

# Rugeley Town Council

Business Plan

June 2021 – June 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 has formally approved, 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 state 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*

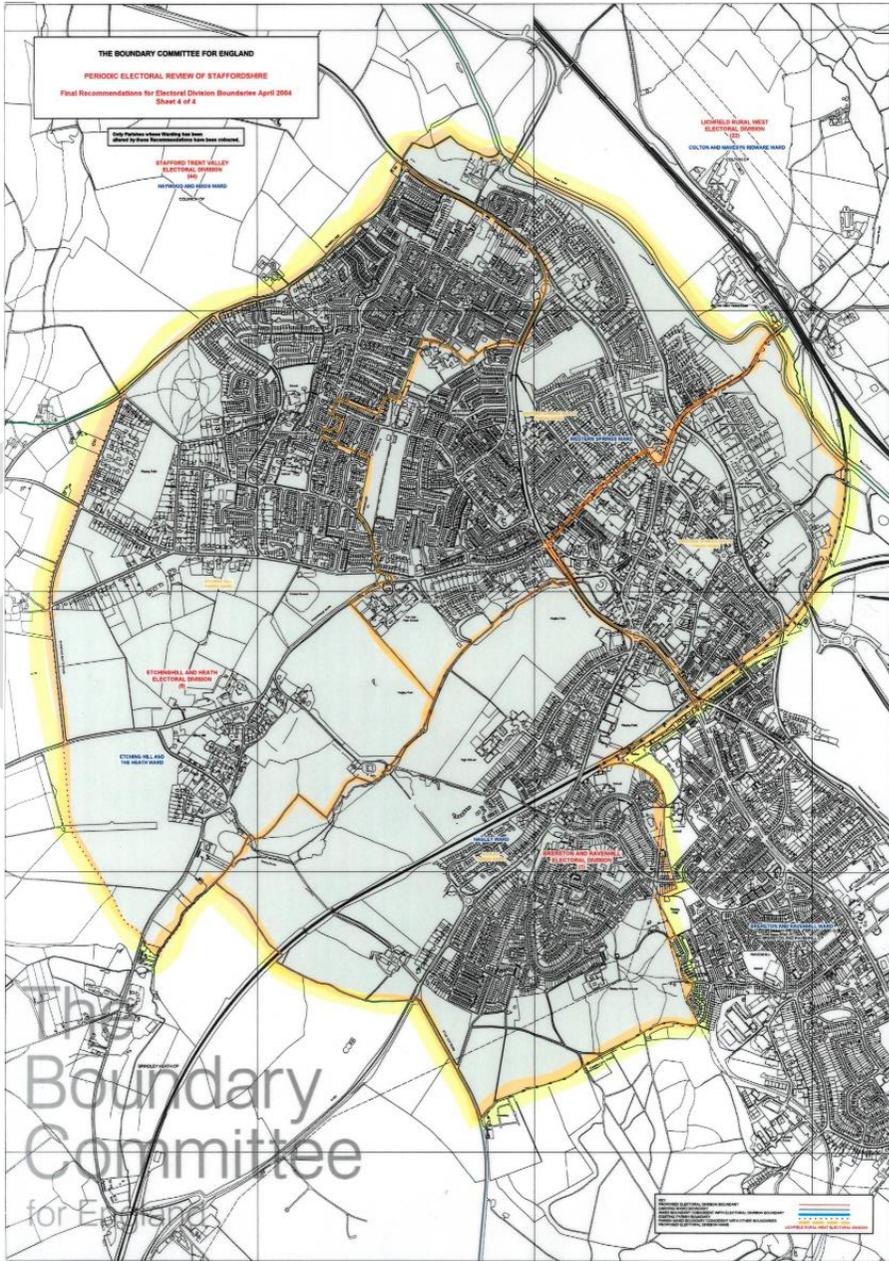
*community looking to make the most of the opportunities presented by this sought-after market town.*

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, several public events each year, 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 reelected and/or new Councillors elected. All Councillors are drawn from the local community. These elections affect the council but 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 Town Council. It covers a period of 3 years which will include the time period of the next Council election (May 2023) and will sit 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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

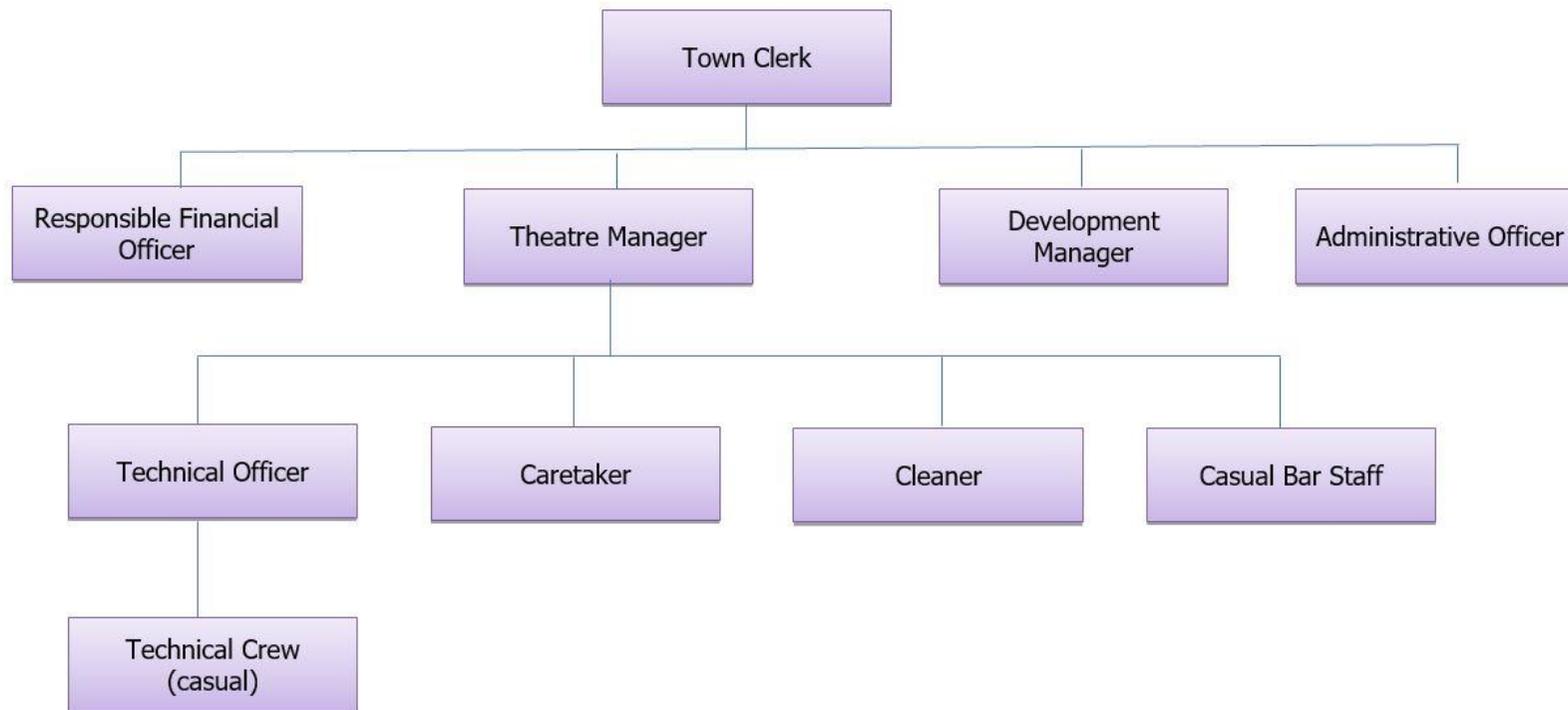
- Organise large community events
- Organise Firework Event
- Organise Christmas Lights
- Develop community projects
- Oversee the Development Manager

## 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.

The projects identified in the short term action plan all live up to these 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 quarterly Community Conferences where a variety of topics / themes are considered throughout the day with discussion group and key contributors. The first of these conferences was so successfully held on line, that it is

anticipated that they will continue to be held this way in order to maximise community contribution and accessibility.

The Rugeley Youth Council regularly attend the town council meetings in order 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 among others 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 which will cover between 3 and 12 months of annual costs. Details of how our money is spent can be found on the councils website

[www.rugeleytowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.rugeleytowncouncil.gov.uk)

## **Partnerships**

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

With the Commonwealth Games mountain biking events being held on Cannock Chase in 2022, this creates the potential for the development of tourism over the coming years, making Rugeley a destination.

Rugeley is served by two railway stations: Rugeley Town has direct trains to Cannock and Birmingham, and Rugeley Trent Valley 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.

<b>Project Aims</b>	<b>Direction</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Tourism	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.	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	Work with CCDC and Youth Council to improve play opportunities for young people.	Ongoing
	Deliver opportunities for relaxation and entertainment throughout the year that are varied and have wide appeal.	Easter to summer each year
	Deliver regular Community Conferences that allow residents and partners to discuss pressing local issues and consider ideas for future projects.	Online every 4 – 6 months
	Deliver events that will bring Hagley Field back into the public domain.	Ongoing

Business	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
Education	<p>Work with primary schools to develop activitites in the town that enthuse and inform our younger generations</p> <p>Build and strengthen relationships with the Hart Secondary School and the new John Taylor all through school to develop an interest in civic responsiblty with our young people.</p> <p>Through our primary school links nurture an environmental responsibility supported by the Councils Urban Green grant fund.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>2024</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
The Arts	<p>Enhancing the landscape of Rugeley Town Centre and the surrounding area through creative projects.</p> <p>Continue the development of online performance space using the Rose Theatre as a recording studio</p> <p>Development of a series of exhibitions to be held in the Rose Theatre</p> <p>Develop growth strategy for new demographic of theatre goers.</p> <p>Widen the offering of performance related opportunities available at the Rose Theatre.</p>	<p>2023</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>