

Key Themes

The following key themes represents a summary of the views of the participants through the community planning process. All quotes are from participants in the process unless otherwise stated.

Rugeley Renaissance

Community Planning Weekend (CPW) participants were knowledgeable and proud of Rugeley's rich heritage and whilst aware of the town's current challenges, they were very ambitious for its future. It was recognised that the power station site regeneration represents a huge "once in a generation" opportunity to deliver something special that can act as a catalyst for the town's renaissance. The setting up of an Energy Innovation Zone is an example of an initiative that will bring benefits and innovation to the whole town. All stakeholders, including ENGIE, local councils and the community, including local business, should collaborate with one overarching objective - Rugeley's Renaissance.

"This is a once in a generation opportunity to bring positive change to the town and spark Rugeley's Renaissance!"

Power Station Regeneration

The regeneration of the power station site is an opportunity to build an exemplar, low carbon, smart technology community. ENGIE will oversee the demolition phase to spring 2021 and act as master developer to regenerate the site, with partners. Development should provide employment, training and community amenities for local people, along with new homes to suit all incomes and a new riverside park. The development should integrate with the town and wider area and include uses and amenities which complement, not compete with, the town centre.

"Make it a showcase development not only for Engie but for Rugeley as well."

Past and future identity

The power station, and particularly the cooling towers, is a significant local landmark and has helped shape Rugeley's identity over many years. Replacing it requires a development with a bold new identity to be created, which include a recognition of the past. Ideas for this celebration includes keeping energy production at its heart, recognising and marking the importance and significance of the cooling towers and providing historical and cultural interpretation potentially combined with educational, community and leisure uses and areas.

*"Create a memorial to the power station"
– student at St Joseph's School*

"Have the footprint of the towers as a memorial"

Employment, training and local economy

Participants were keen to see the creation of good quality jobs and training opportunities for local people, and to retain and attract talent. It is important to keep young people engaged in education and wanting to stay in the town. Efforts should be made to investigate potential further education opportunities including a skills training college and to establish links with universities and companies. There should be affordable workspace for start ups and SMEs to encourage the growth of a more resilient and sustainable local economy. Development should complement not compete with the town centre.

"Keep our talent local - create space for start up companies and SMEs"

"Make it an innovation centre. Create the spaces for businesses that need it, create co-working and technical spaces. Make it community friendly."

Creating a visitor destination

Rugeley residents have bold ambitions to promote their town as a visitor destination by tying together the many heritage, cultural and environmental assets of the town and the county. In particular, the proposed riverside park could link to the Trent and Mersey canal and Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) to attract visitors interested in a range of active outdoor pursuits and encourage overnight stays in the town.

"It might not be a single attraction to draw people here but a range of different attractions."

Getting about

The regenerated power station site needs good pedestrian, cycle and public transport connections with the town centre and rail stations. The opening up of the new riverside park will bring opportunities to create leisure routes linking to Cannock Chase and the wider area. Renaissance should focus on improving the facilities at Rugeley Trent Valley station.

"Create transport links that will work for the community and prioritise people powered and public transport."