



Congleton Town Council

Historic market town

Town Clerk: **BRIAN HOGAN**



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

8th February, 2013

Dear Councillor,

Finance and Policy Committee Meeting – Thursday 14th February 2013

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 14th February 2013 commencing at 7.45pm**

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.

Please note that there will be a meeting of the Planning Committee on the same evening commencing at 7.00 pm

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 3rd January 2013
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.



Congleton
beartown
where friends are made

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

Tel: 01260 270350 Fax: 01260 280357

Email: info@congletontowncouncil.co.uk www.congleton-tc.gov.uk



5. Grant Approvals and Commitments 2012/13 (enclosed)
To receive a statement showing the current position.
6. New Applications for Financial Assistance (enclosed)
 - i) **GR 23/1213 Sol Theatre School**
 - ii) **GR 24/1213 Team Congleton**
7. New Grant Activities Monitoring Forms (enclosed)
 - i) **GR9/1213 Congleton Film Festival**
8. Management Accounts for April-Dec 2012 (enclosed)
To consider the Management Accounts to Dec 2012.
9. Bad Debts (enclosed)
To receive and consider correspondence from Foulds Solicitors Ltd concerning an outstanding payment for hire of the Town Hall
10. Recommendations from other Committees
To consider a recommendation from Community, Environment and Service Committee to provide funding for a buffet for Cheshire Community Foundation presentation to be held in the Town hall
11. Corporate Business Plan and Business Risk Assessment (enclosed)
To receive and consider the Corporate Business Plan for 2013-14 including SWOT analysis and risk assessment review
12. Medium Term Financial Strategy (enclosed)
To receive and consider the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2013-17

To: Members of the Finance and Policy Committee (and other Members of the Council for information); Press (3), Burgesses (5)

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 3rd January 2013

PRESENT

Councillors

Mrs J D Parry (Vice Chairman)
G Baxendale
L D Barker
P Bates
G P Hayes
R I Brightwell
Mrs S A Holland (Town Mayor)
D A Parker
D Murphy
N T Price
G S Williams

Appointed Members E A Clarke

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G.R. Edwards and G.Brittain.

2. MINUTES

FAP/46/1213 RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 29th November 2012 be agreed and signed by the Vice Chairman.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs G. Baxendale and D. Brown declared a non-pecuniary interest in all matters related to Cheshire East Council.

Cllr D. Brown refrained from voting on all matters.

Cllrs P.Bates and D.Murphy declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 7.

Cllr G.Williams declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 8.

Cllr G Hayes declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 10.

4. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

There are no outstanding actions.

5. GRANT APPROVALS AND COMMITMENTS 2012/2013

A summary of grant approvals and commitments was considered by the committee and it was noted that £18,700 is available for grants.

FAP/47/1213 RESOLVED: That the grant summary be received.

6. NEW APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

FAP/48/1213 RESOLVED That:

1. GR.22/1213 Congleton Performance Arts Centre (C.P.A.C) that the application for a grant be refused.

7. DEFERRED GRANT APPLICATION GR 17 12/13 CONGLETON JAZZ & BLUES FESTIVAL

FAP/49/1213 RESOLVED that a grant of £500 be awarded to Congleton Jazz & Blues Festival.

8. NEW GRANT ACTIVITIES MONITORING FORMS

A grant activities monitoring form submitted by Congleton Harriers was considered.

FAP/50/1213 RESOLVED that the monitoring form be received and noted.

9. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS FOR APRIL - NOV 2012

FAP/51/1213 RESOLVED: That the Management Accounts for November 2012 be received.

10. CIVIC REGALIA

A report produced by the Town Clerk on Town Council Civic Regalia was discussed by the Committee.

FAP/52/1213 RESOLVED that:-

1. The Deputy Mayor can make use of the Working Chain when it is available.
2. To purchase a new pendant for the Deputy Mayor to go with the Working Chain.
3. To purchase a pendant for the Mayor's Consort and Deputy Mayor's Consort.

J.D Parry
Vice Chairman

Congleton Town Grant Commitments										
Specific Budgets										
Date Grant Approved	To	For	Section	Minute Reference	EMR b/fwd	Budget	Approved 12/13	Paid £	Outstanding £	Date Paid
	Xmas lights	xmas lights	S144		2,220.00				2,220.00	
	St Peter's Church	Churchyard Maintenance	S215	FAP746/1112	850.00			650.00	200.00	25/10/2012
	Xmas lights	xmas lights	S144		1,852.70				1,852.70	
	Carnival Committee	Carnival Committee	S144		3,750.00	0.00		3,137.00	613.00	
	Congleton Museum	Notional rent				4,500.00	4,500.00	4,500.00	0.00	
	Community Projects	Rent/Project support				16,000.00	16,000.00	16,000.00	0.00	
	Congleton Partnership	Rent				1,533.00	1,533.00	1,533.00	0.00	
	Citizens Advice Bureau	annual grant				15,000.00	15,000.00	15,000.00	0.00	16/04/2012
	Christmas Lights	Christmas Lights				9,000.00	9,000.00	7,789.56	1,210.44	15/11/2012, 09/01/13
	Carnival Committee	Bi-annual Congleton Carnival	S144			3,750.00	3,750.00	3,553.00	197.00	
	Royal British Legion	Remembrance Day Parade				650.00	650.00	713.50	-63.50	09/11/2012
	St Peter's Church	Churchyard Maintenance	S215	FAP104/1213 FAP26/1213 FAP16/1213		3,000.00	1,950.00	1,950.00	0.00	10/07/2012 25/10/12
	St Peter's Church	Church clock maintenance	PCA1957 s2	FAP16/1213		230.00	236.40	236.40	0.00	01/09/12
Totals					8,672.70	53,663.00	52,619.40	55,062.46	6,229.64	
	Ear marked reserve b/fwd									
	Budget 2012/13				£8,673					
	Total approved to date				£53,663					
	Total awaiting application				£51,292					
					£1,044					



Congleton Town Council

Application for Financial Assistance



Part 1: Applicant(s) and Project Details

Application Reference Number (office use only)	GR23 12/13.	
1.1	Applicant(s):	Colin Barlow
1.2	Representing:	SOL Theatre School
1.3	Email Address:	
1.4	Tel No.	
1.5	Project Title:	SOL Theatre Summer School
1.6	Project Objectives:	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Statement of Intent</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SOL Theatre School's intention is to train young people in performing and technical skills, relating to the production of a staged theatrical performance. As a direct result of this, young people will gain confidence, social skills, self reliance, communication skills and a sense of accomplishment which they can take forward in to their everyday lives. SOL Theatre School will run a Summer School each year during the first two weeks of August, giving the young people of the area a focus and purpose other than being 'out on the streets' or left alone at home whilst parents go to work. It is also the intention of SOL Theatre School to foster an interest in live performance thereby increasing the cultural life of the area. The SOL Theatre School Summer School is open to all people between the age of 7 and 18 regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, physical/mental disability or offending background.
1.7	Brief Project Description:	The two weeks training and rehearsals from the 5 th to the 16 th August 2013 culminating in two public performances of the world premier, of a musical written especially for SOL, 'Samarkand' (<i>The girl with the world in her eyes</i>) at the Daneside Theatre on the evenings of the 16 th and 17 th August 2013
1.8	Details accounts/budgets	Please see attached expected expenditure/income sheet

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Part 2: Cost Details / Resources / Timescale

2.1	Total Cost of Project:	£13,750 estimated (see show budget sheet attached)
2.2	Total contribution sought:	£1,000
2.3	What will the money be spent on?	We have estimated that we will spend on average £25 per child for costumes for the show. We are expecting up to 40 children to take part in this years summer school.
2.4	Any ongoing costs:	Advertising and promotions
2.5	Details of confirmed match funding include source <i>Cash:</i> <i>In kind:</i>	We have applied to a number of local organisations, like last year, but have not had any confirmed cash promised yet. We estimate, based on present costing, that the professional team taking part in this exercise and giving their time voluntary would be in the region of £9,000.
2.6	Resources needed:	Rehearsal and performing stage venue, rehearsal materials – music, scores and orchestral arrangements. Sound, lighting, stage set and props. Voluntary people to protect the children under our Child Protection Policy. A large number of people to make costumes, staging, props and manage the theatre.
2.7	Estimated timescale of project from start to finish:	Two weeks during the children’s summer holiday starting on the 5 th August 2013 from 9.00am to 5.00pm each week day.

Part 3: Potential Benefits / Outputs

3.1	What are the potential benefits/outputs to residents of Congleton	As stated in our constitution the children will benefit from being part of a happy and enjoyable team that we hope the parents will appreciate. Certainly the children do. The performance by the children on the two show evenings will enhance the cultural being of the town and make Congleton proud of the young people who take part. Also the 40 + people who give their time and commitment to such a good cause totally on a voluntary basis.
3.2	Are there similar services/projects provided in the area	Not to our knowledge.

Part 4: Evaluation

4.1	<i>How will the project be evaluated?</i>	SOL Theatre School members will evaluate each child's contribution to the project and we present each one with a certificate that they may use for future requirements. We have past members taking part in "Billy Elliot" in Manchester and appearing on the television in the John Bishop show plus others. Also that the children tell their parents to arrange their summer holidays around SOL so that they can take part.
4.2	<i>Who will carry out the evaluation?</i>	We invite a member from the NODA (National Operatic & Dramatic Association), which we are a member, to assess the performance. Also local dignitaries are invited who voice the opinion in many ways including commenting in the local paper, The Chronicle.

Signature:



24th January 2013

Date:



Summer School 5th – 16th August 2013
Budget Sheet

Expected Expenditure

Theatre Hire	£3,150.00
Costume	£1500.00
Props and Set Dressing	£750.00
Set	£2500.00
Technical Equipment Hire	£500.00
Special Effects	£500.00
T Shirts for Presentations	£1,000.00
Expenses <i>(Travel, mileage, postage, presentations, incurred expenses relating to staging)</i>	£1,000.00
Band	£1,000.00
Advertising and Printing <i>(banners, tickets, programmes, adverts, newspaper articles)</i>	£1,500.00
Friday evening food for cast	£200.00
Bank Charges	£150.00
Total	<u>£13,750.00</u>

Anticipated Income

30 Participants Paying £275.00 Each	£8,250.00
6 Participants negotiated prices average £200.00 each	£1,200.00
Ticket Sales Approx 175 each for two Performances at Average £7	£2,450.00
Total	<u>£11,900.00</u>
Expenditure / income	-£1850.00

Jackie Potts

From:
Sent: 28 January 2013 17:28
To: Jackie Potts
Subject: RE: Application for Financial Assistance - SOL Theatre School



Hi Jackie

Yes, we assess the needs of each family and where necessary adjust the fee according to each application. This is done privately so that it is not common knowledge within the group. The money comes from the grants we receive from the various organizations and if necessary our own personal funds. Last year we assisted 6 families. My goal is that we can build up a bursary fund that will allow us to offer free places for the children of deprived backgrounds.

Regards Colin

-----Original Message-----

From: Jackie Potts
Date: 28/01/2013 15:04:36
To: [Redacted]
Subject: RE: Application for Financial Assistance - SOL Theatre School

Hi Colin

Thank you for your grant application form. It will go to the next F&P meeting which is on 14th February. Just a quick question to pre-empt councillors' questions that were asked last time – do you have any provision for deprived children i.e. that can't afford £275 or £200?

Kind regards

Jackie



GR 24/1213

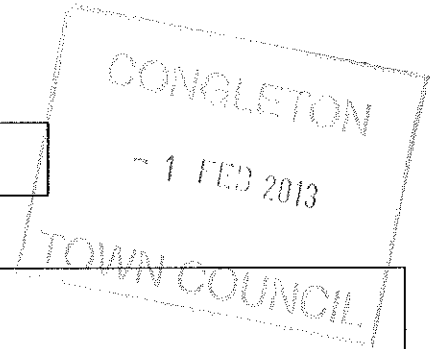


Congleton Town Council Application for Financial Assistance



Part 1: Applicant(s) and Project Details

Application Reference Number (office use only)	
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1.1	Applicant(s):	John Doe
1.2	Representing:	Team Congleton
1.3	Email Address:	
1.4	Tel No.	
1.5	Project Title:	Active Congleton
1.6	Project Objectives:	To promote a greater number of people in Congleton from all age groups to become active
1.7	Brief Project Description:	<p>Help organisations involved in sport and physical activity to work together effectively, providing opportunities for networking, and sharing resources</p> <p>Provide a sports and activities hub with the Active Congleton web site to be produced in partnership with Eaton Bank Academy</p> <p>Use our resources as a catalyst for new and lasting participation in sport and physical activity and act as a conduit and centre of expertise by promoting sporting and activity providers in Congleton via the "Active Congleton" web site.</p> <p>Offer advice, expertise, and promote the general awareness of the benefits of active participation to increase participation levels in sport to improve health and well being</p> <p>Initial focus in 2013 is to encourage events in Congleton which provide low risk, low cost, low embarrassment entry into activities</p> <p>To promote Team Congleton and its aims and objectives, an "It's a Knock Out" competition will be organised on the 9th June at Congleton Park at a cost of circa £k7</p>

		Awards and bursaries will be continued in 2013 to recognise and encourage promising young sports people and athletes in Congleton
1.8	<i>Details accounts/budgets</i>	2012 accounts attached

Part 2: Cost Details / Resources / Timescale

2.1	<i>Total Cost of Project:</i>	£12,000
2.2	<i>Total contribution sought:</i>	£2,500
2.3	<i>What will the money be spent on?</i>	Constructing a web site and promoting involvement in physical activity across a wide spectrum of people in Congleton
2.4	<i>Any ongoing costs:</i>	
2.5	<i>Details of confirmed match funding include source</i> Cash: In kind:	Seeking funding from suitable grant awarding bodies Volunteers time
2.6	<i>Resources needed:</i>	Finance and volunteers time
2.7	<i>Estimated timescale of project from start to finish:</i>	12 months

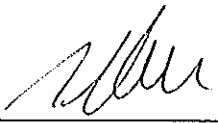
Part 3: Potential Benefits / Outputs

3.1	<i>What are the potential benefits/outputs to residents of Congleton</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater number of residents becoming involved in physical activity • Increased health and well being • Helping to tackle obesity • Lowering the cost to the Health and Social Services as a greater number of residents become fitter and more active
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3.2	<i>Are there similar services/projects provided in the area</i>	No
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Part 4: Evaluation/Publicity

4.1	<i>How will the project be evaluated and who will carry out the evaluation?</i>	Team Congleton will evaluate the project based on the increase in participation in physical activity levels in the Town which will be monitored with the assistance of the various groups and organisations providing such activities in Congleton
4.2	<i>Describe how you will promote the Town Council in your project</i>	The Town Council will be mentioned as a funding provider on all literature and material used by Team Congleton including the website

Signature: 

Date: 28 Jan 2013



ER 9 1213
Town Council Grant

Activities Monitoring Form



CONGLETON
- 7 FEB 2013
TOWN COUNCIL

1. Contact Details	
Organisation name:	Congleton Film Festival
Address:	

2. Grant Information			
Grant Reference Number:			
Total project cost:	£897.56		

Receipts Attached? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Receipt Amount:	£249.90
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Please list receipts below:

Filmbank - £166.80

Whitehursts Agricultural And Building Supplies – £53.40

Linings & Hoses Limited - £8.06

Morreys - £8.53

Bellboy Print - £8.00

Wickes - £5.11

3. Project Information			
When did the project commence?		28.09.12 – 30.09.12	

Did you make a profit from the project? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

If yes, how will this be used?

Please explain how the grant money was used:

The grant money was used to pay for the license to screen 'The Goonies' and also to buy the materials needed to build the screen. Furthermore it was used to pay for posters to be printed.

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

The project is the organisation therefore without one there would not be the other. The project gave local people a platform to screen films that they had made. As part of the festival a children's animation workshop took place which gave children the chance to learn about animation and creative film making. The films they made were then put on YouTube and can be seen at <http://www.youtube.com/user/CongletonFilmFest>

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)
On the website, on programme leaflets and on the screen.

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?

I have had a great experience of using the Town Council Grant Scheme, there are no improvements that I can think of.

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)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Management Accounts December 2012

See attached Income and Expenditure sheet. These figures are for 9 months so would be 75% of the annual budget if the expenditure was regular monthly. Significant variances are explained as follows:

Finance and Policy

Corporate Management

- Council agreed to fund the TIC reduction in hours as the TIC act as the Town Council's reception – there is no budget included for this in 2012/13.
- Subscriptions and Publications include annual charges to SLCC and ChALC.
- Insurance is a full year cost.
- Audit Fees – External are accrued at the end of the year.
- Legal and Professional Fees includes a job evaluation consultant.
- HR & H&S Support – this is outsourced to Wirehouse (previously a consultant did this role) but no budget was set for 2012/13.
- Double taxation income has been received from Cheshire East which was not budgeted for.
- Interest receivable on the direct reserve account holding the council's reserves is greater than budgeted for.

Civic

- The Mayor and Deputy Mayor have received their annual allowance.
- The budget for Civic regalia is only small at £100 but past mayor's badges were purchased at a minimum quantity of 5 at a cost of £258 each. This has resulted in a large overspend on this budget.

Grants

- Out of the initial grants budget of £77,000 a considerable amount has already been allocated e.g. Citizens' Advice Bureau; CCP; Christmas Lights. £18,200 was available at 31/12/12 for new grant applications coming in throughout the year to 31/03/13.

Community, Environment and Services

- The paddling pool has now closed and has come in under budget.
- Nothing has been spent on devolved services as the discussions with Cheshire East are still ongoing – but any devolution will not take place before 31/03/13.
- Shopmobility has received the full budget allocation as per their agreement.
- The full year cost of the PCSOs has been paid.

Town Hall

- A detailed trading account is provided to the Town Hall committee – December bookings were in line with the budget and expenditure slightly over budget.

Personnel

- The overall budget includes increased staffing costs for potentially taking on devolved services in October 2012 which has not occurred. For the management accounts these figures have not been included.

Congleton Town Council - Management Accounts - Dec 2012

	Current Month Actual	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	% of Budget	
Finance and Policy						
101	Corporate Management					
	Staff Costs (re-allocated)	8,992	77,985	118,606	40,621	66%
	Travel	0	836	1,200	364	70%
	Training / Conferences	0	1,309	2,600	1,291	50%
	Rent Payable	1,163	10,463	13,950	3,487	75%
	Reception - TIC	0	2,499	0	-2,499	
	Miscellaneous Office Costs	0	150	270	120	56%
	Telephone/Fax/Internet	288	1,342	1,400	58	96%
	Postage	217	1,968	3,360	1,392	59%
	Stationery & Printing	184	1,128	1,800	672	63%
	Subscriptions & Publications	0	1,611	1,890	279	85%
	Insurance	0	3,584	3,800	216	94%
	Computer/IT Costs	470	2,600	3,045	445	85%
	Photocopy Charges	0	2,022	3,465	1,443	58%
	Recruitment Advertising	0	112	500	388	22%
	Other Advertising	0	146	200	54	73%
	Equipment Replacement\Tools	0	0	100	100	0%
	Bank Charges	0	12	200	188	6%
	Audit Fees - External	0	0	4,000	4,000	0%
	Audit Fees - Internal	0	400	1,200	800	33%
	Accountancy Support	0	1,152	3,675	2,523	31%
	Legal & Professional fees	0	1,525	1,500	-25	102%
	HR & HS support	213	2,007	0	-2,007	
	Central Overheads reallocated	-1,773	-20,707	-29,147	-8,440	71%
	Corporate Management:-Expenditure	9,754	92,144	137,614	45,470	67%
	CEC Double Taxation	0	-18,751	0	18,751	0%
	Interest Receivable	-4	5,325	-3,000	-8,325	-178%
	Corporate Management :- Income	-4	-13,426	-3,000	10,426	448%
	Net Expenditure over Income	9,750	78,718	134,614	55,896	58%
102	Democratic Rep'n & Mgmt/Civic					
	Staff Costs (re-allocated)	1,702	14,927	21,569	6,642	69%
	Training / Conferences	35	496	3,000	2,504	17%
	Stationery & Printing	0	39	250	211	16%
	Marketing/Promotions	0	447	1,500	1,053	30%
	Council Newsletter	368	2,420	5,178	2,758	47%
	Council Website	0	1,730	2,000	270	87%
	Members Expenses	0	29	500	471	0%
	Mayor's Allowance	0	2,600	2,600	0	100%
	Deputy Mayor's Allowance	0	260	260	0	100%
	Civic Expenses	280	4,134	4,500	366	92%
	Civic Regalia	0	1,292	100	-1,192	1292%
	Hall & Room Hire	92	3,169	7,000	3,831	45%
	Civic Artefacts and Treasures	0	148	1,000	852	15%
	Central Overheads reallocated	210	2,452	3,451	999	71%
	Democratic Rep'n & Mgmt/Civic:-Expenditure	2,687	34,143	52,908	18,765	65%
107	Grants		58,813	77,013	18,200	76%
F&P Income - Expenditure Totals						
		12,437	171,674	264,535	92,861	65%

Community, Environment & Services

201	Paddling Pool	108	20,165	24,811	4,646	81%
211	Congleton Park	0	0	5,000	5,000	
215	Floral Displays	242	11,956	15,000	3,044	80%
241	Allotments	30	250	500	250	50%
251	Handyman service	4,014	32,285	68,851	36,566	47%
262	Street furniture	0	0	250	250	0%
264	Shopmobility	0	5,000	5,000	0	100%
280	Devolved Services	0	0	27,250	27,250	0%
301	Congleton Partnership	2,643	23,787	31,716	7,929	75%
302	Community Development	2,136	20,391	27,846	7,455	73%
303	Police Community Support Officers	0	47,200	47,200	0	100%
305	Christmas Fayre/lights	1,019	3,368	4,000	632	84%
321	Tourism	0	1,508	4,000	2,492	38%
341	Youth and Young People	45	1,106	2,000	894	55%
351	Fellowship House	-626	455	0	-455	0

9,611	167,471	263,424	95,953	64%
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Town Hall

221	Town Hall - Expenditure	116,882	160,643	43,961	73%
	Town Hall - Income	69,523	110,400	40,877	63%

0	47,159	50,243	84,838	94%
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Total Net Expenditure

386,304	578,202	273,652	67%
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Personnel

401	Staff Costs - Reallocated	23,025	206,648	300,765	94,117	69%
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Reserves as at 31/12/12

General Reserve	161,021
Capital Vehicle Fund	20,000
Capital Contingency Fund	144,673
EMR Elections	10,000
EMR Crime Prevention/Traffic calmin	3,779
EMR Ancient Treasures	3,000
EMR Training	3,000
EMR Devolved Services	30,000
EMR Loan Repayments	2,425
EMR Public Toilets	14,000
EMR Play Areas	6,000
EMR Public Realm	7,671
EMR Legal Fees	10,000

415,569

FOULDS SOLICITORS LIMITED

Foulds Solicitors Limited
1 Sovereign Park
Cleveland Way
Hemel Hempstead
Hertfordshire
HP2 7DA

Phone: 01442 848508
Fax: 01442 230064
E-Mail: info@foulds.uk.com
February 1, 2013

Your Ref:

Our Ref:

Mrs J Potts
Congleton Town Council
Town Hall
High Street
CONGLETON
CW12 1BN

" : P.R.

4 FEB 2013

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL

Our Ref: CONGL.14868.848.sherif
Your Ref: TC9656 - 9720

Dear Mrs Potts,

- Debt of £918.00

The debtor has not paid the Judgment in this case and we must therefore decide on the best way to enforce the Judgment through the court. To follow are details setting out the possible methods of enforcement of the Judgment:

1. Bailiffs

You can apply to the court for a High Court Enforcement Officer (commonly known as a bailiff) to attend the Defendant's property to try and obtain payment. If payment is not forthcoming the Defendant's goods (assuming there are goods of any value present) are then sold by way of public auction to pay off the debt. This is the best method to use if you believe there may be goods of value at the Defendant's property. The benefit of this option is that it is relatively quick to be implemented and the legal costs involved are comparatively inexpensive. The fee payable to instruct the bailiff is £60.00. However if the Defendant has insufficient goods and this method of enforcement fails, you are additionally liable to pay the High Court enforcement Office a further fee of £72.00. If you would like to instruct the bailiff please send us a cheque payable to 'HMCTS' for £60.00 quoting reference '14868.848/SHERIFF' on the reverse.

Please note that if the judgment is set aside or you negotiate directly with the debtor you will be liable to pay the bailiff's charges for his time and disbursements which will depend on the work he has carried out and are not limited to the said £72.00. It is therefore very important that you do not enter into any contact at all with the debtor after you use this method of enforcement.

2. Attachment of Earnings

If you believe the Defendant may be in paid employment (PAYE), we can apply to the court for an amount to be deducted on a regular basis from their wages. The only risk is that there is a low disposal wages limit below which the court will not allow any deductions to be made. The court allows certain essential outgoings to be deducted from the Defendant's wages. If their disposable income is then below this protected limit no deductions will be allowed for the debt. Even if deductions are made from income above the limit, it can take some time to discharge a debt of this size. The court fee payable is £100.00 (which is recoverable if the application is successful). If you would like to issue an attachment of earnings application please send us a cheque payable to 'HMCTS' for £100.00 quoting reference '14868.848/AE' on the reverse. /cont

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E-Mail: info@foulds.uk.com

Your Ref:

Our Ref:

.../P2 (cont)

3. Charging Order

An application for a charging order is an application to register the judgment as a charge on the registered title of the defendant's property at H.M. Land Registry. Once registered the charge is similar to a charge imposed on a person's title by a mortgage company. It is not an order that the Defendant's property be sold but simply an order charging the property with the debt. The charge remains registered and you would be notified of any intended sale of the property and you can then seek payment of the debt from the proceeds (subject to any earlier registered charges being paid off first and there being sufficient equity left in the property to pay this debt). The first step is to carry out a search at the Land Registry to see if the Defendant owns their property. The fee payable to the Land Registry for this search is £4.00 and this firm's charges for carrying out the search are £25.00 plus VAT. If the defendant does own the property then an application for a charging order can be made. The Court fees and the Land Registry fees payable to apply for such a charging order are a total of £150.00. This firm's charges are £350.00 plus VAT. The reason for these higher charges is that it is necessary for us to actually attend a court hearing on your behalf. The total cost of this method of enforcement is therefore £570.00. The court will only order the Defendant to pay a contribution towards all of these fees and costs, normally being a contribution of £264.00. You should also be aware that once you have obtained the charging order you do not have to wait for the eventual sale of the property by the Defendant but you can then make a separate application for the sale of the property to pay off the debt. Whether the court would actually grant a sale depends very much on each case and is at the discretion of the court. We can advise further depending on the facts of each case. Obviously the legal cost of any application for sale would be in addition to the costs quoted above but can be recovered if an order for sale is made.

If you would like to apply for a charging order please send us a cheque payable to 'Foulds' for £30.00, writing the defendant's name and 'Charging Order' on the reverse.

4. Financial Questioning of the Defendant

If you are unsure what assets the Defendant has or what their income and expenses are, we can apply to the court to order the Defendant to attend a hearing at which they are questioned on oath by a member of the court staff about their finances. We are then sent this information and can use it to decide on the best way of enforcing the judgment. This is therefore not a means in itself of enforcing payment but rather of finding information which then lets us decide

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/cont

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Our Ref:

../P3(cont)

on the best method of actual enforcement to use.(i.e whether to use methods 1,2 or 3 above). The court fee payable for this is £50.00. There is also the additional cost of a private agent to personally serve the papers on the Defendant. This additional cost is £118.44. In some cases it proves necessary for a second set of papers to be served (if the Defendant fails to attend court at the first hearing) which would incur a further like fee of £118.44. Finally, this firm's charges for making this application are £150.00 plus VAT. The total costs of this method of enforcement are therefore £348.44 (£466.88 if a second set of papers need to be served). As these costs are not inconsiderable and only the court fee is recoverable we do not recommend this as a first option. We only recommend this if other options have failed and we then wish to try to find out more about the Defendant's financial circumstances.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,



Foulds Solicitors

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL

Corporate Business Plan 2013 - 2014

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 1st 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 in May 2015.

This, the eighth 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 the Local Strategic Partnership as they develop policies for the area. The Council 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 service devolution will continue to be a key priority. The Town Council has developed a protocol to steer its direction in this respect. 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. The lack of consistent direction and slowness to commit to action by Cheshire East Council is becoming a growing frustration to the Town. Negotiations are still underway over the devolution or transfer of local services to the Town Council, and this will be the major task and decision for the coming year. It also presents a further risk area for the town Council, particularly in today's challenging economic climate

VISION

A flagship town, vibrant, enterprising and sustainable, which remains as attractive to visitors, investors and workers, as it is to live in

MISSION

To deliver the strong governance and community leadership required to preserve and enhance the quality of life for Congleton residents.

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 promote Congleton and the Northern Link Road

Inward facing:

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 28,000 (49% males, 51% females) and an electorate of 21,717. There are 11,902 households.

The age structure of the Town is broadly similar to the national profile. The population was forecasted to increase by some 4% by 2021, by which time there will be an overall fall in the number of children and a substantial increase in the number of people aged 65 and over.

However, with the new Local Plan which encompasses the development of 3,500 houses, the population increase is more likely to be about 12% and exceed 20% by 2030.

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 E01018400 inclusive).

Educational standards are high: in 2009/10, the proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs (or equivalent qualifications) at grades A*-C at the end of Key Stage 4 was very similar to Cheshire (the pre-2009 County area) and the North West¹, as was the 2010/11 proportion of 10-11 year-olds reaching Level 4 or above in Key Stage 2 Reading, Writing and Mathematics.²

Adults' qualifications compare well with the regional and national figures, with 29.2% of residents aged 16 and above being qualified to degree level at the time of the 2011 Census (compared to averages of 24.4% and 27.2% for the North West and England & Wales respectively). However one of the threats to the local economy is the potential for a skills gap to develop between the changing requirements of business and the skills of the population. Furthermore, over a fifth of the Town's 16+ population (22.1%, or 4,800 people) have no qualifications: this is slightly below the England & Wales average (22.7%), but is a greater proportion than in Cheshire East as a whole (19.6%).³

The Experian 2012 Mosaic Consumer Classification shows Congleton has almost twice the national average (22.6% compared to 11.5%) of households in the "Affluent Households" category: i.e. people with rewarding careers who live in sought-after locations, affording luxuries and premium quality products.⁴

The mean annual household income of people living in the Town (£38,100 in 2010) is 8% above the Great Britain average (£35,300).⁵ Earnings data are not available at town level, but for full-time employees who live in Congleton Parliamentary Constituency⁶, median gross weekly earnings were £524 in 2012. This is higher than the equivalent figures for Cheshire East (£500) and the UK (£506). However, for full-time employees who work at a site in the Constituency, median gross weekly earnings are significantly lower, at £459 (compared to £479 for full-timers working in Cheshire East and £506 for those working in the UK).⁷

¹ GCSE and Equivalent Results for Young People by Gender in England (Referenced by Location of Pupil Residence), 2009/10, Neighbourhood Statistics, ONS. 2010/11 data not available for part of Congleton Town.

² National Curriculum Assessments at Key Stage 2 by Gender in England (Referenced by Location of Pupil Residence), 2011, Neighbourhood Statistics, ONS.

³ 2011 Census (Table KS501EW), ONS. Crown Copyright.

⁴ MOSAIC customer segmentation data, Experian 2012.

⁵ Paycheck 2010, CACI Ltd.

⁶ The Constituency has exactly the same boundary as the former Congleton Borough Council.

⁷ Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2012 (Provisional Results), ONS, November 2012. The figures quoted above include overtime.

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 10th most deprived. No other Congleton Town LSOAs fall within the top 10% of Cheshire East LSOAs.⁸

Of the current population in the Town (26,500), some 73.3% (19,400) are aged 16-74⁹. Among this latter group, 69.4% (13,500) are economically active, which is a similar rate to Cheshire East (70.6%) and England & Wales (69.7%)¹⁰. The traditional Manufacturing areas of textiles and engineering have been affected by the effects of 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.¹¹

Congleton is, not unexpectedly, a net exporter of labour: at the time of the 2001 Census, there was a net commuting outflow of 1,300, with 6,800 local residents commuting to a workplace outside the town, but only 5,500 people commuting inwards.¹² However, the impact of this can be reduced by adopting more environmentally sustainable methods of travel and by ensuring local employment opportunities are taken advantage of.

As of December 2012, 2.6% of Congleton Town's 16-64 year-olds were claiming Jobseeker's Allowance. This claimant unemployment rate is slightly above the Cheshire East average (2.3%), but lower than in the North West (4.2%) or the UK (3.7%).¹³

The town has an estimated 900 VAT registered businesses. There is an inevitable shift to the finance and professional, tourism and retail sections, but this will need to be managed if local labour is to be used in the higher value jobs.

⁸ English Indices of Deprivation 2010, Department for Communities and Local Government (published in March 2011). In the light of the population changes shown in the 2011 Census, some LSOA boundaries have been revised, including some in Cheshire East (though no Congleton Town boundaries are affected). As a result, the Borough now has 234 LSOAs (previously it had 231). However, the 2010 Indices of Deprivation statistics predate the 2011 Census and are therefore based on the original LSOA boundaries.

⁹ 2011 Census (Table KS102EW), ONS. Crown Copyright.

¹⁰ 2011 Census (Tables KS601EW to KS603EW), ONS. Crown Copyright.

¹¹ 2011 Census (Tables KS605EW to KS607EW), ONS; and 2001 Census (Table (CAS036). Crown Copyright.

¹² 2001 Census, ONS. Crown Copyright. 2011 Census data on commuting flows are not yet available.

¹³ [1] Claimant Count, ONS, NOMIS. Crown Copyright. [2] Cheshire West and Chester Council, Research, Intelligence & Consultation Team's Small Area Population Estimates. All estimates are constrained to the Registrar General's Annual Estimates of Population for 2010. ONS Crown Copyright 2013.

Congleton has common issues with other market towns across Britain such as pressure on local high streets, general and specialist stores closing, a struggling market, loss of much needed local facilities on economic grounds, and insufficient footfall to attract key anchor stores. Congleton's retail sector has suffered more than its neighbours during the recession with currently 10% of empty shops, although in early 2012 the vacancy rate was much higher at 20%. The Town Centre Plan is an evidenced based blueprint for revitalising the hub of the Town adopted in 2008. A major new shopping complex and Town Square now has planning permission with development scheduled to commence in July 2013. This is complemented by a well thought out and robust Public Realm Strategy and broader Town Strategy which over time will help revitalise the town centre and town.

The Town is strong on distinctiveness which is the basis of local pride and it is this that successful regeneration can be built upon. Distinctiveness is difficult to pin down, but it has to be in the minds of local people and is usually rooted in history. Assets need to be more than economic, and community spirit or pride, a sense of responsibility and business distinctiveness are capable of bringing people together.

The Town has a good civic structure and is quite well served for information with a well-stocked library, information points for Cheshire East Council and a tourist information centre. Congleton has a very active and engaged community. A Cheshire Community survey found that 49% of respondents belonged to a charity, voluntary group or community group, which compares well with a County average of 43%. Congleton has an exceptional voluntary sector, consisting of 4000 registered volunteers and 154 local voluntary organisations, which rise to 209 if ones based outside the Town are included. It is estimated that the voluntary and community sections contribute significantly to the local economy.

Congleton has a low crime rate even by Cheshire standards. Fear of crime however remains disproportionately high and is a concern to many residents; indeed concern about drug related issues has become the focus of attention recently.

The Town is an attractive place to live, and there is evidence that people want to come to the town. The average house price within Congleton in December 2011 was £k182, against a Cheshire average of £k196. The price to earnings ratio is high at 8 and some local people may be priced out of the housing market, particularly first time buyers. In the Town, over 78% of households are owner occupied, compared with 68% nationally. The attractiveness of the area brings other pressures, in that developers at times of a good housing market are inclined to build larger detached executive homes, which often do not cater for local needs. A greater range of affordable and subsidised housing is needed. There are 139 over crowded houses in Congleton and 1,517 under occupied homes which equates to 13.4% of the housing stock. The town has 534 vacant dwellings giving a vacancy rate of 4.4%. On average there have been 62 new homes built per year over the last 5 year period.

Facilities for young people however need to be developed and there is a feeling the Town is poorly served in this respect, despite good examples such as Visyon and a variety of sports, cultural and youth organisations.

The Town has a pleasant and healthy environment with low pollution levels. Traffic rather than industry may give rise to pollution hotspots. There are sometimes local nuisance and noise problems where industry and homes co-exist.

Health facilities are generally good with 3 G.P surgeries and local hospital facilities at Congleton War Memorial.

Key issues facing Congleton are:

- an aging population
- 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
- All economic issues are made even more important by the current World recession.
- need to address climate change
- traffic congestion
- need for more housing in general and in particular affordable housing

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.

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. A commercial partner, Posh Nosh has been recruited to operate the bar and catering franchise and to jointly promote and administer events. Posh Nosh has opened De Laceys Cafe and is promoting the Town Hall as a wedding venue.

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 Bridestones 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.

Situational Analysis for the Town Hall

The Town Hall had been a low priority, non-statutory service for the 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, to take place over 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 open up new areas and restore the Bridestones Suite (Conference Room) to its former glory. The works have been disruptive and resulted in reduced bookings in 2010 and therefore reduced income, but much of the programme has been completed. Works for this year include outstanding electrical

and other services work, but, a major issue to tackle, is to undertake repairs to the various roofs around the Town Hall in an effective but economic way.

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 have now built up considerable experience in the operation of the building and working with the commercial partner has provided commercial experience. The Council will in future be able to capitalise on catering profits 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 possibility of taking on devolved services from Cheshire East Council and implementation of the Town Strategy, 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 Town Clerk and the Support Manager is appointed as RFO and acts as Deputy Town Clerk. Employee conditions of service adopted in 2006 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 been used during 2012 via a low cost vehicle, Wirehouse, who provide a range of services, including health and safety and HR.

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.

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 £6.80 per elector in 2013-14 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, it is hoped that a General Power of Competence will be available during 2013-14 as the Town Clerk will be undertaking the appropriate training and accreditation to enable this power to be adopted by Council. 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 commercial partner needs 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 has been 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).

The Town Council has 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. It has always expected funding to follow functions and has made budget provision over the last four years to raise standards, but not to replace the Cheshire East Council (CEBC) funding. CEBC now have a policy to devolve or transfer a range of services, but, it is however fair to assume that the main driver will be financial savings, which gives rise to concerns over whether sufficient funding will be transferred to maintain the current level of service.

Where CEBC have a statutory duty or policy to continue services such as street cleaning, and grass cutting are considering devolving them to "host" towns or parish councils, who will receive an agreed sum of money for carrying out work under a service level agreement to a defined standard. The "host" authorities will be asked to provide services on behalf of a cluster of smaller parishes which are unable or unwilling to take services on. Congleton currently is acting as a Pathfinder for devolved services and is anticipating taking over street cleaning and grounds maintenance services, subject to Town Council approval, in 2013. However, Cheshire East's current policy on devolution is unclear and this represents a risk in the future particularly in the area of funding provision.

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 finance in 2012. Other functions such as play areas, open spaces, public toilets, and street furniture could well be transferred to the Town Council at some future date with Local Councils being given the opportunity to take them on, but without funding.

Congleton Town Council is a willing and able partner to Cheshire East Council (CEBC) and is a significant Town Council in terms of budget, population and functions, and has an excellent skills base and management structure. It is more able to take on these services than almost any other local council in Cheshire East, but, they will still be significant services compared with those already operated and will present a higher level of both business and safety risk.

Cheshire East have set an unclear time table on devolved services which make the notion of a decision being taken by the Town Council sometime early in 2013 equally unclear. The Town Council has prepared a 12 month project Plan to ensure the Town Council is able to meet any new or revised deadline; however we are still waiting for information from Cheshire East on the availability of officer's time and some clarity on the direction the Borough wishes to pursue in respect of service devolution.

The Town Council has worked up a delivery model for each service and understands exactly what will be included within each service which CEBC offer for transfer and devolvement, what assets & equipment will be passed over and what are the TUPE liabilities. The Council officers have spent considerable time quantifying the services e.g. length of roads, number of litter bins, area of grass to be maintained. For transfer services, the Town Council will need to identify the need for each within the Town, and to consult on its findings. Once CEBC offer a completed funding formula, the Council can negotiate from an informed base and decide whether it is able to add value. At this stage it will be in a position to see whether it is willing and indeed can afford to take over any services.

The other area of work is regeneration and economic development. Whilst CEBC 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 Northern Link Road and economic development of Congleton becoming a key focus area and priority within Cheshire East and the emerging Local Plan. 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 site is put into the LDF and that Section 106 money is directed to the Town Centre and 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. It will also introduce a digital display unit into the pedestrianised area in Bridge Street to improve communication with residents, to promote Town Council activities and other events taking place in the Town.

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. It will work with the Congleton Partnership's Marketing Group to promote the "Beartown Brand. The registration of a trade mark for the Town to reflect the Beartown Brand has been completed in 2011. This will enable local organisations and businesses to use part of the common brand within their own headings, and promote themselves as part of the Town.

The Town Council itself incorporates the Beartown Brand into its corporate letter headings, but alongside its more formal crest, thereby keeping the individuality and civic position of local government whilst making a clear statement that it is part of the Congleton "family"

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 added during 2012-13. It has an IT maintenance & support contract with a local company and launched a new website in 2011. During 2012 some older PC based systems were replaced and this process of upgrading will continue. The Council has appraised its Omega Accounting software and upgraded it accordingly. It currently has a support package in place for this.

An Asset Management system provided by Pear Technology was introduced during 2012 which allows the Council to photograph and record every asset owned in significant detail. An additional advantage is the system comes with a mapping facility of the Congleton area which is proving useful during Planning Committee meetings. Its real purpose though is to locate and record assets held externally which will become particularly useful when we take over devolved services.

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. In 2012 a detailed job evaluation exercise was undertaken by an external consultant which resulted in some staff regrading, but, more importantly introduced the possibility of incremental grading improvement for most staff members.

The Council has a core team of 14. This is supplemented by casual Paddling Pool Attendants during the summer season and casual facilities officer. Within the Team, all are part-time with the exception of the Town Clerk, Facilities Manager and Handy Persons 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 1st December 2009 and brings considerable private sector senior executive experience and was formally Town Clerk at Poynton. 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 and allotments. Chris is also assuming day to day responsibility for the street cleaning and grounds maintenance services of Cheshire East based at Brunswick Wharf as part of the Pathfinder project. 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. 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 and Pete Forster as a casual Facilities Officer. Chris Banks and Mark Worthington are the two Handypersons. Mike Smith joined the staff in April 2010 as Communities Officer and is employed to provide support to Congleton Partnership.

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 2013-14 Budget (Appendix 6) and Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The 2013-14 Budget is obviously structured to deliver the Corporate Strategy, however its greatest pressure will come from the earlier decisions to take on the freehold and re-vitalise the Town Hall, uncertainties from Cheshire East Council over devolved services, 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 six 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, including delegation of local services, regeneration of the Town and building a sustainable agenda. The 2013-14 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 3%, utility costs increasing by about 9% as well as recognising that there may be some costs associated with taking over devolved services from Cheshire East.

2012-13 Outturn

The projected expenditure to March 2013 is anticipated to show a saving of approximately £k6. 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 2013-14 Budget.

- A saving on corporate management costs of £k3.6

- Audit fees £k2 less than anticipated
- Rebate from CEBC of £k18.7 for double taxation
- Increase in Investment income of about £k3 as bank interest was assumed to be a little lower when the budget was set
- Savings of £k2 on training and conference costs
- Increase in costs of £k2.6 for HR and HS support
- Savings on Paddling Pool costs of £k1.5
- Savings on Floral Displays of £k2
- Increase in costs of rates of £k1 for water, and gas of £k4
- Letting income for the Grand Hall below budget by £k10 and Spencer Suite by £k3
- Handyman service below budget by £k10 as an additional person for devolved service enhancement has not been recruited in second half of the year
- Savings on property maintenance of £k1.5
- Savings of £k3 on vehicle maintenance as second vehicle not purchased

Budget Format

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

Reserves

The General Reserve at the year-end is anticipated to be £160k, General Capital contingency £212k, Devolved Services £k30, vehicle replacements/equipment £20k, Public Toilets £k22, Play Areas £k12, Legal Fees £k10 and Public Realm £k5

The Council is recommended to have a minimum of 3 months General reserve equal to net revenue expenditure, which equates to £k149,262, whilst actual reserves for 2013-14 are projected to be £k148,245. A minor underfund of £917 is not going to cause a problem.

Town Hall

Expenditure on the Town Hall is expected to be £k12 less than last year, however, letting income for the Grand Hall is £k10 below budget and £k3 below budget for the Spencer Suite. This has meant that this year no inroads have been made into reducing the Town Hall deficit.

An income of £4k is again included for subsidised room hire for community/ voluntary groups, which effectively top slices the Grants Budget, because such expenditure is legally Section 137 expenditure, the £4,500 notional museum rent is similarly treated.

General Budget Assumptions

The Medium Term Financial Strategy had originally indicated an anticipated Precept increase of 9.97 % for 2013-14, mainly to accommodate the cost of some devolved functions and some increase in office capacity. However the actual increase has been reduced to 1.79% because much of the service improvement costs for devolved services have been withdrawn during the budget framing process.

However, the impact of the cost reduction efficiency targets demanded by Cheshire East Borough Council when taking responsibility for Devolved Services has increased our costs by about £k23.

A number of budget costs over which the Council have little control are energy costs, where a 9% increase has been assumed.

Salary increases have been assumed to be about 2% as the assumption is that a third year of a pay freeze is probably untenable.

- £15k has been included for 2013-14 for the CAB.
- £16k has been included for Community Projects; however, this level of support will be a challenge to the organisation as their operating costs are significantly higher than this.
- Grant provision for the Congleton Partnership is £k14, which is the same level as the current year, but, which was supported by a £k8 grant from CEBC which may or may not be forthcoming next year. Clearly a reduction or removal of this contribution will result in fewer projects for the Town being realised.
- A budget of £k5 has been included for the Mercian March which has been taken out of the Grants Budget
- Costs have been included to take on devolved services which include some additional support staff, but , the costs are assumed to be effective from the 1st April 2013 which is a full 12 months
- No provision has been made to provide a grant to the Congleton Disabled Group as the original commitment was to provide funding for 3 years which has now expired
- £21k has been included for an additional Handyman to provide a Rapid Response service

Investment Policy

The Council is required to maintain and review its Investment Policy at least annually. A review has recently been completed and only small changes are recommended. Investment income is again anticipated to be similar to previous years.

Key Achievements in 2012-13

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

- High Street facing office facilities maintained
- Four Police Community Officers for the Town
- Further improvements to the operation of the Paddling Pool resulting in lower costs
- Marketing of the completed Bridestones Suite and other facilities within the Town Hall
- Maintained allotments at Hillary Avenue
- A quarterly Town Council and Community Newsletter (Bear Necessities)
- Maintained Town Handy Person Scheme
- Christmas Fayre and Christmas Lights
- Town events including a Food Festival, Olympic Torch Relay, Jubilee Celebrations
- Young Council continued for all Junior Schools
- An Active Youth Committee for the Council
- Floral displays for the Town, winning RHS gold standard
- Winner Community Pride Award – Best Kept Large Town
- Won Best Community Web Site for www.congleton-tc.gov.uk
- Completion of Town Strategy
- Completion of Public Realm Strategy
- Commenced negotiations with Cheshire East Council on devolved services and partnership working to increase accountability within the Town
- High Profile Congleton Partnership & liaison with businesses
- Town Centre Management
- Commenced improvements to Radnor Park which should be completed by March 2013
- Grants for the voluntary and community sector
- Completed Environmental Audit
- Notion of Northern Link Road now priority in Cheshire East

The Way Forward

The key actions for 2013-14 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 2009-2012” are 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. 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 Authority has set itself another ambitious, but realistic agenda for 2013-14. The services offered in the building will continue to be developed and promoted in partnership with Posh Nosh. 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 implementation. Whilst the Town Council can lead a number of projects, in other areas they will need a partner or facilitator. The current economic down turn has made it essential to help local businesses and this will be undertaken in a number of ways including promotion of the Town via the Legacy Group formed out of the highly successful Expo, Town Centre Management, supporting the traders forum, supporting a Congleton enterprise centre, funding training and lobbying for adequate housing and employment 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 will also look to take forward their Protocol with Cheshire East Council to secure the delegation of key public realm services, however they will insist on reasonable funding.

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

Lead Officers: TC= Town Clerk, SM=Support Manager, TCen&MM=Town Centre &Marketing Manager, FM=Facilities Manager CO=Communities Officer, CAO=Civic Administration Officer, Administration Assistants		
GOAL 1	AN ACTIVE AND ENGAGED COMMUNITY. <u>Conceptual Indicators</u> A. No decrease in active community and voluntary organisations during 2013-14 B. Increased number of businesses signing up to Fair Trade-2013-14 C. Improved play facilities during year D. Increased no. of affordable houses E. 10 young people engaged in a youth committee	
ACTIONS & OUTPUT TARGETS		
<u>TO SUPPORT, DEVELOP & EMPOWER THE COMMUNITY & VOLUNTARY SECTOR</u> 1. Administer the Grant Scheme to forward the Council's strategic aims 2. Maintain essential support to Cheshire East CAB 3. Support the Cheshire East Local Area Partnership 4. Maintain a community hub/resource in the Town Hall 5. Continue to support Congleton Partnership as an informal LSP, for the Town 6. Support Community Projects as a Key Partner 7. Encourage more Town Centre activities 8. Encourage greater public participation in Congleton in Bloom		
	LEAD OFFICER	DATE
	SM TC TC TC TC TCen &MM TCen TC/Clrs	On going On going On going On going On going On going On Going April 13
<u>TO PROMOTE COMMUNITY COHESION</u> 1. Produce 4 editions of the Council/Community Newsletter 2. Monitor & review the Equalities Policy & staff awareness 3. Promote Fair Trade in the Town 4. Make the Town Hall available for community, social, leisure & educational pursuits 5. Review Publication Scheme Information Guide and Web Information 6. Produce regular media releases to share information about the Town Council 7. Lobby for increased housing including affordable and low cost houses in the Cheshire East LDF 8. Promote and organise the Mercian March in June 13		
	TCen&MM Con TC/TCen&MM TC/FM TC TCen&MM TC	On going June 13 On going On going June 13 On going Feb 13
<u>TO PROMOTE HEALTH & FITNESS AMONGST OUR RESIDENTS AND WORKFORCE</u> 1. Support sport and leisure activities which promote healthy life style in conjunction with Team		

<p>Congleton</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Lobby for play facilities at Astbury Lane Ends & Buglawton 3. Lobby for improved primary health care facilities in the Town 4. Maintain an Allotment Site & improved facilities 5. Have offered improved facilities at the Town Hall for organisations which will promote health & fitness 6. Deliver at least one home safety campaign 	<p>TC/ TCen&MM TC/FM TC FM TC/FM TC</p> <p>On going On going On going On going November 13 October 13</p>
<p><u>TO ENGAGE WITH THE TOWN'S PRESENT & FUTURE GENERATIONS</u></p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support youth organisations and facilities both practically and financially 2. Hold two Young Councillors events for juniors 3. Maintain a Youth Committee & hold replacement elections if necessary 4. Work with businesses to develop the skills of young persons 5. Increase the use of the Town Hall by young people 7. Support Cheshire East Youth Committee/Parliament 8. Attempt to engage elder generations to apply their skills and knowledge within the local work-force and the voluntary sector 9. Maintain the Mayor's Cadet Scheme 	<p>TC CAO CAO TC/CO TC/FM CAO TC CAO</p> <p>To March 14 To March 14 To March 14 To March 14 To March 14 To March 14 To March 14 May 13</p>

<p>GOAL 2</p>	<p>A SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT.</p> <p><u>Conceptual Indicators</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> F. Tangible improvements in the public realm G. More alternative energy produced H. Reduced carbon emissions I. Reduced crime/ anti-social behaviour J. Increased urban green areas
<p>ACTIONS & OUTPUT TARGETS</p>	
<p>LEAD OFFICER</p>	<p>DATE</p>

<p><u>TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain the Town Handy Person Scheme and introduce Rapid Response Team 2. Maintain signage provided through the Market Town Initiative 3. Support & develop the activity of the Clean Teams for the town and encourage more volunteers 4. Lead on the Town's Floral displays by provision of labour & plants 5. Update environmental audit on the Council's operation & revise action plan 6. Enhance or create at least one area of green open space 7. Support the quality maintenance of public footpaths & bridleways 8. Complete the Town Hall energy improvements 9. Protect and enhance areas of our natural environmental assets, directly or through lobbying 10. Lower Carbon footprint by at least 5% 11. Ensure Public Realm Strategy develops to a supplementary planning document 12. Enter Civic Pride Award 13. Enter "In Bloom" competition 	<p>FM FM TC/FM TC/FM TC TC TC FM/TC TC TC TC TC/TCen & MM TC/TCen & MM/FM</p>	<p>Waiting for DS To March 14 To March 14 Sept 13 July 13 February 14 January 14 March 13 To March 14 March 14 Local Plan March 14 March 14</p>
<p><u>TO TAKE STEPS TOWARDS BECOMING A TRANSITIONAL TOWN</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to Support the principles of the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change 2. Support the Congleton Sustainability Group 3. Re-Measure the carbon foot print of the Town Council 4. Support the Dane Hydro Scheme, if still active 	<p>TC TC & CO TC TC/CO</p>	<p>To March 14 To March 14 April 13 March 14</p>
<p><u>TO WORK TO MAKE THE TOWN SAFER</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support anti-social behaviour initiatives such as "Archangel", with the Police & other partners 2. Support 4 Police Community Support Officers 3. Comment on, lobby for, or support road safety improvement schemes. Link Road 4. Support and add values to the safer community initiatives on the Town 5. Work with Cheshire East to support Emergency Planning & the Flood Plan for the Town 6. Review the Crime & Disorder (Sec 17) Audit on the Council's activities 7. Comment on licensing & planning applications to the principal authority 8. Support Shop and Pub watch. 9. Support Cheshire East with adverse weather gritting 	<p>TC TC TC TC Con/TC Con TC/CAO TCen&MM/ FM FM</p>	<p>To March 14 To March 14 To March 14 To March 14 To March 14 September 13 To March 14 To March 14 To March 14</p>

GOAL 3	A CELEBRATED AND PROTECTED HERITAGE. <u>Conceptual Indicators</u>	
	K. Increase in number of people having access to Town Treasures & records L. Arts & Culture Centre for the Town. M. Architectural features of Town Hall restored N. 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. 4. Support the development of Congleton Town Park, with the aim of it being a future devolved service. 5. Proactively Support an Arts and Culture Centre. 6. Maintenance of the War Memorial & surrounding area. 7. To lobby CEBC for a Shop Front Design Supplementary Planning Document	TC TC TC TC TC FM TC	To March 14. To March 14 To March 14 To March 14 To March 14 To March 14 To March 14
<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. 2. Promote access to Town Treasures and Ancient Records via Storyboard project 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 support national heritage week 6. Have agreed draft proposals for an extension of the Museum 7. Have increased performing arts events in the Town Hall. 8.. Encourage public to view Town Hall Storyboard	TC TC TC/CAO TC TC TC/CM TC/TC&MM TC/MM	To March 14 On going To March 14 To March 14 Sept 14 To March 14 February 14 To March 14

GOAL 4	A STRONG AND DIVERSE ECONOMY. <u>Conceptual Indicators</u> 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	
ACTIONS & OUTPUT TARGETS		
	LEAD OFFICER	DATE
<p><u>TO LEAD THE DEVELOPMENT OF A RE-VITALISED TOWN CENTRE</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Lobby Cheshire East to develop the Public Realm Strategy. Provide active Town Centre Management to support existing businesses and new business. Work with partners to deliver the priorities from the Town Centre Plan and Town Strategy. Lobby for the development of the Fairground site Be an advocate for improved leisure facilities. Lobby for use of Section 106 money for Town Centre Strategy & regeneration projects. Actively support good quality, sympathetic and innovative redevelopment. Work with retailers to maintain trade group(s). Hold a Christmas Fayre event. Install Ice Rink for Xmas promotion To maintain the Town Hall as the recognised civic hub of the Town. To facilitate the Christmas lights. Support Cheshire East Sustainable Towns Initiative Determine actions from the AMT Benchmarking Report Dec 2013 	<p>TC TC&MM TC/Con/TCen&MM TC TC TC TC TCen & MM TCen & MM TCen & MM TC TCen & MM CO TC/ TCen & MM</p>	<p>To March 14 To March 14 To March 14 January 14 To March 14 To March 14 To March 14 To March 14 To March 14 December 14 December 14 On-going December 14 February 14 February 14</p>
<p><u>TO IDENTIFY CONGLETON AS THE “ENTERPRISE HUB” OF CHESHIRE EAST</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate the delivery of the priorities from the Public Realm Strategy. (See Project Plan) Prioritise growing and protecting existing businesses and improve existing business parks where appropriate, via the Legacy team Support local businesses having access to good quality advice and support. Work with partners to help businesses survive the recession and help individuals back into work. Lobby for increased hotel/conference facilities in the Town. 	<p>TC/CO TC/CO TC TC TC</p>	<p>To March 14 To March 14 To March 14 To March 14 December 13</p>

<p>6. Support the training of the Town work force. 7. To facilitate a Business Group within the Town. 8. Lobby to ensure sufficient and suitable land, premises and infrastructure for high value employment. 9. Support Freshers Fayre event for schools 10. Support Link2Prosperity Business Group</p>	<p>TC TC/MM TC TCen & MM TC/Cllrs</p>	<p>To March 14 To March 14 To March 14 October 13 To March 14</p>
<p><u>TO IMPROVE ACCESS AND COMMUNICATIONS TO & WITHIN THE TOWN</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be an advocate for improved public transport links. 2. Support the development group for Congleton Station/rail services. 3. Support the Dial a Ride operation for the Town 4. Lobby for sustainable & fair parking facilities and enforcement with Cheshire East Council. 5. Lobby for the inclusion of a Northern Link Road in the Cheshire East Local Plan. 6. Help develop safe routes to Schools. 7. Lobby for more link ways for pedestrians and cycle movements through Public Realm Strategy 8. Support highway schemes which help disabled access. 9. To facilitate provision or improvement of bus shelters where proven need exists. 	<p>TC TC/CO TC TC TC TC TC TC TC</p>	<p>To March 14 To March 14 To March 14 March 14 Feb 13 February 14 January 14 March 14 December 13</p>
<p><u>TO PROMOTE CONGLETON</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain the Council Website with up to date information. 2. Provide current information on the Town Council and community groups on notice boards. 3. Work with partners to promote the Congleton through the Bear Town Brand 4. To contribute to promoting Tourism in support of "Congleton Renaissance". 5. Support the Food Festival 6. Support the Music Festival (Jazz and Blues) 7. Support the TIC and maintain the information kiosk. 8. Support Parklive. 9.. Support Congleton Carnival 	<p>TCen & MM/ST SM/FM TCen & MM TCen & MM TC/TCen & MM TC TCen & MM TC/TCen & MM TCen</p>	<p>To March 14 To March 14 To March 14 To March 14 June 13 June 13 To March 14 July 13 To March 15</p>

<p>GOAL 5</p> <p>OPERATIONAL QUALITY.</p> <p><u>Conceptual Indicators</u></p> <p>O. Excellent audit reports P. Maintenance of Quality Town Status</p>	<p>OPERATIONAL QUALITY.</p>
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	ACTIONS & OUTPUT TARGETS	LEAD OFFICER	DATE
<p>Q. Maintaining Accreditation of an integrated quality system R. Reduced accidents S. Increased number of staff with key skills</p>			
	<p><u>TO DEVELOP CAPACITY AND A DIVERSE SKILLS BASE WITHIN THE COUNCIL</u></p>		
<p>1. Have updated the Member training & Development Programme & implemented it 2. Have completed Employee Development Reviews. 3. Have revised and implemented a Staff Training Plan. 4. Have undertaken a business risk assessment as part of Business Planning. 5. Have updated the safety risk assessments and action plan. 6. Have implemented H&S action plan. 7. Have reviewed the Safety Policy against legislation 8. Have fully developed & commenced use of electronic files 9. Have established Archive files & reviewed document retention policy</p>	<p>TC TC TC TC TC FM/TC TC TC/SM SM</p>	<p>March 13 May 13 June 13/Mar 14 March 13 March 13 July 13 On going To March 14 October 13</p>	
	<p><u>TO DELIVER EXCELLENT SERVICES ACCORDING TO BOTH NEED AND CONSUMER CHOICE</u></p>		
<p>1. Maintain the Allotments and review its operation. 2. Continued operation of the Paddling Pool & enhance service. 3. Maintain the Handy Person Service. 4. Have completed Phase 1 of Devolved Services Pilot with CEBC. (See Action Plan) 5. Have completed Phase 2 of Devolved Services Pilot with CEBC. (See Action Plan) 6. Have completed Phase 3 of Devolved Services Action Plan 7. Have prepared any transfer services for handover in accordance with Action Plan</p>	<p>TC FM FM TC/SM/FM TC/ SM/FM TC/ SM/FM TC/ SM/FM</p>	<p>October 13 September 13 To March 14 July 2012 October 2012 March 2013 October 2013</p>	
	<p><u>TO ACHIEVE HIGH PERFORMANCE BY TAKING A MORE INTEGRATED APPROACH TO MANAGEMENT</u></p>		
<p>1. Have retained Quality Town Status 2. Have gained the general power of competence and reviewed operations accordingly 3. Have updated the Constitution 4. Have carried out the necessary audits for Chamber Assure & instigated corrective action. 5. To continue the continuous improvement element of Chamber Assure Integrated Quality System. 6. Have completed the Corporate Business Plan for 2014-15</p>	<p>TC TC TC TC TC TC</p>	<p>Completed March 13 March 13 To March 14 To March 14 March 14</p>	

7. Have maintained Performance Management System	TC	To March 14
8. Have completed all VAT & Internal Revenue returns	SM	To March 14
9. Produce 6 weekly Management Accounts and associated reports	SM	To March 14
10. Have reduced the Town Hall Operating Deficit	TC & all mgrs	To March 14
11. To have reviewed Personnel Policy/ procedures under changing legislation	TC	April 13
12. To have reviewed data protection compliance	TC	August 13

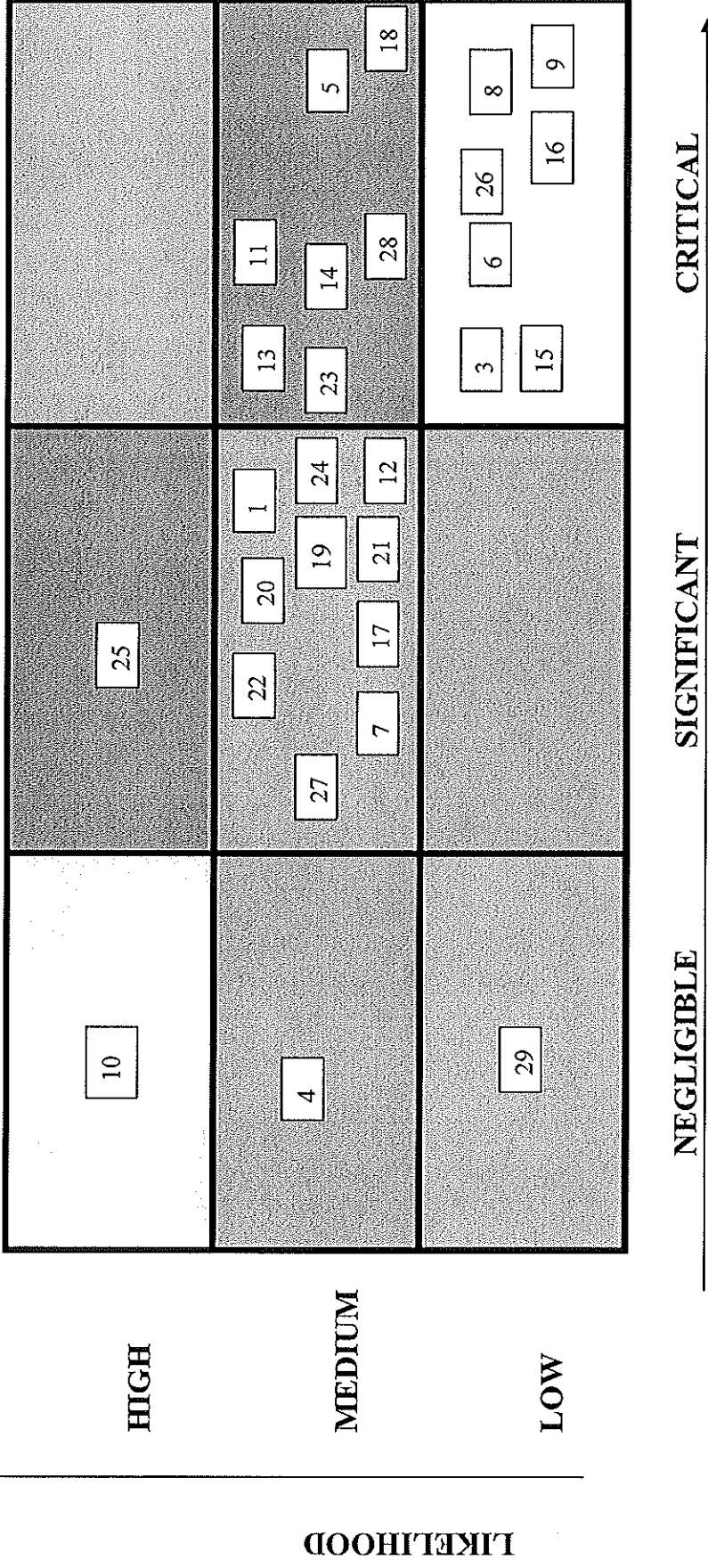
Appendix 1		SWOT Analysis
<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committed Members with range of skills Support from key community & public partners Considerable skill & experience in staff & advisors Dedicated staff Robust Vision & Strategy Achievable but challenging objectives Council prepared to make necessary financial commitment Adequate financial reserves & medium term financial plans Developed strong business like ethics Developed strong community links & empowered voluntary sector Continuously developing capacity to expand Structure to take on devolved services Contained politics Centrally located offices Improving IT capability <p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased local services to improve standards Possibility of Infrastructure Levy Devolution of powers from Cheshire East Council Build capacity of organisation Further improve marketing & promotion Long term regeneration of Town through Regeneration Strategy Implement Town Centre Plan Implement Public Realm Strategy Further improve operating efficiency Develop Town Hall potential General power of competence Implement Public Realm Strategy Establish Northern Link Road 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of experienced councillors at election Limited range of powers until general power of competence obtained Limited financial capacity Limited but developing IT capacity Uncertainty over likelihood of taking on devolved functions Limited opportunity for grant funding Potential loss of skills & support during year Considerable number of initiatives, could outstrip capacity Uncertain partnership funding Uncertainty over Local Development Framework Current economic climate adversely affecting businesses & limiting development Possible delay in Town Centre redevelopment Lack of funding to develop Public Realm Strategy Loss of income through change in tax base and uncertainty over Cheshire East funding 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of match funding for projects Cost of transferred/devolved 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 expectation Upheaval following local government reorganisation Current economic climate adversely affecting funding

<p>Political Government funding cuts to local government & communities Uncertainty of approach of coalition government to local councils Cheshire East Council policies unclear Cheshire East Council cuts services Uncertainty over new LEP effectiveness</p>	<p>Economic 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>Social Pockets of deprivation in a prosperous community Recession & public sector cuts biting residents & businesses Strong community spirit in Town Low interest in local government</p>	<p>Technological Fast developing e-technology More E-business as a method of trading IT soon becomes obsolete</p>

Appendix 2 SWOT Analysis of the Town Hall	
<p>Strengths Architecturally valuable building High Street location Town Council presence Community Hub Acknowledged community asset Huge support from Town Councillors Public support for improvement Earmarked funding Free asset Good disabled access Staff dedicated and now experienced Commercial partner gaining experience</p>	<p>Weaknesses High maintenance liability Still remaining maintenance & improvement works outstanding Still under utilised Not yet attractive to prestige business Little client car parking Only limited marketing so far Limited market research Operational financial debit Professional management & flair still needs developing Problems with roof leaking</p>
<p>Opportunities Complete maintenance & improvements to facilities</p>	<p>Threats Lack of external funding for development</p>

<p>High standards of upkeep Involve & empower staff Improve marketing & promotion Develop with commercial partner Improve operating efficiency & management Continue to lower business & safety risks Attract grants More exciting events Further develop use of premises Long term extension</p>	<p>Loss of experienced staff & 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>
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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- 2013 - 17

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.

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 dominated by potential decisions that may be taken in respect of devolved 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. Indeed the Council has already agreed to earmark £k50 towards the first Public Realm project.

The Town Council is continuing to operate a Pathfinder project on Devolved Services in conjunction with Cheshire East Borough Council. Funding in respect of "Transfer" services will not follow function and finance for this will have to be catered for in our existing budget, although we will be working to encompass the cost of providing such services within the scope of the devolved services budget by deriving efficiency improvements to offset this cost. In the meantime discussions will continue with CEBC to agree how to fund the Devolved Services and finalise the contractual arrangements to allow the service to be devolved to the Town Council. However, a new challenge that has to be met in relation to this project is the requirement to meet efficiency cost reduction targets set out by Cheshire East Brough Council which may amount to 3% p.a. of the total budget for the devolved service.

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 to this and delegated services
- Cheshire East Council's occupancy of the Town Hall, which is on the wane
- Low and uncertain investment income which is exacerbated by the current economic downturn

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 when possible for procurement
- Maximise service efficiency to keep costs down
- Maximise letting income for the Town Hall
- Enhancing service provision of devolved functions

World equity markets remain fragile. Inflation whilst falling back to 2%-2.5% could easily return to the previous relatively high levels of 4-5% in the future. Public sector salaries for 2013-14 are unlikely to be frozen for a further year as employees have suffered 3 years of nil increases. The Country however, is barely emerging from recession, but, public expenditure continues to be under enormous pressure and local government will have to shoulder its share of cuts, including Cheshire East who is already dramatically reducing its expenditure this year and in the coming years. It is likely that this will impact in some way upon the Town Council and the residents of Congleton, by way of the level of services being provided or indeed withdrawal of some services that CEBC provides to the Town.

The Council is projected to have the following reserves on 31st March 2013:

General Reserve	£160,042
Capital Contingency Reserve	£212,353
Devolved Services	£30,000
Public Toilets	£22,000
Vehicle	£ 20,000
Play Areas	£12,000
Legal Fees	£10,000
Public Realm	£5,421
Crime Prevention	£ 3,279
Civic treasures	£ 3,000
Training	£ 3,000

The projected reserves at 31st March 2013 exceed the minimum recommended reserve which equates to 3 months net revenue expenditure, by £29,834. This assumes that reserves will end the year at £160,042, but, nonetheless leaves reserves in a healthy position.

The refurbishment, improvement and continued maintenance of the Town Hall means the Council have as planned undertaken a variety of catch-up repairs and instigated improvements to provide better commercial potential and community facilities, including extending the kitchen and bar area this year. £360,000 is the interest free loan over 10 years from the Borough Council. The remainder of improvements and internal maintenance to the Town Hall will be financed from the loan of £360,000 through the Public Works Loans Board which is for a 40 year term. This will include upgrades to the heating system and electrics including lighting.

During the year, the fees and charges to hire the Town Hall have been assessed, as actual costs have been analysed, amendments have been made to simplify the cost of hire as improved facilities and premises have been developed. Part of our strategy to improve letting income will be to continue to target corporate customers and to continue to work in partnership with Posh Nosh to make the Town Hall the wedding venue of choice in the locale. To this end new promotional literature will be produced aimed at attracting corporate customers, weddings and other events.

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. Whilst utility cost will be inflated at 9% reflecting the recent trend of significant price increases.
- Provisions such as contributions and grants will remain at fixed sums unless Council decides to change them.
- General inflation effects and anticipated increases in use costs have been provided for in the Inflation affect line.
- Staffing costs have been inflated at 2% in the light of employees receiving nil increases for 3 years. Any re-grading required as a consequence of additional responsibilities arising from devolved services or incremental increases has been treated separately.
- There will be a future commitment to operating public toilets in the Town, but, finance for this has been included for partly in the budget and partly as a consequence of being provided by efficiency gains arising from devolved services.
- Provision for additional support resources arising from devolved services, including staff & IT is included in the Office Capacity line, the effects of which take place in year 1
- The most significant increases in the medium term forecast revolve around additional staff for devolved services. Whilst negotiations with CEBC are yet to be completed, the Borough is demanding efficiency savings to be delivered if the Town Council takes on the service which has resulted in a 20% reduction in the budget being proposed. As a consequence it will not be possible to provide such savings whilst at the same time delivering the same or indeed an improved service to the residents of the Town. The increased costs, therefore, is to maintain and improve service levels.

- The other major increase arises from a need to increase our reserves in line with 3 months net revenue expenditure criteria as our overall budget increases as a consequence of financing devolved services
- Concurrent Function grant from Cheshire East will not be available in the next budget year or future years, although we did enjoy an unexpected windfall this year of £18.7
- There may be a further increase in costs of PCSOs at the next service level agreement review due in 2013/14, but, as yet we do not know what this increase might be, if any.
- The reduction to the Tax Base is a further area of concern. As a consequence of this change the precept has been reduced to £618,472 with a grant from Cheshire East Borough council of £75,354.making up the difference. Concern arises in the future as to whether or not CEBC will continue to fully fund this grant

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 despite an ambitious, but, necessary service growth programme for the Town, the increase in the Budget over the next four years is still relatively modest in line with the current economic climate.

Brian Hogan
February 2013

Medium Term Financial Forecast 2012 -2017						
		<u>2012/13</u>	<u>2013/14</u>	<u>2014/15</u>	<u>2015/16</u>	<u>2016/17</u>
		£k	£k	£k	£k	£k
101	Investment income decrease	-3	2	0	0	0
101	Office capacity	-3.5	4.5	0	0	0
101	Audit Fees	-2	0	1	0	0
101	HR & HS	2.5	0	1	0	1
101	Training & Conferences	-2	0	1	0	1
101	Civic expenses/regalia	1	-1.5	0	1	0
101	Concurrent Function Grant	-18.5	0	0	0	0
107	Grant provision	-8	0	0	0	0
109	Capital Funding	0	7	0	0	5
109	Vehicle Funding	0	0	5	0	5
109	Loan Repayment-CBC (£36k pa)	0	0	0	0	0
109	Loan Repayment –PWL B (£25k pa)	0	0	0	0	0
109	Office equipment/computers	0	2	0	0	0
109	Public Realm contribution	0	50	0	0	0
201	Paddling Pool	-2	-0.5	0	0	1
211	Congleton Park	-5	0	0	0	0
215	Floral Displays	-2	4.5	2	2	2
221	Town Hall expenditure	9	2.5	5	5	5
221	Town Hall –Additional income	20	-10.5	-5	-5	-5
241	Allotments	0	0	0	0	0
251	Handy Person Service	-15.5	11	0	0	0
261	Highways/Transport (inc drop kerbs)	0	0	0	0	0
263	Public Toilets	0	0	2	2	2
264	Shop Mobility	0	-5	0	0	0
265	Play Areas	-6	0	2	2	2
280	Devolved Services	-27	11	22	21	21
301	Regeneration (Cong Partnership)	0	-1	5	5	5
303	Community Safety-PCSOs	0	0	5	0	0
321	Tourism	0	-1	1	1	1
341	Youth Council-Projects	0	0	0	0	0
351	Fellowship House	2	0	1	0	1
901	LGR-other devolved functions	0	0	0	0	0
902	Other Public Realm provisions	0	0	0	0	0
		0				
All	Staff Cost increases	2.5	0	10	10	11
All	Pension Increases	0	0	2	2.1	2.2
	precept increase		-12			
	Net effect on previous Yr baseline	-57.5	63	60	46.1	60.2