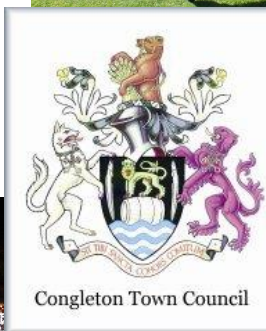


Congleton Town Council



Business Plan 2020 – 2023

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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 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 Congleton Urban District Council's powers transferred to the new District (Borough) of Congleton, formed in April 1974 by the merger of five former urban and rural authorities.

Congleton Borough Council and Cheshire County Council, along with Macclesfield Borough Council and Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council merged to form the new unitary principal authority, known as Cheshire East Borough Council. This authority has existed since 1st April 2009.

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, 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 examines plans due for consideration by Cheshire East Council as the planning authority.

The Town Council is made up of 20 Councillors, representing two town wards, Congleton East and Congleton West. Council elections take place every four years when a new Council is elected, the last elections in 2019 saw a change in the political balance of the Council from 18 Conservatives, 1 Labour and 1 Independent to 7 Liberal Democrats, 6 Conservatives, 6 Independents and 1 Women's Equality Party

This business plan concentrates on the civic years 2020 -2023, 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 the town.

The plan recognises the current priorities of the Town Council and the community it serves and key actions and activities included within the emerging Congleton Neighbourhood Plan. The plan illustrates the Town Council's commitment to working with Cheshire East Council and 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 Congleton 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).
- ◆ Based on the **Acorn data** 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%)

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-profiles/congleton-east-ward-profile-2016.pdf>

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 37th 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).
- 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%)
Population Density (per hectare)	23.2

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>

WARD MAP

This map gives an idea of how the Parish of Congleton is divided into two wards. Far greater detailed map can be seen by clicking onto the links below.

[Congleton East Ward Map](#)

[Congleton West Ward Map](#)



OUR VISION

Our vision is for Congleton to be a vibrant, inclusive, enterprising, active and sustainable town, which remains as an attractive place to live, visit, invest and work.

OUR CORE VALUES

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

1. Addressing the needs of our community
2. Equality, diversity and inclusion
3. Collaboration
4. Honesty and integrity
5. Ensure value for money
6. Reducing our Carbon Footprint

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Our high level Strategic Objectives are :-

- SO 1 Ensure growth of the town is matched by adequate services and infrastructure
- SO 2 Ensure transport infrastructure is integrated and sustainable
- SO 3 Reduce economic, social and health inequalities within our community
- SO 4 Ensure that the town centre is fit for 21st century
- SO 5 Greater promotion of Congleton as a place to work, live, visit and do business
- SO 6 Congleton Town Council will be sustainable and carbon neutral
- SO 7 Ensure we effectively communicate with all sections of our community
- SO 8 Ensure a high standard of operational quality and asset management

KEY ISSUES FACING CONGLETON

- Provision of public services impact (doctors/dentists/schools/childcare/social care/mental healthcare)
- Insufficient and poor-quality sports and recreation facilities
- Traffic congestion/air quality/car parking challenges
- Walking/cycling/buses/trains/electric vehicles/mobility scooters infrastructure
- The challenges of ageing and disability
- Lack of support for families and young people
- Lack of affordable childcare
- Lack of local jobs
- The gender pay gap
- Inequality in health outcomes
- Shortage of social housing
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Crime and Antisocial behavior
- Gambling and irresponsible lending/borrowing
- Declining retail market
- Insufficient employment land
- Key employment sites requiring/awaiting development
- Congleton is an undiscovered gem
- Protection of built heritage
- Celebration of town's history
- Development of cultural heritage
- Preservation of quality green spaces
- Sustainability and Climate Emergency
- Lack of engagement with some parts of our community

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES DETAIL

SO 1	Ensure growth of the town is matched by adequate services and infrastructure
	Congleton to have the necessary infrastructure and services to support the Cheshire East Council Local Plan's new housing and employment allocations by 2030
1.1	Complete the Congleton Neighbourhood Plan by 2020
1.2	Engage with CEC and surrounding parishes on the CEC Boundary Review consultation
1.3	Through the Planning process lobby CEC for S106 and CIL Contributions to support planned infrastructure improvements
1.4	Establish with CEC the current and future requirements and locations for both Physical, Mental Health and Education provision
1.5	Ensure adequate provision of outdoor sports facilities and associated infrastructure.
1.6	Work in partnership to secure adequate employment land and to protect and enhance current sites where appropriate
1.7	Work with Partners to develop and deliver effective marketing campaigns promoting Congleton as a place to do business and invest in
1.8	Support and lobby for continuation of the services provided by the Congleton War Memorial Hospital
SO 2	Ensure transport infrastructure is integrated and sustainable
	A sustainable, flexible transport system that meets the needs of all residents and creates a cleaner, better connected Congleton by 2030.
2.1	Development of a Sustainable Transport Masterplan for Congleton and surrounding Parishes
2.2	Promote existing infrastructure for sustainable modes of transport
2.3	Review current bus and train provision and develop proposals with CEC for integration
2.4	Review provision for car drivers including electric charging points and Car Parking strategy
2.5	Safety campaign and educational programme for motorists, walkers , cyclists and wheelchair users
2.6	Reinforcing the need for high quality transport plans from developers of new housing
SO3	Reduce economic, social and health inequalities within our community
	By 2025, Congleton will have measurably 'narrowed the outcomes gap' for members of our community so that Congleton has some of the best social, economic and health mobility indicators of any Cheshire East town.
3.1	To establish a benchmark for social, economic and health inequalities
3.2	To strive for first rate mental health services for our town and surrounding areas
3.3	Promote existing services and support the development of additional support for families and young people
3.4	Improve provision and enable access to affordable childcare for people in Congleton
3.5	Support the requirements of an ageing population
3.6	Support the requirements of people with disabilities or complex needs
3.7	Promote the benefits of a diverse and inclusive workforce
3.8	Support and promote initiatives to close the Gender Pay Gap in Congleton
3.9	Work to increase the provision of social housing in Congleton
3.10	Empower and promote agencies supporting those living with addiction and abuse e.g. of drugs, alcohol, gambling
3.11	Promote initiatives to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Congleton

SO 4	Ensure that the town centre is fit for 21st century
	A fit- for -purpose town that meets the needs of a 21st century Congleton by 2030
4.1	Engage with land owners and CEC planning to promote the regeneration of key sites within the town e.g. Bridestones /market area, Bossons Mill, Bradshaw House, former council offices site Market Square - provision of an additional hotel
4.2	Support the relocation and development of the museum
4.3	Actively protect the conservation area
4.4	Awareness and protection of listed buildings and local listed buildings
4.5	Make representations on regeneration projects and new developments to ensure it reflects the heritage and traditional architecture of the Town
4.6	Maintain a vibrant town that services the current and future needs of residents and visitors
4.7	Work with and support the Local Policing Unit to ensure we have adequate police coverage
4.8	Work with partners to develop initiatives focused on reducing anti-social behaviour
4.9	Continue reviewing the CCTV provision and other forms of security and monitoring
4.10	Enhance the built heritage in the town should grants become available
4.11	Lobby for Business development and start up grants
SO 5	Greater promotion of Congleton as a place to work, live, visit and do business
	Congleton to be recognised as a friendly town with a vibrant cultural scene and an interesting heritage surrounded by beautiful countryside.
5.1	Development of a Tourism and Marketing Strategy by 2020
5.2	Create and promote Town trails
5.3	Develop and promote a regular events programme
5.4	Review the opportunities for twinning with another country (s) with a focus on youth
SO 6	Congleton Town Council will be sustainable and carbon neutral
	Congleton Town Council to reduce its carbon footprint to zero by 2025 and work towards creating a sustainable and carbon neutral town.
6.1	Reduce the carbon footprint for the Town Council's assets and Streetscape service
6.2	Through partnership working and engagement with the adjoining parishes plant and maintain 30,000 new trees by 2024
6.3	Review existing facilities for recycling and develop new where necessary
6.4	Develop and deliver a campaign (s) promoting the need and facilities for recycling
6.5	Create awareness of training opportunities
6.6	Maximise opportunities for the retention and enhancement of Green Open Spaces
6.7	Support the development and delivery of the Congleton Sustainability Group's initiatives
6.8	To work with partners on recycling initiatives
6.9	To improve the air quality in Congleton
SO 7	Ensure we effectively communicate with all sections of our community
	Congleton is an engaged and caring community that looks after the needs of all residents and businesses
7.1	Develop a communications strategy inclusive of all forms of media.
7.2	Through Partnership working support and promote activities that deliver the needs of residents
7.3	Inform local residents about the provision of local services
SO 8	Ensure a high standard of operational quality and asset management
	The Town Council is recognised as being well managed ambitious council that supports the needs of its residents
8.1	To achieve and maintain the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) 'Council Gold Standard of Operation'

8.2	Through a capital investment plan maintain and develop the current Town Council's built assets inclusive of the Town Hall, Cenotaph, Paddling Pool and Allotments
8.3	Explore opportunities to acquire additional assets and services that will benefit the community
8.4	Ensure that health and safety is at the forefront of Town Council's services
8.5	To develop and enhance the Streetscape grounds maintenance and street cleansing service
8.6	Work to reduce the operational deficit of the Town Hall

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

The Town Council has well defined terms of reference for each of its committees, which all have 10 voting members. Non-voting councillors regularly attend other committees to enable them to have a wider understanding of Town Council business. All councillors are entitled to attend and speak on agenda matters if they so wish, however only members appointed that that committee may vote. The only exceptions to this is the Planning Committee and Full Council 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 job descriptions pay and working conditions and the overall operating structure

Town Hall, Assets and Services: Reviews the overall performance and development of the Town Hall and the Streetscape Service as well as the management of the Council's other assets and Services

Planning: The Town Council is not the planning authority, the committee forwards its observations and local knowledge on planning and license applications within the town boundary to Cheshire East Council who determine the applications

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

Council: Meetings are open to all 20 Councillors and its role is to ratify the minutes of the committee meetings and consider strategic matters this includes but is not limited to:

- Adoption and amendment of the corporate strategy and business plans
- Approval and amendment of policies
- Approval of the Neighbourhood Plan
- Approval of the annual budget and precept
- Election of Mayor and appointment of committees and chairs
- All powers in case of a civil emergency or urgency item

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 generally 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, examples of some of the working groups are below – with the working group listed under the appropriate committee .

Committees				Partnership groups
Council / Civic	Town Hall, Assets and Services	Community and Environment	Planning	
Chairs group	Streetscape Development	Anti- Social Behaviour	S106 Review group	Health and wellbeing
Strategy working	Market Development	Congleton Green		Dementia
Youth Council		Integrated Transport		Sustainability
		MIU War memorial		Youth Forum
		Christmas		Senior Forum
		In Bloom		5 Town partnerships
		Pub-watch – non reporting		Connected Communities
		Health and Wellbeing – mental health		Cenotaph

The Town Council also holds 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 committee and council agendas, minutes and reports can be viewed at www.congelton-tc.gov.uk

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 2020/21 is £1.72 per week for an average band D property. This enables the Town Council to spend £923,674 per annum. This is enhanced by a grant from Cheshire East Council where we have a Service Level Agreement for the delivery of the Streetscape Services, which provides a high quality environment for our town through the floral displays, grass cutting, grounds maintenance and street cleansing. Additional income is raised through the hire of the Town Hall and via grants and sponsorship raised for specific projects and activities.

Overall our Income and expenditure is expected to be circa £1.4million for 2020/21

SUMMARY

This Business Plan identifies the core values and the strategic objectives for Congleton Town Council for the year 2020-23 and beyond. This document only give the headline titles and the areas of work. Operationally there are many action and working plans designed to deliver the Business Plan through employees of the council, councillors and partner organisations.

In 2020 -23 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 adequacy of services and infrastructure to support the growth of the town
3. The impacts of the Congleton Link Road during construction and once completed
4. Changes that may or may not impact on Congleton depending on the country's future relationship with the European Union.
5. Changes that may or may not impact on Congleton depending on political changes within national government and Cheshire East.
6. Any changes in Cheshire East Council's policies that affect town and parish councils.
7. The review into the Local Government Boundaries and ward sizes and any impact that is has on Congleton and its structures
8. Whether a number of key developments in Congleton come to fruition.

For further Information contact:
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GLOSSARY

ACORN DATA provides consumer classification using 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 an amount that is paid by developers to help towards the cost of infrastructure needed in an area to accommodate the demands of the new development.

NALC—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 are 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.

SUSTAINABLE MODES OF TRANSPORT – refers to walking, cycling, bus routes, bridleways and including disability access / provision