

Congleton Town Council



Business Plan 2019-2020



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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 Urban District Council 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. This system 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 Borough Council which serves as a unitary principal authority.

Congleton Town Council is one of the largest of 108 town and parish councils within Cheshire East. 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 and to provide an effective link between the local residents/council tax payers and Cheshire East Council, to express local feelings and interests and to comment on all developments within the Town. Congleton Town Council also has examines plans due for consideration by Cheshire East Council as the planning authority.

The Council is composed of 20 Councillors, representing two Town Wards, Congleton East and Congleton West. Council elections take place every 4 years when a new Council is elected, the next full elections will be held in May 2019.

This plan concentrates on the current year but some actions stretch beyond this period, it is a living document which will be reviewed and modified to take account of developments and challenges as situations arise, this may include major funding opportunities or significant issues within in the town.

The plan recognises the current priorities of the Council and the community it serves encompassed within the emerging Congleton Neighbourhood Plan. The plan illustrates the Council's commitment to work with Cheshire East Council and will remain committed to working in partnership with other public bodies as well as the local voluntary and community organisations for the good of Congleton.

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

Congleton Town Profile: East Ward

Data provided by Cheshire East Council

Congleton East Ward Summary

- ◆ With 13,674 residents, Congleton East Ward is the third largest in Cheshire East, in terms of number of residents, but the 33rd in terms of population density.
- ◆ The ward has a similar proportion of residents by age band to the Cheshire East average, 59% are of working age.
- ◆ Household income is average, the ward is ranked 36th out of 52 (where 52 is the lowest) and based on **Acorn data** 49% of the population are in the 'Affluent Achievers' group (based on their postcode).
- ◆ Overall deprivation and five of the seven index of multiple deprivation domains are in the third national quintile.
- ◆ Based on the Acorn wellbeing index 50% of the population are in the 'Healthy' group
- ◆ At Key Stage 4, 58% of pupils achieved an A* - C in English and Maths, slightly lower than the Cheshire East average of 67%. At Key Stage 5 average points per pupil were 80 in comparison to the Cheshire East average of 110.3.
- ◆ The Crime Rate is 41.2 reported incidents per 1,000 population, in line with the Cheshire East average of 44.

Congleton East Ward Profile

◆ Population area (hectares)	1,688
◆ Households	6,070
◆ Population	13,674
◆ Children 0-15	2,556 (18.7%)
◆ Working age 16-65	8,120 (59.4%)
◆ Pensionable age 65+	2,998 (21.9%)

Challenges

15.7% of properties are 'social rented properties', higher in comparison to the Cheshire East average of 11.1%, position 11 out of 52 wards.

The proportion of all crime recorded as vehicle crime is 14.2%, which is almost twice the Cheshire East average of 7.8%

<https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/pdf/council-and-democracy/council-information/ward->

Congleton Town Profile: West Ward

Data provided by Cheshire East Council

Congleton West Ward Summary

- ◆ With 13,157 residents, the ward is in 5th largest in Cheshire East, in terms of number of residents, and the 12th in terms of population density.
- ◆ The ward has similar proportion of residents by age band to the Cheshire East average, 58% are working age.
- ◆ 10.3% of properties are 'social rented properties', in comparison to the Cheshire East average of 11.1%, position 20 out of 52 wards
- ◆ Household income is average, the ward is ranked 37h out of 52 (where 52 is the lowest) and based on Acorn data 39.7% of the population are in the 'Affluent Achievers' group (based on postcode).
- ◆ Overall deprivation and four of the seven index of multiple deprivation domains are in the fourth national quintile.
- ◆ At Key Stage 4, 59% of pupils achieved an A* - C in English and Maths, slightly lower than the Cheshire East average of 69%. At Key Stage 5 average points per pupil were 84.5 in comparison to the Cheshire East average of 110.3.

West Ward Profile

◆ Population area (hectares)	568
◆ Households	6,465
◆ Population	13,157
◆ Children 0 – 15	2,121 (16.1%)
◆ Working Age 16—65	7,672 (58.3%)
◆ Pensionable Age 65+	3,364 (25.6%)

Challenges

The Crime Rate is 61.6 recorded incidents per 1,000 population, higher than the Cheshire East average of 44.1

Based on the Acorn wellbeing index combined 59% of the population are in the groups 'Health Challenges', 'At Risk' and 'Caution'

<https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/pdf/council-and-democracy/council-information/ward-profiles/congleton-west-ward-profile-2016.pdf>

Map Showing East and West Wards



Vision, Core Values and Strategic Objectives

3. VISION

Our vision is for Congleton to be a flagship town that is vibrant, enterprising, active and sustainable, which remains as attractive to visitors, investors and workers, as it is to live in.

4. OUR CORE VALUES

The core values by which we operate as a Council are:

CV1 BEING RESPONSIVE TO PUBLIC NEEDS

CV2 PROMOTING EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

CV3 WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

CV4 DEMONSTRATING DEMOCRACY AND TRANSPARENCY

CV5 REPRESENTING VALUE FOR MONEY

5. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES – Pages 10-11

GOAL 1 AN ENGAGED COMMUNITY

GOAL 2 A SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

GOAL 3 A CELEBRATED AND PROTECTED HERITAGE

GOAL 4 A STRONG AND DIVERSE ECONOMY

GOAL 5 HIGH STANDARD OF OPERATIONAL QUALITY AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

GOAL 6 ENHANCING THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF RESIDENTS

GOAL 7 CREATING AND SUSTAINING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

GOAL 8 EFFECTIVE MARKETING PROMOTION AND COMMUNICATION

Key Issues Currently Facing Congleton

- ◆ Addressing the needs of and maximising the opportunities relating to an ageing population
- ◆ Minimising the impact of the reduction in public services and funding
- ◆ Insufficient employment land
- ◆ Low job density resulting in Congleton becoming a commuter town
- ◆ Insufficient and poor quality sports and recreation facilities
- ◆ Inadequate sustainable transport links and infrastructure (walking and cycling)
- ◆ Mitigating the impact of online shopping on the high street
- ◆ The need for continued development of the Town Centre
- ◆ Traffic congestion creating air quality issues
- ◆ Protection of the towns physical heritage

Committee Structure

The Council has well defined terms of reference for each of its committees which all have 10 voting members, however other members regularly attend these meetings to enable them to have a wider understanding of Council business. All councillors are entitled to attend and speak on agenda matters if they so wish, however only committee members may vote. The only exception to this is the Planning Committee where all 20 Councillors are members

Finance & Policy: Reviews the financial performance of the council against the approved budget, approves proposals for expenditure and reviews where necessary policies of the Council

Personnel: Reviews and makes decisions about staff related matters such as pay and working conditions and the overall operating structure

Town Hall & Assets: Reviews the overall performance of the Town Hall and the development and management of the Councils assets

Planning: Reviews planning applications and passes comments to Cheshire East Planning on applications within the town boundary

Community, Environment & Services: Reviews a wide and extensive range of activity that can have both a positive and negative impact on the community.

Council Meeting: Attended by all 20 Councillors and ratifies the minutes of the other meetings and makes decisions on key Council business.

Working Groups

Working Groups are generally proposed by a Committee when there is a specific subject that would benefit from councillor and officer investigation, sometimes with the involvement of external bodies. The working groups will have a term of reference but cannot make any decisions on behalf of the council and will return its findings to the committee it originated from.

Working Groups are not open to the press or public unless specifically invited.

Current working groups in operation are:

Anti-Social Behaviour

Floral Arrangement (In Bloom)

Health and Wellbeing

Congleton Market

Street Sweeper

CCTV

The Town Council also has Strategy Working Group meetings which tend to discuss specific items that may have some elements of commercial sensitivity, members of the press or public are not in attendance at these meetings.

Copies of the Agendas, Minutes and Reports to Committees and Council can be viewed at www.congelton-tc.gov.uk or paper copies are available in the library and at the Tourist Information Centre.

Financial Information

Most of the Town Council income is via a Precept, which is collected with the Community Tax made payable to Cheshire East Council. The Precept for 2019/20 is £1.65 per week for an average band D property. This enables the Town Council to generate £884,152 of income per annum which is enhanced by a grant from Cheshire East Council where we have a Service Level Agreement to deliver Streetscape services which provides a high quality environment for our town through floral displays, grass cutting and litter picking. Additional income is generated through Town Hall lettings sponsorships Services. Further income is gained through room hire of the Town Hall and via grants and sponsorship raised for specific projects and activity. Overall our income and expenditure is expected to be circa £1.3 million for 2019/20

Strategic Objectives - Goals

	GOAL 1: AN ENGAGED COMMUNITY
1.1	Maintaining an effective partnership structure
1.2	Support, develop or lead on community initiatives to ensure all ages groups feel involved in their community
1.3	Support, develop or lead on initiatives that are within Congleton Town Council Goals 2-8
	GOAL 2: A SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT
2.1	Maximise opportunities for the acquisition retention and enhancement of open green spaces
2.2	Support the development and maintenance of public footpaths, bridleways & cycle-ways (Goal 6.3)
2.3	Support the development and delivery of the Congleton Sustainability Groups key initiatives
2.4	To work with partners on recycling initiatives
	GOAL 3: A CELEBRATED AND PROTECTED HERITAGE
3.1	Actively support the conservation area and management plan
3.2	Awareness and protection of listed buildings and local listed buildings
3.3	Support the Museum's development plans
3.5	Support the development and review the management of Congleton Park
3.6	Make representations on regeneration projects and new development to ensure it reflects the heritage and traditional architecture of the Town.
	GOAL 4: A STRONG AND DIVERSE ECONOMY
4.1	Work with partners to deliver the priorities from the Neighbourhood Plan and the Public Realm Strategy inclusive of the use of Section 106 & CIL money
4.2	To engage, promote and work in partnership with individual businesses and business group representatives to secure additional employment land and to protect and enhance current sites where appropriate.
4.3	Actively support good quality, sympathetic and innovative redevelopment
4.4	Develop or support the development of major events and activities for the town centre
4.5	Communicate to business any business support initiatives being promoted locally, regionally or nationally.

Strategic Objectives - Goals

GOAL 5: HIGH STANDARD OF OPERATIONAL QUALITY AND ASSET MANAGEMENT	
5.1	To achieve and maintain the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) 'Council Gold Standard of Operation'
5.2	Through a capital investment plan maintain and develop the current Town Councils built assets inclusive of the Town Hall, Cenotaph, Paddling Pool and Allotments
5.3	Explore opportunities to acquire additional assets and services that will benefit the community
5.4	Ensure that health and safety is at the forefront of Council services
5.5	To develop and enhance the Streetscape grounds maintenance and street cleansing service
5.6	Work to reduce the operational deficit of the Town Hall.
GOAL 6: ENHANCING THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF RESIDENTS	
6.1	To lobby for adequate Primary Health Care facilities that relate to the growth of the town
6.2	Support the development of high quality indoor and outdoor recreational facilities
6.3	Support improvements to both the existing and planned infrastructure for sustainable modes of transport
6.4	Develop and promote initiatives or events related to improving physical and mental health
GOAL 7: SUSTAINING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT	
7.1	Review the PCSO and general police provision for Congleton
7.2	Give direction to Cheshire Police about the local priorities for PCSOs
7.3	Work with partners to develop initiatives focused on reducing anti-social behaviour
7.4	Continual review of the CCTV provision and other forms of security and monitoring
GOAL 8: EFFECTIVE MARKETING, PROMOTION AND COMMUNICATION	
8.1	To develop and maintain a Tourism Strategy for Congleton
8.2	To develop and deliver effective marketing campaigns promoting Congleton as a place to do business and invest in.
8.3	To develop and deliver effective marketing campaigns to enhance awareness of the Town Council, its assets, services and partnership activities
8.4	To develop and deliver effective marketing campaigns promoting Congleton, its attractions, events and services to new and existing residents and to attract day visitors, shoppers and tourists to the town.
8.5	To develop and deliver effective marketing campaigns promoting Congleton as a great place to live.

Summary

This document highlights the core values and the strategic objectives for the Congleton Town Council for the year 2019-2020 and beyond. This document only give the headline titles and working areas. Underneath the Strategic Objectives are a number of actions and working plans designed to deliver the Business Plan.

In 2019– 2020 there are a number of activities, decisions, policies, opportunities and threats which may impact on the Town Council and the Business Plan delivery these include:

1. The development of the Congleton Neighbourhood Plan, its action plan and what the public chooses to do at a Neighbourhood Plan Referendum.
2. The outcome of the Local Election where all 20 council seats are up for election. This may result in a different make-up of the elected members and a need for training and induction of new members.
3. The progress of the Congleton Link Road and the impact that the construction has on the town during the works.
4. Changes that may or may not impact on Congleton depending on the country's future relationship with the European Union in the future.
5. The outcome of the elections within Cheshire East and any resulting changes in policies that affect Town and Parish Councils
6. The review into the Local Government Boundaries and ward sizes and any impact that is has on Congleton
7. Whether a number of key developments in Congleton come to fruition.

For further Information contact:
Congleton Town Council
Congleton Town Hall
High Street
Congleton CW12 1BN

info@congletontowncouncil.co.uk

www.congleton-tc.gov.uk

Glossary

ACORN DATA provides consumer classification uses demographic data, social factors, population and consumer behaviour to segment the UK population. It provides precise information and an understanding of different types of people.

CCTV - Close Circuit Television. Congleton pays Cheshire East Council to monitor CCTV cameras in the town centre. Cameras are monitored 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Town Council is looking at ways to improve coverage of the town and surrounding areas as part of creating a safer community.

CIL - A Community Infrastructure Levy is funds that are paid by developers to help towards the cost of infrastructure needed in an area to accommodate the demands of the new development.

NALC—is the National Association of Local Councils. As a Town Council, Congleton is automatically a member of this group. NALC oversees an accreditation scheme for Local Councils which Congleton Town Council intends to gain in 2019/2020.

PCSO - Police Community Support Officer. Congleton Town Council pays for one additional PCSO to work in the Congleton area. Cheshire East Council pays for one PCSO for each ward.

SECTION 106— This is similar to CILs and is funds negotiated between the Principal Authority (in Congleton this is Cheshire East Council) and a developer to pay for infrastructure requirements close to a new development. In the Planning Agreement the terms and conditions of the section 106 usage will be set.