	M	M	4	M	H	6	Risk from providing services	Evaluate & make provision
Town Hall	L	M	2	M	4	L	H	3	L	H	3	Viability of Commercial partner	Review contracts and promote events
Tourism	L	L	1	L	1	L							
War Memorials	L	M	2	L	3	H	M	2	L	M	2	Developing refurbishment programme for Cenotaph & Community Garden	Inspect structure