



SANDBACH TOWN COUNCIL

Agenda for the meeting to be held on Wednesday, 14th December 2022
at 7.00pm in Sandbach Town Hall.

Opening Reflections

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive apologies for absence made directly to the Clerk **by 5pm** on the day of the meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To provide an opportunity for Members and Officers to declare pecuniary & non-pecuniary interests in relation to any item on the agenda.

3. MAYOR'S COMMENTS

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The meeting Chair will adjourn the meeting to allow questions relating to items on this Agenda from members of the public.

After the questions, the Chair will reconvene the meeting.

Prior requests to speak: Local Resident – Item 8

4. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Action: *To consider that, under the Public Bodies (admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and accredited representatives of newspaper be excluded from the meeting for any items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.*

5. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 30 NOVEMBER 2022 (DRAFT).

6. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE SMALL COMMON SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 7 DECEMBER 2022 (DRAFT).

Minutes can be viewed via Sandbach Town Council website:
<https://sandbach.gov.uk/public-meetings-2022-2023/>

7. A DEMENTIA FRIENDLY COUNCIL

[Attached: Report of the Chair of the Dementia Friendly Task & Finish Group]

Lead: Chair of the Dementia Friendly Task & Finish Group

Action: *That Council:
Supports the steps outlined in the action plan and work towards becoming a Dementia Friendly Council within 3 months.*

8. COMMITMENT TO CLIMATE CHANGE

[Attached: Report of the Climate Change Steering Group]

Lead: Council Climate Champions

Action: *That Council:
i) Commit to be carbon neutral by 2025 and publish the plan to achieve that;
ii) Note the current and planned actions to ensure that the Council fulfils its commitment providing leadership through effective joint working to tackling climate change.*

9. ADOPTION OF CORPORATE STRATEGY

[Attached: Final Corporate Strategy Document]

Lead: Council Mayor

Action: *That Council:
i) Approve the draft document as the Council's Corporate Strategy, subject to any final presentational issues to be delegated to the Chief Officer prior to publication;
ii) Note the continuing work of the Corporate Strategy Task and Finish Group and await further developments.*

10. PROPOSAL FOR FIT FOR PURPOSE ACCOMMODATION

[Attached: Report]

Lead: Council Mayor

Action: *That Council:
i) Approves the transfer of staff to fit for purpose accommodation to the CEC Enterprise Centre and delegates authority to the Chief Officer to enter into a lease at a maximum net annual cost of £17,000, after taking into account additional room hire income, to be funded from earmarked reserves set aside for the office accommodation project and then considered as part of the 2024-25 budget setting process.
ii) Considers the remaining aspects of the Fit for Purpose project and awaits recommendations from the Assets and Services Committee*

11. CORRESPONDENCE

None Received.

12. DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Town Council Meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 8th March 2023 at 7pm in Sandbach Town Hall.

Please note that this meeting will be recorded and the audio recording made available to the public within 5 working days of the meeting.

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Introduction

- 1) Sandbach Town Council is committed to being a council that is inclusive to all its residents including people with Dementia. We have an Equality and Inclusion Policy that supports our Objectives and our commitment to demonstrating Community Leadership is set out in our Corporate Strategy Document.
- 2) We recognise that Dementia is the biggest Challenge facing the NHS and Adult Social care within a population that is living longer with an annual cost of £30 billion. Dementia is a disease of the brain that has no cure and currently effects close on 1 million adults in Britain today.
- 3) In Sandbach there are 197 adults over 65 diagnosed with Dementia but we suspect this number is much larger for adult who have not been diagnosed.
- 4) Our Challenge as a forward-looking Council is take the necessary steps to declare our Council a Dementia Friendly Council and act accordingly.

Task and Finish Group

- 5) Following Approval by the full Council in September 2022 a Task and Finish group was set up to identify what steps were required for the Council to Declare itself Dementia Friendly and report back within 3 months seeking approval by Council members.
- 6) The Group met on two occasions where the characteristics of a Dementia Friendly Council were discussed. We used the 5 key domains identified by the LGA in their pamphlet on Dementia Guidance for Local Councils. They are **Voices, Place, People, Resources** and **Network**.
- 7) We recognised that by using these 5 domains we were also protecting the rights of all vulnerable groups in Sandbach focusing on issues/projects the Town Council has control over or can influence. This can include improving street pavement access for disabled users and a review of Steet lighting to ensure Residents feel safe particularly at Night.
- 8) Sandbach has a voluntary group called **Dementia Friendly Sandbach** which champions the needs of people with Dementia and their carers. The Chair of this group was part of the Task and Finish Team offering valuable advice on the way forward. They run 2 Monthly support groups for people with Dementia and their carers and have an average attendance of over 30 people at each group session.

Way Forward

- 9) There is no formal Definition of a Dementia Friendly Council but it was agreed that we needed an action plan that focused on key areas consistent with the LGA guidelines on Dementia Friendly Councils.
- 10) Using the 5 key domains listed above we would like to propose the following Action plan for approval by Full Council.
 - (a) That all staff Members are supported to become Dementia Friends as part of their professional development working with the Public. This Training is free and can be offered Locally.
 - (b) That all Councillors are invited to become Dementia Friends in their role as Community Leaders.
 - (c) Identify a lead officer in the Council who would oversee progress and ensure the Council Website is up to date. This would include reviewing policies and activities to ensure they are Dementia Friendly.
 - (d) Proactively support local Dementia groups and ensure community notice boards provide information on local support groups in Sandbach.
 - (e) Sponsor the monthly coffee morning run by Dementia Friendly Sandbach for people with dementia and their carers at an annual cost of £360 per Annum.

Summary

- 11) Consistent with the aims of the Corporate Strategy of the Council we have this opportunity to show the Values that the Council holds and to Demonstrate that we will put the needs of Vulnerable people at the forefront of our policy Decision making.
- 12) Declaring ourselves a Dementia Friendly Council using the 5 Domains set out by the LGA is a statement that the Welfare of Vulnerable People in Sandbach is a Council priority.

Recommended; That Council:

Supports the steps outlined in the action plan and work towards becoming a Dementia Friendly Council within 3 months

Cllr Donal Hegarty
Chair Dementia Friendly Council Task and Finish Group

INTRODUCTION

Sandbach Town Council is committed to making its contribution to addressing climate change, as demonstrated by one of five strategic goals published in its draft corporate strategy in Spring 2022 as follows:

'A SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

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

It is well documented that the Council has been through a difficult period of disruption and staff shortage, and as a result of that, progress towards actions to deliver this objective has been hampered.

The Council is now in a position to move forward and this report sets out actions to date and a plan for the future in this important area.

BACKGROUND

In May 2019, Cheshire East Council declared an environment and climate emergency. The motion covered two key areas:

- i) Target Cheshire East Council to be carbon neutral by 2025;
- ii) Encourage emissions reductions in the wider borough.

Other organisations and Town Councils have similarly made such declarations. For the avoidance of doubt, Sandbach Town Council:

- i) Agrees there is a climate emergency;
- ii) Will join the Borough and other Town Councils to become carbon neutral by 2025.

WORKING WITH OTHERS

Responding effectively to the climate change emergency is an immense challenge for all of us. It is easy to feel defeated by its scale particularly within a small organisation. However, it is key that the Town Council takes a leadership role, as far as it is able, and adopts the following approach:

- i) Gets its own house in order and becomes a 'Green Council' by making a series of commitments to improve the Council's own carbon footprint, and to meet the carbon neutral target by 2025. See Appendix A for generic list of actions which will be under consideration, as a guide.
- ii) Works with others as set out below:
 - a) learn from specialists without reinventing the wheel. See Appendix B for Cheshire East Council's commissioned Town and Parish Council Toolkit extract – a valuable guide;
 - b) join forces with other Councils to exert more influence and strategic impact;
 - c) engage effectively with the community and local partners to jointly and positively tackle the agenda;
 - d) share the cost and work involved in making necessary changes.

CURRENT AND PLANNED ACTIONS

At its meeting on 21st September 2022, the Council appointed 2 of its members to operate as Climate Change Champions, and a small group has been formed, including the Chief Officer and member of the public, to develop the Council's approach to tackling climate change. It is envisaged that this group will expand and become the Council's Climate Change Steering Group. A support officer of the Council has also been assigned to the group to ensure progress is made and actions are delivered;

The Chief Officer is in discussion with the Chief Officer of Congleton Town Council with a view to joint working. A meeting is planned in January with officers and members of both councils to develop this approach. It is envisaged that other local councils could be approached to share good practice and resources where possible;

The Council will adopt the CEC Town and Parish Council Climate Emergency Toolkit and other recognised guides to steer its policy and action;

The Council is currently developing a new website and will design in significant coverage of climate change, its approach to tackling the challenge, and its role to share information and best practice;

The Council will agree and publish a number of measures and objectives to improve its carbon footprint and meet its carbon neutral commitment including a review of all its assets including the Town Hall and Market Hall;

The Council will ensure that all major policy proposals include consideration of the environmental impact along with other factors taken into account in its decision making process eg. cost, staff, community engagement implications etc;

The Council will ensure its Chief Officer and Change Champions have received sufficient training to undertake their role in supporting the Council to deliver an effective response to climate change;

The Council will, following Steering Group work with other Councils and reference to best practice models, approve and publish a 'Green Council' Policy in Spring 2023.

SUMMARY

If the Council (or any organisation) is to respond effectively to climate change it will need to prepare to commit resources, make necessary (sometimes difficult) decisions and become an 'agitator for change'. The commitment needs to be in actions not words. The Steering Group will undertake the work to ensure that it is equipped to make those decisions in due course.

RECOMMENDED;

That Council:

- 1) Commit to be carbon neutral by 2025 and publish the plan to achieve that;
- 2) Note the current and planned actions to ensure that the Council fulfils its commitment providing leadership through effective joint working to tackling climate change.

APPENDIX A

Examples of 'domestic' actions to address climate change:

- ★ - easy (does not take a lot of time or effort)
- ◇ - hard (takes time and effort to continue doing/implement)
- ▲ - expensive
- ▼ - cheap

(listed in no particular order)

1. ◇▼ Going paperless, or drastically reducing paper use.
2. ★▼ Unplugging electronics or turning off plugs at the end of a shift.
3. ★▲ Buying a bottleless water dispenser.
4. ★▼ Renewable bottles for staff (BYOB policy).
5. ◇▲ Using greener/renewable cleaning supplies for offices/the building.
6. ★▼ Using lights less. Relying on sunlight through windows.
7. ★▲ Upgrading as many lights as possible to motion sensor.
8. ◇▲ Switching to energy efficient LED lights whenever possible.
9. ★▲ Getting recycling bins for the building.
10. ★▼ Using a 1-bin office policy.
11. ★▲ Buy business cards with an eco-friendly provider.
12. ◇▲ Setting up bike racks in/outside the building.
13. ★▲ Invest in smart power strips/smart plugs, eco-friendly as they turn themselves off and on.
14. ◇▼ Encourage work from home policies.
15. ★▼ Invest in reusable packaging for office kitchens.
16. ◇▼ Reduce the use of heating whenever possible. Create rule/policy about the control of office temperature
17. ★▼ Put water saving tips in kitchens/toilets.
18. ★▼ Use biodegradable pens/eco-friendly notebooks whenever needed.
19. ★▼ Encourage mindfulness when brewing water and consuming dairy products (milk).

APPENDIX B

CEC Town and Parish Council Toolkit (EXTRACT)

What is your role in providing solutions?

1. **To inspire others** – There is opportunity for you to lead by example and ‘set the tone’ of urgency for others to follow. This may be through delivering projects on your own iconic assets and in the community, or by sharing knowledge and experiences through your local networks. Utilise your relationships and knowledge of the community to demonstrate that change is possible.
2. **To provide practical guidance** – You are held by many as a trusted source of information. Developing your role as an educator and conduit for best practice sharing on this topic will become more important. You may consider hosting workshops, leading campaigns, and producing guidance materials. You may also need to seek access to more information on the topic and be more curious as to how other towns and parishes have overcome barriers.
3. **To develop more meaningful partnerships** – No organisation is better connected to your community than your own. You are therefore well based to support local businesses, schools, communities or organisations to deliver low-carbon projects and activate positive change. This may also include working with the Borough council and other towns/parishes in new and innovative ways.
4. **To support access to finance** – Whether co-ordinating fund-raising and grant funding, or stimulating business sponsorship and local investment, towns and parishes have a key role to play.
5. **To collectively lobby for support** – Recognising your influence will have its limitations in certain areas or sub-sectors, it is important that you voice your concerns with other towns and parishes and feedback barriers. This will involve more active or innovative engagement with Cheshire East Council on the topic, and may also include lobbying National Government on relevant existing and proposed legislation.

Key Topics For Action:

- Getting Organised and educated
- Domestic Housing
- Non Domestic Buildings
- Transport
- Waste
- Natural Environment
- Energy Supply

BACKGROUND

The Council's draft corporate strategy was produced in Spring 2022, through a commission with ChALC. The document was issued for consultation through its website, social media and a summary leaflet to households. In September, a Task and Finish Group was set up to initially produce a final strategy and subsequently organise its delivery through the Council's infrastructure and scheme of delegation.

CURRENT POSITION

The Task and Finish Group have reviewed the draft strategy, considered the feedback and updated the content. A small number of responses were received through this process which were largely constructive and supportive of the Council's intentions. These were published within the Council agenda in September. The final document is intended to be shorter and more focussed than the original draft and, to that end, the contextual information contained in the draft, will be shown as an Appendix to the final strategy (unchanged) rather than included throughout the strategy document.

A proposed final document for adoption is attached to the report.

Once adopted, the group, which includes the Mayor, Committee Chairs and Chief Officer will further review the content of the strategy and aim to advise Council on determining relative priorities, status of proposals (many are underway and some completed), resource implications, responsible committee (with officer support), engagement proposals and action plan required for effective delivery.

The delivery of this strategy is a process not an event and will evolve over time. It contains an ambitious set of proposals and the Council will need to review its relevance and deliverability on an annual basis, ideally in conjunction with the budget setting process.

It should also be seen in the context of the Council's on going governance review, as much of the detail required behind the proposals will be contained within more detailed policies and action plans, and be developed through working groups with various degrees of engagement with partners and the community depending entirely on the nature and scope of the plans.

RECOMMENDED That Council;

- i) Approve the draft document as the Council's Corporate Strategy, subject to any final presentational issues to be delegated to the Chief Officer prior to publication;
- ii) Note the continuing work of the Corporate Strategy Task and Finish Group and await further developments.



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 Kathryn 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

Our Approach

To bring together our residents, our assets, and our partners to create better futures for our community:

To support the development of a sustainable economy:

Communities feel safe, engaged and connected to contribute to a vibrant town:

Improve the quality of life and wellbeing of our residents:

Collaborate with or network of residents, staff, partners and volunteers to ensure the Town can be the very best it can:

Live our values to attract and develop and retain great people:

Understand and adapt to the needs of our community:

To provide cost effective services based on decisions that are environmentally sustainable:

Grow and nurture public support through listening, responding and including.

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 mechanisms such as 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 helping to ensure 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 asset management and measure its carbon footprint as a 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.
- Work with others to 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.

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- 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 the creation of a "virtual" museum for Sandbach linked to the proposed Cheshire Archive - Crewe new building.
 - 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.
- 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.
- Become a Dementia Friendly Council.
- 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.



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SANDBACH TOWN COUNCIL 14 DECEMBER 2022

FIT FOR PURPOSE ACCOMMODATION PROJECT

Background

At present, Sandbach Town Council officers and members are accommodated as a temporary measure within the Town Hall. This results from the deterioration of the Sandbach Literary Institute provision during COVID 19, which rendered the Council unable to adequately accommodate staff and visitors and resulted in an urgent and temporary relocation. The Council launched an Office Accommodation Working Group and made provision in the form of an earmarked reserve to identify options for a satisfactory long term plan in keeping with its agreed asset strategy (Council June 2022).

Current situation

Whilst the Town Hall provides basic accommodation needs of the Council, it is woefully inadequate in its current state and was always intended as a temporary solution. In particular the use of the Town Hall Board Room in the Town Hall for the majority of the Council staff is problematic and unsatisfactory.

The issues are as follows:

- No Town Council reception
- No disabled / easily visible access for members of the public / visitors to visit the Council
- No suitable meeting space for visitors / members of public / Town Hall customers
- Inadequate working space for all Council team members to operate effectively
- Faulty drainage and toilets
- Use of Boardroom, Ballroom and Bar for officer / Council meetings foregoing rental income and causing operational difficulties
- No adequate private meeting space
- Blocked exits due to market activity requiring constant review
- Temporary status affecting necessary adaptations and inability to plan ahead

At the Assets and Services Committee on 9th November 2022, the Chief Officer outlined emerging requirements for Council accommodation in the context of recent staff recruitment, public access and a functioning committee suite. It was suggested that the Chief Officer provide the next meeting with updated proposals in order for a task and finish group to develop options if required. The Committee resolved that the Chief Officer would provide a report to the next meeting.

The emerging proposal which provides adequate and affordable provision is as follows:

- Retain the Town Hall Ballroom for all Committee and Council meetings
- Retain the Market & Events Town Hall office for Town Council staff supporting events and market activities – suitable for a small number of staff who need to be Town Hall / Market based. Hot desk facility for visiting staff / management

- Retain a basement / storage space for the Caretaker
- Release the Board Room for rental and transfer majority of Council team to suitable rented office town centre accommodation
- Explore options to upgrade the current STC public toilets for modern accessible changing places toilet and 'Mini store' for Market and Town Hall Use
- Release Market Store for re use / upgrade

As part of the work to develop proposals it was noted that local current rental options should be explored. There are currently only 2 suitable locations which were viewed as part of this process; Ladbrokes (Ground floor) and CEC Enterprise Centre. Ladbrokes would need redecoration and various adaptations and had insufficient space for the Council team. CEC enterprise centre has a limited number of units available which appear suitable for the Council's needs.

The Council understands that the first floor accommodation is currently available although other parties are interested. This would meet the council's needs and has the advantage of being a CEC property in term of connections, reliability and price. The Ground floor is also suitable – and cheaper – but it is unclear if and when this would be available. Discussions are on going but it is necessary to make a quick decision regarding the securing available space to ensure The Town Council can negotiate a lease, given the lack of suitable accommodation in such a central location.

Financial Implications

The Council has earmarked reserves for the Fit for Purpose Accommodation strategy of £99,500, as it was envisaged that significant costs may need to be incurred to provide a suitable solution to the Council's accommodations issues. If property is rented rather than adapted, it is likely to be far less costly, available immediately, and probably more effective.

An analysis of the rent, business rates and offsetting increased town hall rental income show that the estimated annual net costs to the Council, depending on which units are leased, range from between £13,000 and £17,000 per year on current prices.

It is proposed that the first year rental costs would be funded from some of the earmarked reserve and that future year's costs are addressed within the budget setting process. The remaining earmarked reserve could, for example, be used to fund a much needed project to improve the town's public toilet provision and to release the Market Store for more productive use than at present.

Recommended: That the Council:

- Approves the transfer of staff to fit for purpose accommodation in the CEC Enterprise Centre and delegates authority to the Chief Officer to enter into a lease at a maximum net annual cost of £17,000, after taking into account additional room hire income, to be funded from earmarked reserves set aside for the office accommodation project and then considered as part of the 2024-25 budget setting process.*
- Considers the remaining aspects of the Fit for Purpose project and awaits recommendations from the Assets and Services Committee.*