

REPORT TO COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

STRATEGIC PLAN ACTIONS 2023/24



Report Reference COM-23-05
Meeting Date 19th June 2023
Agenda Item 10
Prepared by Town Clerk

1.0 BACKGROUND

The Town Council has adopted a new Strategic Plan, setting out its six strategic aims for the ensuing decade. Each aim is supported by a series of objectives, each of which has been assigned to a committee for implementation. Full Council has tasked each committee with determining its actions for the current financial year (through to 31st March).

The Strategic Plan is ambitious and many objectives will require work over a number of years to successfully complete. It is important that the council carefully plans its work over the period to ensure a manageable workload whilst also ensuring it successfully delivers for the community.

Appendix A contains the suggested actions from the community consultation. It includes a commentary/guidance from the Town Clerk.

2.0 OBJECTIVES ASSIGNED TO THIS COMMITTEE

The following objectives have been assigned to the Community Committee:

REF	Objective
C1	Work with partners to identify needs and improve access to services to support those in need within the St John's Wood ward.
C2	Bridge the apparent disconnect between Longridge and the rest of Knutsford
C6	Support and develop community organisations operating in Knutsford ensuring they have the skills and resources needed to thrive
C7	Support the creation of new community organisations where needs are identified
C8	Improve town communication channels to help connect the community
S1	Work with the Knutsford Medical Partnership to see the delivery of improved primary medical care facilities
S2	Work with partners to develop and implement a preventative health strategy
S3	Increase provision of services, facilities and employment for young people across the town
S4	Understand the service needs of the community and lobby for their retention and increased provision as necessary.

These are discussed further individually below, with some ideas for how the council could work to meet these objectives in the current financial year.

2.1 C1 – ST JOHN’S WOOD SERVICES

We will work with Great Places, The Welcome, Cheshire East Council and other partners to ensure those who are in the greatest need have access to the required support to help them achieve their full potential. We’ll work to understand what is needed and how we can ensure it is provided.

This objective will be multi-year spanning objective. The first stage of which will be to understand specifically what service needs there are in the area and how they can be provided.

Suggested activity for 2023/24:

- Meeting to be convened with Great Places, The Welcome, Cheshire East Council’s Community Team and St John’s Wood ward councillors to discuss what is known and what is not known in order to develop a forward plan under this objective.

2.2 C2 – CONNECTING THE TOWN

We will work to improve the connection between Longridge and the rest of the town, aiming to break down any barriers which exist to all residents feeling part of the Knutsford community.

This objective will be a multi-year spanning objective requiring constant gradual action. Over the longer term, there needs to be greater integration

Suggested activity for 2023/24:

- There have been suggestions to rename roads on the Longridge estate. An initial community consultation could be held on the idea, seeking the input of residents in the area on whether it should be pursued and ideas for renaming. This could contribute to it being seen less as one single area.

Following meeting with Great Places/Welcome/CEC a more detailed multi-year action plan would be developed.

2.3 C6 – SUPPORTING COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

We will work to ensure the community organisations, churches and charities which serve Knutsford are well supported, connected and able to continue delivering for the town. We’ll help bring groups together to share skill and resource.

Suggested activity for 2023/24:

- Develop an updated community organisation directory for internal use and publication online
- Develop a regular community group e-newsletter to share local community organisation news, resource, funding opportunities etc
- Deliver a successful third ReFresh Knutsford community freshers fair.
- Promote the council’s grant scheme and other funding opportunities with local groups

2.4 C7 – SUPPORTING THE CREATION OF NEW ORGANISATIONS

Where a need is identified, we will help establish new community organisations to deliver services for the community and provide the necessary support and guidance to help a group get off the ground.

Suggested activity for 2023/24:

- Undertake a gap analysis of the community organisations within the town to identify if there are any areas where new organisations would be beneficial

2.5 C8 – IMPROVING TOWN COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

The better connected our community is the stronger it is, so we will work to ensure we communicate more effectively with residents, businesses and community groups and that information on what is happening and available in the community is readily available. We will further work to improve the way we engage the community in our work, seeking to get more people informing the decisions that affect their town.

This objective is key to the successful delivery of many of the objectives within this plan. It is therefore suggested it be considered a priority objective in the early phases of the plan. Officers will be having a further discussion on ideas to enhance communications.

Suggested activity for 2023/24:

- Investigate and agree a new e-marketing platform to enable the development of improved e-communication channels. This would be to enable the council to manage a more segmented mailing database (of different stakeholders) providing more targeting e-newsletters
- Proactively develop the e-newsletter database to reach 1,500 resident subscribers – this would include tapping into existing networks and proactively seeking subscribers through customer interaction
- Develop a new regular e-newsletter from the Town Council
- Develop a schedule of existing locations where posters/notices can be displayed to promote activity
- Develop a schedule of locations for potential new noticeboards in areas across the town with natural footfall
- Create a pop-up “What’s On” ‘POS’ display that can be deployed at events to promote upcoming activity/ general information
- Develop a ‘consultation and engagement template’ that can be used when planning engagement activity – this would list the various opportunities for tapping into existing networks, taking advantage of existing events and other novel engagement methods that would be considered each time a consultation activity is planned. This would also look at how to reach different stakeholders/demographics.

2.6 S1 – PRIMARY MEDICAL CARE FACILITIES

We will work with local doctors to support their call for substantial improvement to primary care facilities in Knutsford. This will include lobbying NHS bodies and other relevant stakeholders to ensure they provide the resource and funding necessary to deliver a

comprehensive programme of improvements, preferably by delivering a new central combined medical centre.

The Town Mayor has commenced the implementation of this objective by convening a public meeting. The Town Council will continue to play a role in bringing parties together to develop clear proposals for how this project will progress.

2.7 S2 – PREVENTATIVE HEALTH STRATEGY

Our Neighbourhood Plan set an aspiration for a community preventative health strategy; we will work with Cheshire East Council, local NHS bodies and other partners to develop one. The strategy will look to ensure access to the services, support and facilities needed to live a healthier life and will aim to make Knutsford one of the healthiest towns in Cheshire East.

It is suggested that this form a project for the mid-stage of the strategic plan (c. 2026-28) once more is known of the delivery of the new medical centre.

2.8 S3 – SERVICES, FACILITIES AND EMPLOYMENT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

We will firstly work to understand the needs and wants of young people in Knutsford and then work to ensure they have access to a range of appropriate leisure and social activities outside school. We will also work to promote opportunities for appropriate employment and entrepreneurship for young people.

This will be a multi-year objective, first requiring a clear understanding of desires of young people in the community. Once this is known a more detailed plan for implementation can be developed.

Suggested activity for 2023/24:

- Research existing services and facilities to create a baseline of what services/facilities are available within the town
- Undertake a targeted consultation with young people to better understand what services and facilities they would like to have access to. This will need to be carefully designed to appeal to the demographic and deliver meaningful outcomes.

2.9 S4 – COMMUNITY SERVICES

We will work to understand the demand for services in Knutsford and where they are not provided locally or insufficient, we will lobby for improvements. This will include:

- *assessing the planning of school places*
- *supporting the implementation of the Sports Vision Action Plan*
- *lobbying for improvements to Knutsford Leisure Centre*

We will strive to prevent the loss of community assets and services which are used by the community and do all we can to ensure essential services are retained.

Further detailed work will be required to plan a programme of actions to deliver this objective.

Suggested activity for 2023/24:

- Obtain information from Cheshire East Council and local schools on current school places provision and subscription levels
- Investigate current and potential community usage of the Adelaide Academy Sports Barn
- Obtain a clear position from Cheshire East Council on the status of funding for improvements to Knutsford Leisure Centre following changes introduced in their medium term financial strategy

3.0 DECISIONS REQUIRED

The committee should:

- a) Agree a series of specific actions for the current financial year to begin delivery of the strategic plan. These would then be shaped into SMART targets for monitoring.
- b) Discuss potential future actions for the delivery of the plan, these will be recorded and used to inform future action plan creation and begin to create a multi-year action plan
- c) Consider the suggestions put forward in Appendix A and whether these should feature in future/current action plans

APENDIX A: ACTIONS FROM STRATEGIC PLAN CONSULTATION

Ref	Action	Objective	Comments
9	Work with Cheshire East to establish an evidence base to challenge the airport (who currently hold all the information) and have a say in future decisions.	N/A	The council appoints a representative to the Manchester Airport Consultative Committee. The Community Committee is discussing recent airport noise complains at its June 2023 meeting.
28	Install more noticeboards.	C8	Noticeboards remain an important way of communicating with certain people in the town and have repeatedly proved effective at reaching people (based on feedback from events, job applicants etc). A suggested action is provided for 2023/24.
29	Deliver a regular newsletter through every door	C8	The committee should consider whether the distribution of a physical newsletter would be desirable. Many town councils do produce a regular newsletter (e.g. quarterly), there is naturally a cost which would need to be factored into budgets for creation, print and distribution.
30	Proactively engage with and support the town's many community and voluntary groups.	C6	The suggested actions for 2023/24 include the creation of a regular community group e-newsletter to commence stronger regular engagement with groups.
31	Devise more creative ways to get constructive feedback and more open dialogue channels.	C8	The suggested actions for 2023/24 include creating a template for consultation/engagement looking at more creative ways to engage the community.
32	Find out the profile of those commenting and seriously consider elderly and infirm to ensure that they all get to be heard and not just by electronic means.	C8	The suggested actions for 2023/24 include the creation of a regular community group e-newsletter to commence stronger regular engagement with groups.
33	Work to ensure that a new purpose built community centre is created in the heart of the Longridge estate	S4	Subject to planning decisions there may be a community asset created on the Longridge development. This suggestion should be reviewed once that decision has been made.
34	Work with Adelaide Heath Academy so that their facilities can be used by the local community outside school hours	S4	The suggested actions for 2023/24 include a review of existing and potential use for this building.
35	Open a community centre / community hall	S4	In 2015 the council undertook a community space survey. This could be renewed and updated to ascertain the current needs and shortfall.
36	Maintain a Councillor in every organisation.	C6	The Town Council presently appoints members to a number of organisations. This has usually been at the request of the organisation. The option could be promoted as part of the improved communications with groups, but there would be a potential member-resource limit due to

Ref	Action	Objective	Comments
			the number of organisations
37	Increase funding for community groups	C6	The committee could consider increasing the budget allocated to community grants as part of developing its 2024/25 budget.
38	Work with volunteer groups to support, maybe offer educational/special interest courses to support the activity eg gardening/preservation/basic DIY as part of the volunteering.	C7/S3/S4	The committee could consider investigating demand for such activity and looking how it could be delivered, for example some activity could be delivered by the Town Council (some councils arrange such activity/workshops etc for the communities as community activities),
39	Employ a volunteer coordinator or community coordinator to support groups	C6	This could be considered if it was felt justified. Some councils do employ a similar post to support groups, help apply for funding etc.
40	Develop a community website/directory where people can find out about what groups there are in Knutsford and how to engage with them.	C6	This is included in the suggested actions for 2023/24
41	Provide small grants to support local small scale projects	C6	The council already operates a community grant scheme. The effectiveness of the scheme would be reviewed during the plan period.
42	Re-establish resident led planning groups	C7	This would tie in well with the review of the Neighbourhood Plan, or the CEC review of the Local Plan.
43	Ensure that strong community means sharing resources and respecting resources.	C6	
55	Work with Knutsford academy to deliver more adult night class provision.	S4	Future work needed to understand demand.
58	Engage with Egerton Youth Club to support the in excess of 1000 residents who use the facility	S4	Future work on supporting the implementation of the Sport Vision Action plan would address this.
59	Ensure linking in with Cheshire East Council, ICB & care community objectives to reduce duplication of community initiatives.	S2	These bodies would be partners in the delivery of this objective.
69	Open a youth club.	S3	This would need careful consideration as it would be a significant cost to operate. Suggested action for 2023/24 includes undertaking work to understand precisely what would be desired by young people.
94	Oversee the delivery of a new medical centre	S1	The council is already working to deliver this action
124	Improve access to sports pitches for all - many are currently members only. Not many places kids can go for a game of footy.	S4/E1	Suggested action for 2023/24 includes undertaking work to understand what would be desired by young people. This would also link with consultation to develop a green spaces strategy and implementation of Sport Vision Action Plan
125	Ensure that Section 106 / CIL funding is attributed to those best placed	S4	Future work on supporting the implementation of the Sport Vision Action

Ref	Action	Objective	Comments
	to deliver sporting activities		plan would address this.
126	See the upgrade of Knutsford Leisure Centre	S4	Suggested action for 2023/24 includes understanding the current state of play. The Town Council has been involved in previous meetings with ESAR and CEC on this project.
127	Make ESAR accountable to sporting groups, provision of facilities to encourage sporting growth at times suitable for age groups participating.	S4	Future work on supporting the implementation of the Sport Vision Action plan would address this.
130	Provide more organised sport & facilities for the kids in Longridge	S3	Suggested action for 2023/24 includes undertaking work to understand precisely what would be desired by young people.
131	Save the Stanley Centre	S4	The Town Council has already agreed to object to the closure and will work as it can to prevent its closure.
156	Carefully design engagement to reach young people	C8	Suggested action for 2023/24 includes looking at how engagement is designed to reach all hard to reach stakeholders
157	Encourage school age children to participate in local volunteering/activities perhaps in conjunction with schools/offering DoE (Duke of Edinburgh) activities, recognition of young peoples activities as groups /individuals, not just registered sports clubs/high academic achievers.	C6	This could form a future action, to link up community organisations with potential youth volunteers, or volunteering through the town council in support of multiple groups as part of e.g. DofE. This would also link with the Knutsford Lions' Young Leaders in Service award.
158	Deliver a play area in the south-east and south-west areas of the town	S3/E1	This is an area with an identified shortfall of equipped play areas. Suggested action for 2023/24 includes undertaking work to understand what would be desired by young people. This would also link with consultation to develop a green spaces strategy.