



Nantwich Town Council

A “Vision” for Nantwich 2019-2023

Introduction

In 2011 the Council responded to the passing of the Localism Bill by committing itself to the transfer of assets from Cheshire East. It took a conscious decision to become a more proactive Council. In May 2012 the Council took over management of Nantwich Civic Hall, Nantwich Market Hall, 4 allotment sites, Snow Hill toilets and 2 redundant toilet blocks to be used for storage. The Council also took on responsibility for town centre management, street entertainment, tourism, CCTV and shopmobility.

The Council now has a staff complement of 14 full time staff and 2 part time staff plus a team of casual employees for bar work.

The Council will consider its budget for 2020/21 in November 2019. It is appropriate to review how the Council might evolve in the next few years and to consider how it sees Nantwich developing physically, economically and socially. This document will provide the strategic aims to guide the Council, reviews its present functions and identifies matters to address.

The Town Council – A Leader of the Community

Town and Parish Councils form the lowest tier of the local government hierarchy. Traditionally they have had little influence and their powers have been restricted. With the passing of the Localism Bill however there has been recognition that this tier is the closest to the electorate and that it has an important role to play in representing local views and opinion. The transfer and devolvement of functions has also given the sector increasing control over the way services are delivered.

Within this context Nantwich Town Council has embraced its new role and is looking to further its influence over local services. It sees itself as a proactive organisation working with partners in government, the private sector and voluntary organisations to establish new and innovative ways of service delivery whilst maintaining its traditional roles. It will look to provide its own services where possible but also to work with others to enable change to take place.

Overall the Council considers it should be a leader of the local community seeking to influence others where necessary and promoting change to encourage the provision of effective and efficient services.

Above all else the Council is intent on putting Nantwich first.

Strategic Aims

To fulfil its role the Town Council will strive to achieve the following aims:-

- 1. To conserve and enhance the character of the town and its green spaces, making the town greener and cleaner**
 - 1.1 Encourage the control of development to ensure the historic character of the town is conserved and enhanced. Adoption of a Public Realm Strategy and design guidance may be appropriate.
 - 1.2 Encourage improvement in the town's green spaces, particularly the Riverside, Barony Park and Brookfield Park.
 - 1.3 Support the Nantwich Litter Group and other volunteer groups.

- 2. To make Nantwich a better and safer place to live, work and visit**
 - 2.1 Encourage and develop a range of measures to maximise the visitor economy and make Nantwich a tourist destination town through the development of a tourism strategy
 - 2.2 Encourage a range of measures to make Nantwich an event destination town through co-operation and support for events' organisers
 - 2.3 Maximise opportunities to access sports, leisure and recreation resources including investment in the Council's own facilities such as the Civic Hall and allotments.
 - 2.4 Encourage greater parking provision through influencing the adoption of an appropriate parking policy
 - 2.5 Assist in promoting business development, employment and economic vibrancy through co-operation with Nantwich retailers and South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce to maintain and develop the role of Nantwich as a traditional market town. The proposed redevelopment of St Anne's Lane will be a key factor in developing the retail offering in the town.
 - 2.6 Promote accessibility for all in the community

- 3. To deliver effective and efficient services**
 - 3.1 Continue to manage facilities and services to ensure best value for money to precept payers through the Medium Term Financial Strategy
 - 3.2 Make effective choices based on individual cases to determine what additional services and functions the Council will deliver.
 - 3.3 Develop appropriate strategies to ensure effective management of finance and assets
 - 3.4 Work with Cheshire East and other strategic partners to ensure the continued provision of key non statutory services and assets.

- 4. To work with and influence others to deliver improvement in areas where the Council has no direct control**
 - 4.1 Work with and influence other agencies (government and voluntary) to develop a range of delivery mechanisms to effectively deliver services.
 - 4.2 Support implementation of Borough Council planning policies
 - 4.3 Support local voluntary groups and work with cleansing services and landowners to ensure a consistently high level of cleanliness in the town.
 - 4.4 Work with and influence the Police and other agencies/partners to reduce crime and the fear of crime

- 4.5 Assist transport authorities to secure enhanced road and rail infrastructure and protect and improve public transport
- 4.6 Assist health services to influence the provision of adequate and effective health care
- 4.7 Work with the housing authority and housing providers to maintain and develop a range of appropriate housing options to meet local demands and needs.

5. To develop appropriate strategies and plans for the Town and the Town Council which are supported by the community

- 5.1 Continue to review the needs of the Town in line with changes in circumstances
- 5.2 Improve and maintain community engagement and communications with resident and organisations
- 5.3 Consult the community on the preparation of plans
- 5.4 Consider the development of a "Strategic Plan" including a a short, medium and long term action plan.
- 5.5 Actively participate in the Cheshire East Community Governance Review of the Town Council boundaries.
- 5.6 Ensure the establishment is balanced against work requirements and has the appropriate skills/knowledge to meet future organisational needs.

Future Direction - Key areas

To achieve the above aims there are key areas of concern which require action.

1. Retention and enhancement of open and green spaces.

1.1 Town planting and displays – The Council currently supports Nantwich in Bloom and procures planting and other services from Cheshire East. Support for Nantwich in Bloom has increased over the years.

1.2 Riverside - The riverside open space requires further enhancement to improve pedestrian links and cycle routes with particular emphasis on improving the linear links from Nantwich Lake to Beam Bridge. It is important that the open space is continued on the western side of the river and is not broken by land which is currently not under the control of the Kingsbourne developers.

On the eastern side the area surrounding the refurbished swimming pool should be the focus of improvements linked to the potential redevelopment of Snow Hill and additional car parking. The pool is a valuable asset to the town. Everybody Leisure is committed to a significant investment to develop the services available at the pool.

1.3 Gateways and corridors - The gateways to the town and corridors into the town including the roundabouts on the major roads give an impression of the town to visitors. These areas would benefit considerably from the installation of public art and improved landscaping. The appearance of the corridors into the town would be improved and benefit tourism. The Town Council will consider improved Gateway signage with the introduction of Tourist Information Points throughout the town centre.

2. Protection and enhancement of the historic character of the town, conservation of the natural and built environment.

2.1 Protecting and enhancement of the buildings and character of streets in the conservation area – The conservation area is integral to the character of the town. This should be the focus of a Strategy for improvement and maintenance of the Public Realm which should include:

- Character and appearance of development in the conservation area
- Enhancement of parts of the conservation area
- Re-instatements policy
- Treatment of unadopted footways and highways
- Views into and out of the conservation area
- Appearance of car parks
- Backland views
- Control of advertisements particularly illuminated signs in the conservation area
- Control of A boards
- Design, colour and lettering of signs
- Appearance, suitability and location of street furniture including seating
- Avoidance of signage clutter

Several areas of the conservation area need enhancement to protect the historic character of the town and improve the tourism offering, including Castle Street, the Stocks at Pillory Street, Church Walk and the area surrounding the Church are in desperate need of major work to repair uneven surfaces and replace inappropriate materials. These areas situated at the core of the conservation area make an essential contribution to the fabric of the town contributing to its character and ambience. They are well used by pedestrians and perceived of as public highway and as such need major work to ensure that they continue to make a contribution to

the historic conservation area. The Council, as a member of Nantwich Partnership, is exploring sources of investment to improve these areas.

- 2.2 Protecting trees, hedging and planting in residential, public and open spaces – Continued support for Borough Council policies could be supplemented by further work for a lengthsmen.
- 2.3 Ensuring renovation and new buildings complement the existing buildings and character of the town - Appropriate design guidance could be prepared as part of the Public Realm Strategy.
- 2.4 Maintenance of highways and pavements and preservation of appropriate materials in the conservation area. Lack of appropriate maintenance has taken its toll on the pedestrianised area within the town centre. Uneven surfaces, poor reinstatements and drainage issues detract from the retail experience and will ultimately affect visitor numbers in the short term and investment by developers and retailers in the long term. Investment in appropriate renewal is still needed to ensure confidence in Nantwich as an attractive retail and visitor town is maintained.
- 2.5 Review pedestrian prioritisation measures – The traffic orders should be reviewed to reduce the number and size of vehicles entering the pedestrianised area.

3. Residential and town parking issues.

- 3.1 Residential parking – An appropriate parking policy needs to be developed to ensure that residential areas close to the town centre are not adversely affected by town centre visitors.
- 3.2 Town centre car parks and parking fees - There is already great pressure on car parking space within the town which will only increase with the new development at Reaseheath. The “Free after 3” initiative on the Snow Hill car park has been well received in the town but its popularity also indicates the demand as other car parks are still well used. The provision of additional car parking in the Snow Hill locality is required. This could be linked to the redevelopment of the Swinemarket retail area.

4. Leisure, sporting and tourism facilities.

- 4.1 Nantwich Civic Hall – The hall would benefit greatly from a modest rear extension to provide additional facilities. This would allow greater use by community groups and voluntary groups as well as assisting commercial bookings and improving the appearance of the rear elevation.
- 4.2 Snowhill Public Conveniences – The Town Council will consider options for the re-introduction of a public convenience provision at Snow hill.
- 4.3 The Museum - Support for Nantwich Museum has been increased.
- 4.4 Players Theatre – Continued support is required for this highly successful theatre.
- 4.5 Tourist Information - A tourism strategy is required with an emphasis on local tourism including promotional material and the development of links with local tourist attractions.

5. Health, wellbeing and emergency services.

- 5.1 Activities that enhance the health and wellbeing of residents – The Council is participating in campaigns to promote a healthier lifestyle and promote awareness of health issues.
- 5.2 Nantwich 1st Responder – The Council supports the local service with an annual grant.
- 5.3 Hospital Street Air Quality – The problems of poor air quality in Hospital Street have been investigated over a long period. There is no highway driven solution to the problem and other measures have been developed to improve the environment for residents within this area. Specialist paint which absorbs toxics has been applied to the buildings.

6. Community Safety.

- 6.1 Policing and law enforcement in the town – The Council works closely with the local Police to manage events in the town and reduce the incidents of crime.

- 6.2 CCTV – The Council has committed itself to support for continued operation of CCTV in the town.
- 6.3 Licensing – The Council supports the introduction of a late night levy on premises with extended opening hours as a means of funding extra policing.

7. Transport.

- 7.1 Railway station – The Council supports Crewe and Shrewsbury Passenger Association (CASPA) in campaigns to ensure Nantwich is well served by train services.

8. Business and Employment.

- 8.1 Promotion of business activities in the town and surrounding areas, increasing tourists/visitors – The Council works closely with the South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce to develop business activity in the town.
- 8.2 Facilitating business diversity in the town and inward development and investment – The Council manages the Market Hall and Farmers Market to increase the diversity of retail offering in the town.

9. Communication.

- 9.1 Open communication and information sharing between residents and the town council – The Council publishes a newsletter, Talk of the Town, and maintains a web site.
- 9.2 Groups, residents and volunteers are given the opportunity to participate in discussions and have direct involvement in local projects.
- 9.3 The Town Council would like to seek the views of its resident and stakeholders in its Vision for the Town. By completing the survey which is available at www.nantwichtowncouncil.gov.uk it will help inform the Strategic Action Plan which will be developed from the approved Nantwich Vision 2019-23 document.

Present Functions

The Town Council is currently involved in the following activities and services.

1 Administration

Administration covers the costs of running the Town Council office, employing staff, elections, audit and insurance.

Issues

Civic Hall – The Council has moved the main office to the Civic Hall.

Future of Brookfield Hall – The lease on Brookfield Hall ends in 2027. The Council is still pursuing the wish to terminate the lease.

Council Chamber – The Council could consider a modest scheme to improve the Peggy Killick Suite for Council meetings.

2 Civic Duties

Civic duties include Mayoral activities and responses to consultations from Cheshire East and other government agencies.

Issue

Some Town Councils have Youth Councils. The Town Council will pursue options to improve youth engagement.

3 Planning

Development Control – The Council is consulted on planning applications.

Issue

To ensure timely response Planning applications will be considered by the Full Council and its committees' which ever meeting is next on the schedule.

Strategic Planning – The Council assisted Cheshire East in the preparation of the core strategy of the Local Plan through the Stakeholder Panel.

Issue

The development of strategic sites will impact on the services and infrastructure in the town. The Council needs to continue to lobby for expenditure to be made in the town centre.

4 Communications

Publicity and Talk of the Town Newsletter

The Town Council has a statutory responsibility to publicise its meetings and activities. The Council also publishes Talk of the Town, a quarterly newsletter distributed to all households in Nantwich, to provide information and advice to residents on Council activities and other items of interest.

Issue

Wider distribution of Talk of the Town – Council could consider increasing the budget to achieve a wider distribution to the retail sector and businesses.

Web site

The Town Council also provides information on its activities and services through the web site, www.nantwichtowncouncil.gov.uk

Issue

Interactive functions – As the Council develops its functions and services there is an opportunity to provide more services through the web site.

5 Events

A number of events are organised or supported by the Town Council to promote the development of the civic, cultural, educational & social life of Nantwich's residents. These include support for Holly Holy Day, Jazz Festival, Nantwich Food & Drink Festival, Words and Music Festival and the provision of Christmas lights.

Issues

Continued / increased support for events – The Council is committed to supporting events through the year. However, as spending by others has decreased, requests for additional support have been forthcoming, most notably in respect of Nantwich Show and the Food Festival. The Council needs to consider its ability to increase support in the future.

The proposal by Nantwich Show to move to a two-day event on Friday and Saturday will have revenue implications for the Council and a request for a further grant may also be forthcoming.

6 Support for other events and organisations including those involved with Environment Works and Creative Arts

The Town Council makes donations and grants to support other events and organisations in Nantwich – Nantwich Players, Nantwich Museum Trust, Nantwich Civic Society, Guy Harvey Youth Club, and Nantwich Choral Society.

Issues

Level of support – As support from other agencies decreases requests to increase the level of support have been received. Does the Council wish to continue and / or increase its support?

7 Nantwich Civic Hall

The Town Council operates the Civic Hall as a community building for Nantwich and the surrounding area. A policy document on the philosophy of use has been adopted.

Issues

Level of subsidy – The continuing aim is to minimise the subsidy from the precept.

Extension – A rear extension to provide additional facilities would increase use of the hall and improve facilities for existing users. A feasibility study is proposed before the Council considers whether to include the scheme in the capital programme.

Other alterations – Limited improvements to the Peggy Killick Suite are being considered.

8 Nantwich Market Hall

The Market Hall is operated by the Town Council to enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre and extend the retail offering.

Issues

Increased use – The Market is open to the public on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Any increased use would impact on the existing traders.

9 Maintenance of allotments

Following transfer, 4 allotment sites at Brookfield (3 sites) and at Welshman's Lane are being maintained for letting to Nantwich residents. Nantwich allotments are now open to Stapeley residents following the agreement with Stapeley and District Parish Council.

Issue

Capital investment – The Council could consider further capital investment to improve the roadways.

10 Maintenance of the Millennium Clock
The Town Council maintains the Millennium Clock in the Cocoa Yard using in-house resources.

11 Street scene works / Nantwich in Bloom
To improve the physical appearance of the town, planting and hanging baskets are provided in the town centre and the Town Council supports Nantwich in Bloom.

Issues

Level of support – Funding from other sources has decreased. The Council has increased support in the last few years.

Street furniture – The Council has taken over responsibility for benches and planters. It has a rolling programme of maintenance linked with the Memorials scheme.

Enhancement schemes – Several areas of the town require capital investment to improve surfacing and drainage. Does the Council wish to invest in schemes particularly in those areas where responsibility for maintenance is unclear e.g. Church Walk?

12 Town Centre Management
The Town Council is investing in a number of initiatives including the comfort scheme and upgrading the noticeboards.

Issues

Continued support for comfort scheme – This scheme is successful and should be continued.

Snow Hill toilet block – What should be the future use of this site?

13 Street Entertainment
A programme is organised and supported during the summer months.

Issue

Is more expenditure required to ensure the programme remains vibrant and relevant?

14 Maintenance of Riverside open spaces
Improvement of the Riverside is supported as an area for informal recreation for the benefit of the residents of Nantwich through grant aid to Nantwich Civic Society / Riverside Concern and Greenspace.

Issues

Continued support - Does the Council wish to increase support and if so by how much?

Enhancement schemes – Should the Council become more involved in schemes to improve the Riverside.

15 Community Safety
Nantwich First Responders
The Town Council supports the First Responders emergency service.

Issues

Continued support - Does the Council wish to continue support?

16 Information Services
The Town Council runs the tourism service. A Tourism and Marketing Strategy is required.

Issues - Development of service – In what ways does the Council wish to see the service develop?

RECOMMENDATIONS

The above document will inform the budget setting for 2020/21 and beyond and be articulated in a 4-year Strategic Action Plan.