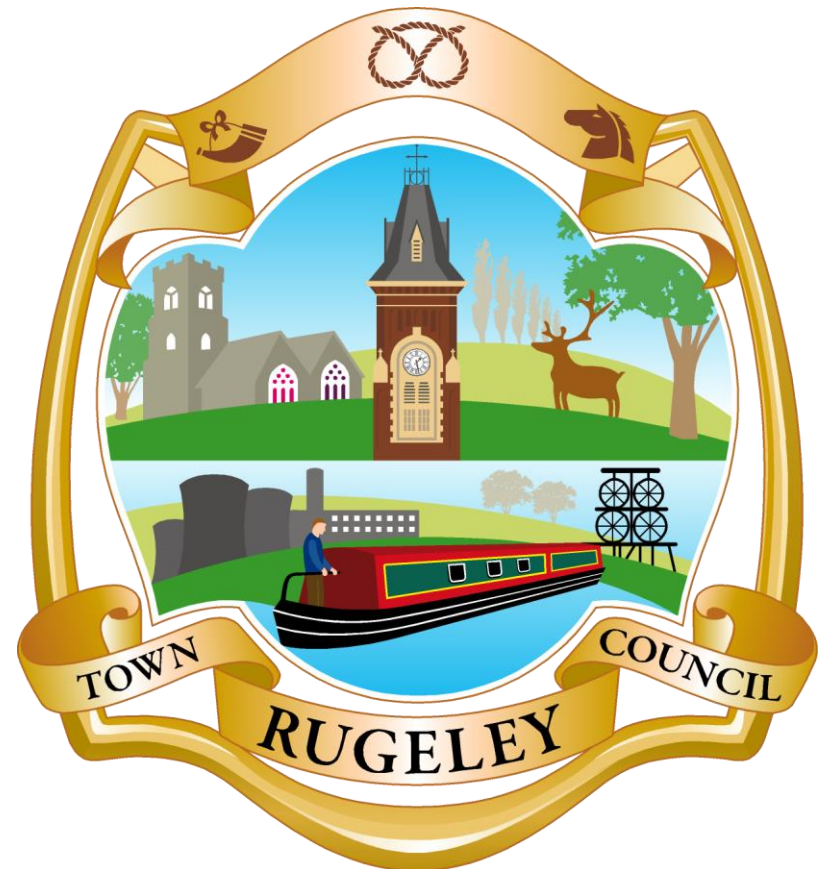


Rugeley Town Council

Business Plan

October 2021 – September 2024



Introduction

The aim of this Business Plan is to supplement the annual Strategy and Action Plan with a longer-term vision. This vision, which the Rugeley Town Council formally approved in October 2021, will be used to guide future expenditure of the council and aim to direct future projects and initiatives.

Rugeley Town Council – what is it?

We are a small town council with 19 elected Councillors and Town Council staff which undertake the wishes of the Town Council as a whole. In the Strategy and Action Plan for the Council, we stated that our Vision Statement was *to work with partners to preserve, enhance and develop the identity, environmental impact, and rich history of our picturesque market town, whilst recognising and drawing upon the advantages and opportunities to be found in forthcoming developmental projects. With many conservation areas protecting the architectural quality of the town, Rugeley will be well used by its communities and will also attract visitors as its unique location between the River Trent, the Canal and Cannock Chase AONB make it a destination of choice. Opportunities from the new proposed housing developments around the town will bring in a new*

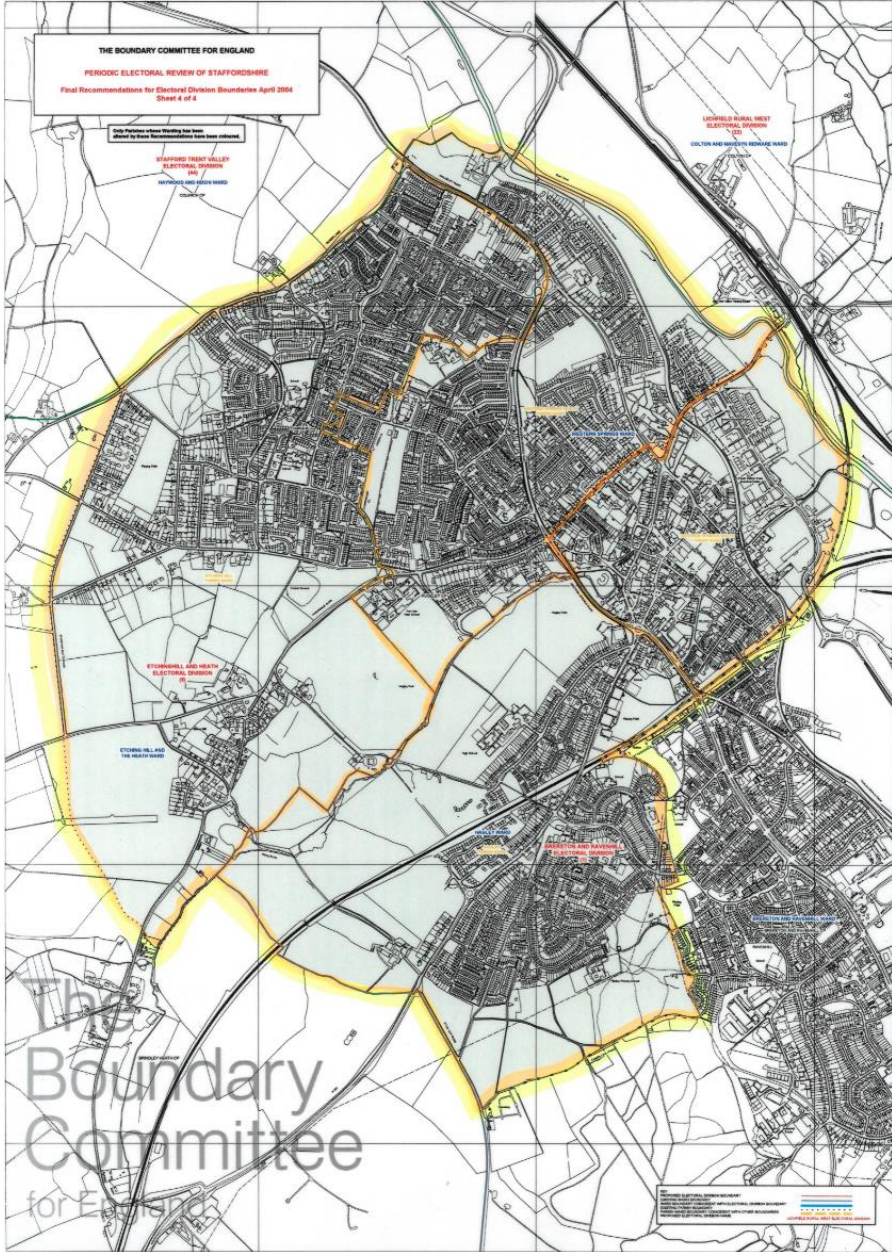
community looking to make the most of the opportunities presented by this sought-after market town.

A town council is a level of local government that operates below a district council. In Rugeley, it covers a specific administrative area shown on page 2.

Rugeley Town Council collects a Precept each year which forms part of the residents Council Tax, and with this money, the Town Council funds its administrative operation, the Rugeley Rose Theatre, public events, develops and implements various community projects, has a Youth Council You would be surprised what Rugeley Town Council gets involved in!

As a form of local government, Rugeley Town Council holds elections every 4 years when the Councillors can be re-elected and/or new Councillors elected. All Councillors are drawn from the local community. These elections affect the council and can also affect the work of the staff and the service that is delivered to the public. To provide an element of continuity to the public who are served by the Council, a Business Plan has been created to give a longer-term structure to the work of the Town Council. It covers a period of 3 years which will include the time period of the next Council election (May 2023) and will run alongside the Strategy and Action Plan.

Map showing Rugeley Town Council administrative area.



Council Meetings

The Full Council is the body that takes the majority of the council decisions although individual committees will also have the authority to take decisions on certain areas. Full Council sits on the 1st Wednesday of every month (except August.)

Full Council

- Sets the Precept
- Approves the Councils Annual Return and Annual Accounts
- Approves Councils Strategy and Action Plan
- Matters of all principle or policy

Finance and Management Committee

- Considers all resource requirements e.g. finances, land, property, employees and contractors.
- Issue and vary employment contracts
- Consider and recommend annual budget and precept
- Monitor income and expenditure
- Approves the councils Grants

Planning Committee

- To consider and comment on local planning applications / tree preservation order requested, listed building applications
- Make representations to the local planning authority on applications

Rose Theatre Committee

- To oversee the running and administration of the Rose Theatre
- Manage the agreed budget for the theatre
- Have authority to spend on related projects

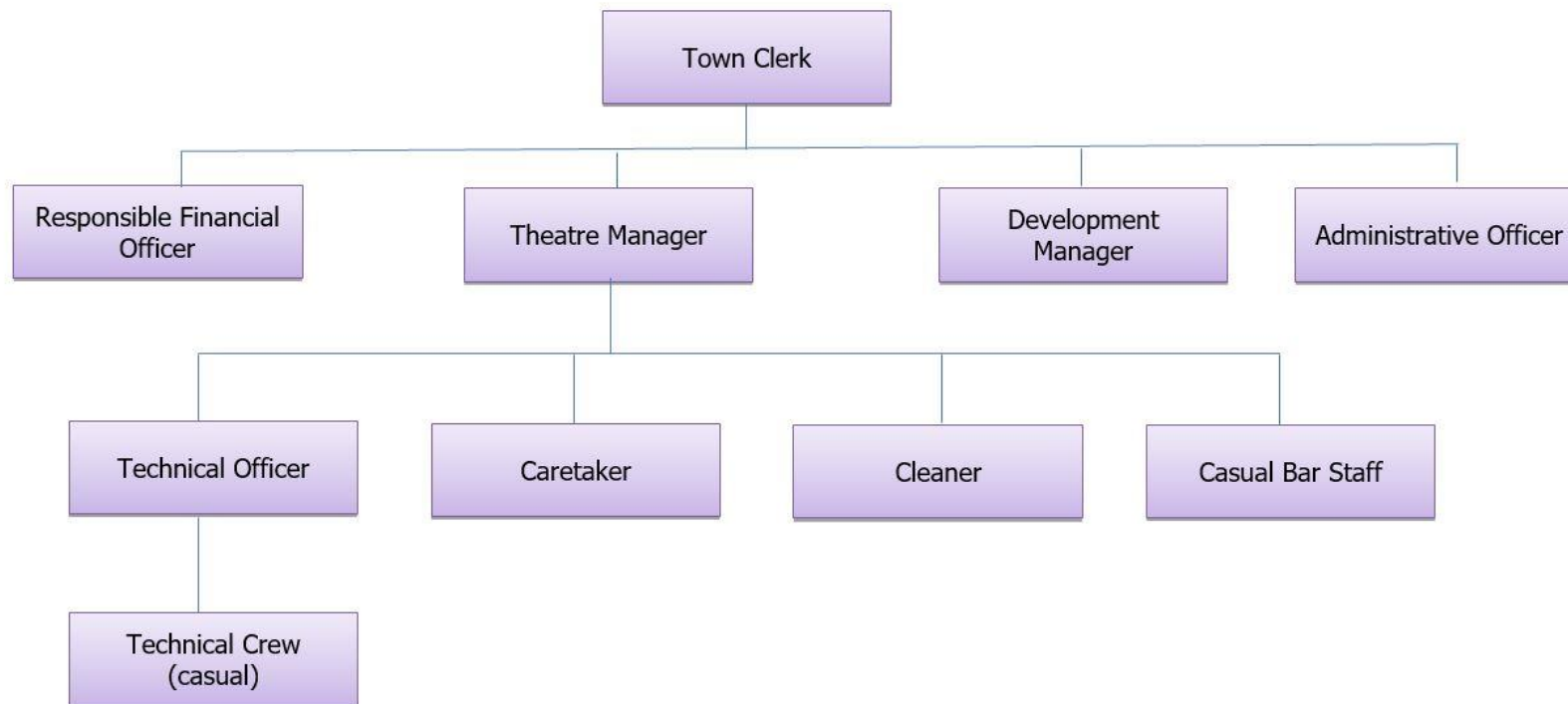
Community Engagement Committee

- Organise large community events
- Organise Firework Event
- Organise Christmas Lights
- Develop community projects
- Oversee the Development Manager

Staffing Structure

The staff employed by the Town Council cover the work of the council itself, and also the work of the Rugeley Rose Theatre.

Rugeley Town Council Staffing Structure



In the Strategy and Action, we talk about the three pillars which underpin the development of projects and the direction of the town councils work:

Wellbeing – a strong and varied community of people

Prosperity – economic strength underpinning employment and retail development

Sustainability – the position of Rugeley next to Cannock Chase and adjacent to the Trent and Mersey Canal and the River Trent offers opportunities for tourism development and enjoyment of the countryside and local history. Working on plans developed by Zero Carbon Rugeley.

The projects identified in the short term action plan all live up to these principles and this business plan will show how the future of the Town Council will continue to observe them.

Consultation

The town council consults with its community in a variety of ways:

We hold at least 2 Community Conferences a year where a variety of topics / themes are considered throughout the

day with discussion group and key contributors. The first conferences were held on line in order to maximise community contribution and accessibility of information. For the foreseeable future they will continue online in order to maximise participation by the community.

The Rugeley Youth Council regularly attends Town Council meetings to report on activity and seek guidance / support for various activities and projects with which they would like to be a part.

Through the development of the Rugeley Neighbourhood Plan, the town council works with Power For All, residents, businesses and partners in order to identify the physical direction for the town.

During 2020/2021, the world was severely impacted by the Covid pandemic. One of the results of this was that all council committee and full council meetings were held online and live streamed to the Town Councils Facebook page. The Town Council was overwhelmed by the numbers of residents accessing the meetings either live or later downloading the contents through Facebook. We were now going into the home of hundreds of residents rather than a select few. In May 2021 though, government legislation meant the return to in person meetings but we continue to live stream to Facebook.

Finances

The Town Council has an annual precept of just over £303,000. Each year the town council looks at the plans for the forthcoming financial year and what expenditure will be essential (staffing, utilities etc) and desirable (project development and public events). The council holds Ear Marked Reserves for known expenditure that will happen in the future eg payment for elections, maintenance of the buildings. In addition the council holds general reserves amounting to between 3 and 12 months of annual costs. Details of how your money is spent can be found on the councils website

www.rugeleytowncouncil.gov.uk

Partnerships

With the demolition of the Rugeley Power Station in June 2021, a longer vision for the town, residents and businesses has opened up. The creation of 2,300 homes, retail and business space and the creation of an All Through School in this location will dramatically affect the town of Rugeley.

The Commonwealth Games mountain biking events are being held on Cannock Chase in 2022, creating the potential for the development of tourism over the coming years, making Rugeley a short break destination.

Rugeley is served by two railway stations: Rugeley Town Station has direct trains to Cannock and Birmingham; Rugeley Trent Valley Station offers links to the north west and Lichfield.

With the River Trent and a canal passing to the east, water recreation opportunities are also there to be realised.

All of this requires ongoing partnership working like never before! Grant funding can often be the way forward for schemes but is best sought in partnership with others who bring different skills. Rugeley Town Council works hard to develop these partnerships with Heritage Funding, the Arts Council, Birmingham and Solihull LEP and others.

Rugeley Town Council is committed to partnership working in order to achieve the best that it can for its community. To support the action plan for the council, the business plan bases its overarching visions on the partnerships and collective goals for Rugeley.

The table below identifies the key objectives and partnership long term visions for the town council which will continue over the next three years.

| Project Aims | Direction | Timescale |
|-----------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Tourism and Heritage | Capitalise on the Commonwealth Games mountain biking event by promoting Rugeley as a destination. | Summer 2022 |
| | The Old Chancel – working with the trustees to develop a unique building promoting energy history. | Ongoing |
| | Market Town destination – work with local retailers to support the local shops through continuation of initiatives such as Artisan Markets. | Ongoing |
| | Develop the green link between power station site and the town centre to an information walkway using the Energy Arts project to decorate the walk. | 2023 onwards |
| | Work with Friends of Hagley, CCDC, Staffordshire County Council to improve the Heritage Trail through Rugeley. | Ongoing |
| | Working with Zero Carbon Rugeley and partners to create walkways and cycle routes around Rugeley | 2021 – March 2022 |
| | Community Conference to look at tourism – both the promotion of destination and the scope of accommodation providers. | November 2021 |

| Project Aims | Direction | Timescale |
|------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Community | Work with CCDC / SCC and Youth Council to improve play opportunities for young people. Looking to use funds from the Community Infrastructure Levy to develop local parks and play areas. | Ongoing |
| | Deliver opportunities for relaxation and entertainment throughout the year that are varied and have wide appeal. | Ongoing |
| | Deliver regular Community Conferences that allow residents and partners to discuss pressing local issues and consider ideas for future projects. | Online every 6 months |
| | Work with Staffordshire County Council to bring Hagley Field into the public domain. | Ongoing |
| | Deliver a programme of events that utilise the natural auditorium of Hagley Field and develop the opportunity for youth recreation. | Ongoing |
| | Work with NHS / Clinical Commissioning Group to understand and influence the delivery of medical provision in Rugeley. | Ongoing |

| Project Aims | Direction | Timescale |
|---------------------|--|------------------|
| Business | Work with partners to develop economic initiatives that strengthen the position of local retailers eg subsidised parking, empty shop window schemes, support of local markets. | Ongoing |
| | Pedestrianisation of town centre development – working with police and local councils to reinforce the the pedestrianisation of the town centre thereby delivering a safer shopping environment. | Ongoing |
| | Support the work of the Rugeley Action for Business group, bringing traders together and supporting the promotion of the businesses and looking at ways to increase footfall to the town centre. | Ongoing |

| Project Aims | Direction | Timescale |
|---------------------|---|------------------|
| Education | Work with primary schools to develop activitites in the town that enthuse and inform our younger generations | Ongoing |
| | Build and strengthen relationships with the Hart Secondary School and the new John Taylor All Through School to develop an interest in civic responsibltiy with our young people. | 2024 |
| | Through our primary school links, nurture an environmental responsibility supported by the Councils Urban Green grant fund. | Ongoing |

| Project Aims | Direction | Timescale |
|---------------------|--|------------------|
| The Arts | Enhancing the landscape of Rugeley Town Centre and the surrounding area through creative projects. | 2023 |
| | Continue the development of online performance space using the Rose Theatre as a recording studio | Ongoing |
| | Development of a series of exhibitions to be held in the Rose Theatre | Ongoing |
| | Develop a growth strategy for new demographic of theatre goers. | Ongoing |
| | Widen the offering of performance related opportunities available at the Rose Theatre. | Ongoing |

| Project Aims | Direction | Timescale |
|---------------------|---|------------------|
| Planning | Neighbourhood Plan development working with Power for All and wider community groups. Development will culminate in a referendum and then adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan which will be linked to the District Council Local Plan. | Ongoing |
| | Undertake consultation events to understand the visions of the community regarding the physical environment. | Ongoing |