



SANDBACH TOWN COUNCIL

SANDBACH TOWN COUNCIL CORPORATE STRATEGY 2022-2025

FOREWORD

"I am delighted to commend this Corporate Strategy to Sandbach, on behalf of Sandbach Town Council, and feel it reflects the extent of our ambition to be a key player in the community. The Council is truly committed to delivering high quality, professional and relevant services in an inclusive, respectful, affordable and environmentally responsible way. We are very fortunate to work with, and benefit from, a thriving and engaged community to achieve this together."

Sandbach Town Mayor Councillor Katheryn Flavell

Our Vision for Sandbach

A vibrant, modern market town and service centre, which capitalises on its heritage and location to develop a robust economy, a sustainable environment and an inclusive and engaged community.

We will achieve this by supporting and engaging with our communities; working with key stake holders and partners to stimulate economic growth and protect amenities and the environment.

Our Mission

To use our mandate to represent the best interests of our town and surrounding parishes. We aim to deliver efficient and cost effective services, to empower our communities, to improve the quality of life and wellbeing of our residents and to be an active partner and advocate for an inclusive Sandbach.

We will achieve this by working together with our network of staff, partners, residents and volunteers to ensure the town can be the very best it can be. We will understand and adapt to the needs of our communities and make decisions that are environmentally sustainable. We aim to grow and nurture public support through listening and responding to our residents.

Our Core Values

- Openness and transparency
- Equality and respect
- Good communication and engagement
- Integrity and value for money
- Professionalism and delivering on our promises

Strategic Goals



A PROSPEROUS TOWN

Make Sandbach even better by enhancing economic prosperity for all with a spread of high quality and sustainable employment and a vibrant town centre. Sandbach will embrace the opportunities presented by digitalisation, delivering improved services to meet the additional demand as it grows.

A SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

Improving the quality of the public realm, responding to climate change issues, lobbying for better public transport and protecting the local environment and the Town's heritage.

AN ENGAGED COMMUNITY

Developing a sense of civic pride across all age groups, improving the level of public engagement and providing a place where people feel positive and safe, promoting equality, diversity and inclusivity.

AN AGENDA FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Investing in, enabling and campaigning for services that promote healthy and safe lifestyles. Improve and increase leisure assets and promote arts and culture.

A COUNCIL TO DELIVER

Developing the capacity and skills within the Council to equip it to deliver the community facing priorities efficiently and effectively and to use resources wisely and responsibly.

A PROSPEROUS TOWN

We propose to:

- Work with Cheshire East, the Cheshire & Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and other partners to maximise the benefits for Sandbach from the Town Centre Vitality Plan.
- Work with the community to achieve the objectives set out in the Sandbach Neighbourhood Plan (as revised) and to use these as principles when responding to planning applications and planning policy consultations.
- Consider developing a new “brand” for Sandbach and work with partners to promote the town as **the** place to live, work, shop and visit in South Cheshire.
- Work with others, particularly Cheshire East Council, to develop increased and more co-ordinated public transport services linking the railway station and the Town’s population centres as well as with centres outside the Town.
- Lobby for live times for bus and train travel to improve access and information
- Continue to lobby for the vitally important inclusive access to the railway station and more accessible parking facilities through membership of the Community Rail Partnership.
- Enhance and develop the Town’s markets in order to maximise its contribution to the revitalisation of Sandbach, including the visitor offer, whilst ensuring markets operate on an increasingly commercial basis.
- Work with local businesses – physical and virtual – and representative bodies such as the Cheshire East Chamber of Commerce, to encourage networking, investment, and job creation for a speedy and sustained recovery following the impact of the pandemic.
- Continue to organise, support, and promote a range of events which promote the Town and attract visitors.
- Use our planning influence to ensure there is no net loss of allocated employment sites and to retain and enhance smaller employment sites particularly where they enable “start-up” activity or the expansion of existing businesses.
- Lobby for and help Cheshire East Council and the LEP facilitate the development of the Capricorn Employment site adjacent to Junction 17.
- Help facilitate start-up activity or the expansion of existing businesses and by recognising the move to hybrid working support business from home and online.
- Be alert to of the development of HS2 (and possibly Great British Railway HQ) at Crewe and seek out spin off opportunities for cluster or support businesses within Sandbach.
- Promote the visitor and night-time economies by working with stakeholders to raise the standard and range of the offering in Sandbach, with supporting promotion to local audiences.

- Lobby to retain free public parking in the Town and to increase the amount of parking available, including edge of town and associated transport, whilst promoting better public transport and promoting their use.
- Continue to work with Cheshire East Council, the community and other partners to ensure the development of Sandbach is planned and delivered in a strategic and holistic manner.
- Work with others to ensure that Sandbach gets “full fibre” and 5G across the town so that local residents, businesses (current and new) and visitors alike can all access ever improving digital services and prevent digital exclusion.
- Develop the visitor offer of Sandbach, including access to Sandbach Park, the canal, the multitude of paths and bridleways and link with the hospitality offer to make Sandbach a “must go” destination.
- Work to ensure a quality retail offering whilst maintaining the heritage of the town by helping to influence the continuation of adequate physical retail outlets and an extension to the current space, where opportunities allow, including by conversion.
- Continue to grow the Town Hall to best advantage to support businesses and revitalise the Town Centre for both commercial and community events. We will also look at developing its use, including the offer of conference facilities, “offsite” meeting facilities for away day opportunities etc., by releasing the Board Room for its original purpose
- Whenever possible we will use local suppliers and businesses and seek to influence our partners to do likewise. We will create a roster of companies that match our ethical standards, environmental aims and value criteria.
- Work with Cheshire East Council in seeking funding to support businesses and job creation in Sandbach.
- Support the development and maintenance of a Business Directory.
- Promoting a culture that recognises the value of the contribution of young people to the wellbeing of the Town whilst ensuring education is linked to local business needs.

A SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

We propose to:

Work to protect and enhance our local environment and public realm

- Adopt an Environmental and Sustainability (Green) Policy to support locally the climate change initiative and ensure actions are taken individually and collectively.
- Play our part in implementing the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan in relation to “Protecting the Countryside”, “Preserving Heritage and Character” and “Adapting to Climate Change”.

- Raise the standard of the public realm by tackling litter, fouling, graffiti and neglected or aesthetically displeasing areas. Work in partnership with existing responsible bodies and voluntary organisations such as the Clean Team to improve the look of the Town.
- Review our Ranger service to widen its sphere of activity and to investigate taking on devolved public realm services from Cheshire East Council, provided funding follows which avoids double taxation.
- Do all we can to preserve the natural environment, parkland, biodiversity and important landscapes. Initiate wilding of areas, wildflower and tree-planting, while also seeking to develop additional wildlife areas and community gardens. Produce a Biodiversity Statement to define how the Council will meet its statutory obligation.
- Act as an advocate and gateway to other agencies in order to resolve nuisance complaints.
- Undertake an Environmental Audit to determine the effect of the Council's activities and measure its carbon footprint as a simple benchmark against which to monitor future progress and draw up an action plan.
- Work with partners and the community to make the Town sustainable and address climate change via a Local Authorities "joint pledge"¹ approach.
- Gather baseline data on the environment and sustainability within the Town, on which to prioritise future actions.
- Encourage and facilitate walking and cycling in and around the Town, between our communities and links beyond the parish to reduce the adverse impact of traffic.
- Use our communications channels to promote environmental awareness in the Town. Look in to the feasibility of an environmental walking trail.
- Support increasing the network of electric vehicle charging points in the Town where economic to do so.
- Explore meaningful public engagement options for eg. an Environmental open day at the Town Hall.
- Investigate the feasibility of trialling real time monitoring of air pollution across the wards.

Work to protect and make our heritage more accessible.

- Develop more robust ways of working with local partners to maintain Town events that highlight our history which commemorate important historical events and local heritage, whilst making these interesting for younger people.
- Support reviews and maintenance of both listed buildings and buildings on a local list and of the Conservation Area.
- Use our role in the planning system to preserve green open spaces and vistas to key features.

- Ensure Sandbach’s heritage is recorded and made accessible to all. Look to develop more online content on our website that captures the Town's look, memories, and history.
- Support a “virtual” museum for Sandbach.
- Use our website to encourage interest in family history and the Town’s social history.

AN ENGAGED COMMUNITY

We propose to:

- Celebrate the diversity of our communities of place, origin, interest, or age, and proactively engage with them.
- Work with our community on determining how to best help it develop. We will work with other local bodies which support, advise and develop community and voluntary groups and help to establish a form of Sandbach Community Hub.
- Engage with, and support, the wide variety of voluntary and charitable organisations in the Town, which help deliver our aims.
- Develop more sustainable arrangements for providing grant funding for Community/voluntary groups to ensure delivery of the maximum benefit to the community. Priority will be given to proposals which are in accordance with our strategic priorities.
- Reach out to young people and work with others to ensure they have things to aspire to, such as employment opportunities, safe activities, places to engage in and an interest in their community and Council.
- Continue to support and campaign and where appropriate help provide for, our existing youth services and outreach activities.
- Work with others to empower the volunteering culture within Sandbach by raising awareness of the benefits, promoting opportunities and co-ordinating active involvement.
- Continue to support specific local initiatives and campaigns such as the Friends of Sandbach Cemetery and their endeavours to ensure CEC reviews its strategy with regard to cemetery provision following a petition of almost 6,000 signatures.
- Ensure our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy always reflects best practice in respect of employment, services and democracy.
- Maintain either directly or in partnership, a programme of events to promote both the Town and the Council's other objectives.

- Develop a shared agenda to influence the improvement and effective management of local services through coordinating with stakeholders and relevant third parties, holding to account service providers responsible for delivery.
- Work more closely with Cheshire East Council to influence the delivery of coordinated services and development. Support the development of Cheshire East Sustainable Communities Plan where it benefits Sandbach.
- Promote and support events that build community cohesiveness or promote the Town, in the centre and in our smaller parish communities.
- Maintain an active and responsive programme of Mayoral engagements to support the community and promote the Town.
- Help to build social inclusion by linking all parts of the Parish and reaching out to new comers and minority groups.
- Look to improve voice for young people and increase their involvement in Town Council governance, possibly by reviving youth representatives or a youth council.
- Encourage more people to attend and speak at Council and councillor surgeries, whilst acknowledging some are more comfortable to take part in a community group than a council.
- Develop both a Council Social & Ethical Policy (to include a statement on modern slavery) and a Community Engagement Policy.

AN AGENDA FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING

We propose to:

Work to make our Town safer

- Look at opportunities to work with Cheshire East Council to extend CCTV services.
- Work with the Police and other partners on community safety initiatives, ensure PCSOs remain in the Town and to disseminate information and ensure residents know where to report matters of concern.
- Work with Cheshire East Council's Community Enforcement Team to address anti-social behaviour and environmental crime.
- Ensure that Sandbach has a robust Town Emergency Plan, working with appropriate third-party organisations.
- Provide access to home safety & health advice/information through our website, social media and other STC channels.

- Support Cheshire Fire & Rescue fire safety campaigns through our website, newsletter and other channels.
- Undertake a Crime Reduction Audit on the Council's activities & facilities to enable us to lead by example.
- Look to utilise the Council's assets and resources to benefit the most vulnerable in our society, including potentially a "Safe Place" in the next development of the Town Hall complex.
- Lobby for road improvements and maintenance, which improves safety.

Work to improve health and wellbeing

- Support and partner initiatives that encourage residents to live a healthier lifestyle.
- Reduce social isolation and loneliness by supporting befriending schemes and community transport.
- Work with others to provide facilities for young people to meet in and around the Parish, including opportunities for those who do not wish to join formal organised activities such as uniformed organisations.
- To support the Community & Wellbeing objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- To undertake or initiate projects to prevent the isolation of specific groups of people within our community or to help address their wellbeing. An example is a "Men's Shed" after work facility.
- Lobby to ensure that the Sandbach community and neighbouring parishes have enough health and social care facilities and services and to contribute at a very local level to Sandbach's needs, where appropriate.
- To work in partnership to address food poverty, where it occurs.
- Lobby to ensure the housing proposed in the Cheshire East Council Local Plan is delivered in a sustainable way, has a mix of types for a balanced and diverse population (including affordable homes) and is of a design that preserves the character of Sandbach.
- We will be careful not to push unwanted development in the neighbouring parishes that don't have the resources to resist.
- Review our Equality Policy to ensure "diversity" and "inclusion" are given more prominence.

Work to improve the range of leisure and sporting assets

- Oppose new developments where recreation or sports facilities are lost unless equivalent provision is provided.
- Support, facilitate and promote the development of new sports and leisure facilities to meet the local and surrounding population's needs.

- Work with grant awarding and third-party bodies to maintain and upgrade the various play parks in the Town. Encourage and facilitate “friends of” groups.
- Support inclusive local sports and leisure organisations to expand and play a greater role in meeting the population’s needs, encouraging residents to lead a healthier lifestyle.
- Open discussions with Cheshire East Council regarding taking on the maintenance of open space in the Parish.
- Promote cycling and walking, making routes accessible to all and to help funding the updating of maps.
- Work with other stakeholders to develop art and culture provision in the Town.

A COUNCIL TO DELIVER

We propose to:

Take an integrated approach to Management.

- Develop capacity and a diverse skill base through a full understanding of our human resources and an active and ongoing Councillor and Officer training programme.
- Revise the Council staffing structure, which clearly differentiates areas of responsibility, led by a strong and empowered senior Management Team, with sufficient additional resources to cope with our initial plans. Recruit to the identified roles.
- Build our processes in accordance with our Quality Policy ensuring a culture of continual improvement.
- Be innovative in finding external funding for Council and other local community initiatives.
- Seek to gain accreditation under the Local Council Award Scheme, where it furthers efficient practises.
- Deliver the Council objectives through outcome-focused delivery plans and related performance management. We will devise ways to measure the social value of our services and facilities.
- Improve operational efficiency by developing a range of quality based operating procedures.
- Regularly review our governance and policies to ensure they work to the best advantage.
- Ensure the Council's information technology is fit for purpose and delivers value for the organisation. We will develop a Digitalisation Plan which will include on-line booking and transactions, more opportunities for remote and flexible working, facilitation of hybrid meetings and introduction of new software or services where they fit the Council's aims.
- Review Conduct rules both for councillors and staff and personnel policies.

Deliver excellent services.

- Determine priorities on objective need and public choice in the light of both business, environmental and safety risk assessments.
- Continue to deliver our existing services and develop outcome-based standards.
- Support or supplement essential services provided by others, and take on new or devolved services where it is necessary to preserve or improve them.
- Introduce new services and initiatives where we can satisfy need and choice cost-effectively.
- Seek to remain eligible for the general power of competence and embrace other new powers made available, which benefit our aims, so as to increase our ability to offer services, local governance and influence.
- If requested and where capacity allows, to make our skilled Staff resource available to smaller neighbouring parishes, to advise, support and work together for the benefit of the wider community.

Provide excellent communications and transparency

- Seek to engage the public and communities through a variety of channels ensuring communication is two way and that we listen.
- Regularly report progress on actions in our delivery plans, including any unimplemented resolutions and delegated decisions. Develop a range of key performance indicators where they enable better communication of our progress.
- Ensure regular publication of key Council financial reporting and that published accounts are easy to understand.
- Continually improve and increase the content of the Website. Develop the use of social media such as Facebook and Twitter, to make the Council more accessible and efficient.
- Reinstate a periodic newsletter and review effective and responsible means of distribution.
- Keep our Publication Scheme and Information Guide current and exceed “data transparency” requirements.
- Continue to hold a public participation session at all public meetings.

Continue to promote the Town Hall as a centre for everyone and as a strongly performing commercial enterprise.

- Ensure the Town Hall Complex and other accommodation provides modern office space and a welcoming reception – consider the development of a tourist information point at the centre of our community.

- Provide a quality and engaging public interface for the Council's services and a gateway to services by other providers. This will include enhanced digital communication and noticeboards.
- Aim to operate some activities on a commercial basis, with a full cost understanding of all events and activities and the markets in which they compete.
- Provide a range of services and events to support and promote the Council's democratic processes, the community, citizens' wellbeing, supporting local businesses and job creation and protecting the Town's environment.
- Provide subsidised use of the facility by community organisations and charities which support the Council's strategic aims.
- Continue to undertake a range of commercial events which help maximise the use of the facility.