

Rugeley Town Council

Strategy and Action Plan

May 2021 – April 2023



Rugeley is an historic market town in Staffordshire. It lies between Cannock Chase (to the west) and the River Trent and Trent and Mersey Canal to the east. The towns of Stafford, Lichfield, Cannock and Uttoxeter are all within easy reach of Rugeley which has a population of 17,749 (2011 census). Rugeley Town Council was established in 1988 following the disbandment of the Rugeley Urban District Council.

The Council comprises 19 members who will normally serve for a four year election cycle period. The next election of all councillors will be May 2023. For Town Council purposes, Rugeley is split into four wards:

Etching Hill and The Heath (7 councillors)
Western Springs (south) (2 councillors)
Western Springs (north) (5 councillors)
Hagley (5 councillors)

In addition to the monthly full council meetings, Rugeley Town Council has four standing committees covering a broad range of functions:

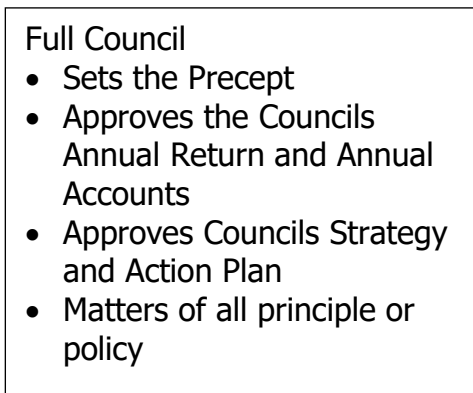
Planning Committee
Finance and Management Committee
Rose Theatre Committee
Community Engagement Committee

Town Councils are the most local tier of government and are closest to the community. Other councils in the region are Staffordshire County Council which provides services such as Education; Youth Employment; Transport; Social Services; Recreation/Arts/Museums; Roads and Pavements; Waste Disposal, Footpaths, Grass cutting of highways etc. Cannock Chase District Council coordinates and collects council tax; environmental health; planning applications; local plans; some waste collection; tree and listed building preservation, housing benefits etc.

Vision Statement

Working with partners we will 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.

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 Charter Fair
 - Organise Firework Event
 - Organise Christmas Lights
 - Develop community projects
 - Have authority to spend up to £500 at any one time from promotion budget

Introduction

This Strategy sets out the broad vision and ideas of Rugeley Town Council. The vision provides the detail of where we want to get to and how we should get there. It aims to provide the framework within which the town council, community and other partners can interrelate over the next year. This strategy covers the remaining 2 years of this current council. It will next be revisited in 2023 to cover the term of the newly elected town council.

Economic Change

Over the coming years, there will be much structural change to Rugeley. With residential and commercial development anticipated on the Rugeley Power Station site pressures will be brought on to the economic heart of Rugeley and local housing. Whilst the development sits within the Brereton and Ravenshill Parish Council and Armitage and Handsacre Parish Council areas, the natural focus for retail and commercial support will be Rugeley.

Older more traditional employment opportunities are fading out and being replaced by service industries. With no local job centre, work to support local job

seekers and those wishing to change career paths is increasingly important.

Rugeley has a long and proud history but the retail heart of the town is suffering the effects of commercial development in Cannock and Lichfield. The town is looking to create and develop a unique selling point of the town – to create a reason for shoppers and visitors to come back to the town.

There are three tenets 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.

Wellbeing

Rugeley Town Council is a strong organisation which will support the local community and other partners to develop and deliver schemes and projects to develop Rugeley.

Over recent years, much work has been undertaken to improve two way communication between the council and the community. Councillors are now involved with initiatives such as Dementia Friendly Rugeley, Rugeley Youth Council, Rugeley Traders and many others.

It is vital that these working relationships are strengthened and built on and work will continue to develop them. More effort is put into linking with other local organisations and through those links, bring enhanced projects and benefits to local residents.

Prosperity

The employment opportunities for Rugeley has historically come from the mines and the work at the Power Station. The power station still is very physically dominant in the landscape but no longer provides employment and economic security. Replacement economic development has come from

smaller industrial development along Power Station Road with key distribution centres (eg Amazon) offering an element of replacement employment.

With an increase in population through the projected residential development on the power station site, so the demand will be there to see the development of the town centre. It is the aim of the town council to work with the local district council to bring forward a considered and well thought out scheme to take the town forward for the next generation.

In previous years we have run employment clubs and jobs fairs but as other organisations have a recognised role in this, so the Town Council looks at community involvement in local events through the pop up cinema, events at our Rose Theatre, supporting the elderly through afternoon teas and tea dances etc.

Sustainability

The town of Rugeley has five conservation areas which protect the historic heart of the town. The conservation areas protect a pleasant and attractive town centre which is host to twice weekly markets. Footfall in the town centre has dropped in recent

years and retailers are looking for new and inviting ways to increase the number of visitors. Adjacent to the town boundary lies the historic hunting grounds of Canock Chase. To the east lie the waterways of the River Trent and the Trent and Mersey Canal. The opportunity to develop the tourism potential of these attractions is yet to be embraced by the council and the community.

In the summer of 2020 we secured funding to promote the bicycle. With the Commonwealth Games holding their mountain bike competition on Cannock Chase in 2022, we are promoting cycle routes around the town and up on to the Chase for all abilities. We are also working with partners to improve the bicycle and pedestrian paths from Rugeley to Hednesford and Cannock towns.

In Autumn 2020 we secured funding from Culture Recovery Heritage Fund in order to promote the Rose Theatre as an exciting online entertainments venue with work underway to create the first virtual Rugeley Fringe Festival.

In Spring 2021 we secured funding from Cultural Recovery Arts Fund to promote the Rose Theatre as

an exhibition space – this is supported with the development of small cooling towers, to be decorated by residents which will form collars around trees through the town.

Since March 2020 we have been working with Zero Carbon Rugeley to explore ways in which we can become a carbon neutral community.

We continue to work to secure funds from other sources to support and develop the work of the Town Council so that we can best serve the community.

Project Title	Date of Approval and Funding	Nature of Scheme	Partners	Measure of Success	Timescale
Corporate					
Standing Orders and Financial Regulations	Approval sought at Full Council in April/May each year.	To ensure that the standing orders and financial regulations for the council are kept upto date and approved.	RTC	That the council is run in an orderly and accurate manner	Renewed in April/May each year
Local Council Award Scheme	tbc	A method by which peer authorities rate the framework to improve and develop council services	Staffordshire Parish Councils Association and NALC	Achieved Foundation in 2017 and Quality in 2018. Hope to achieve Gold in 2022.	End of 2022
Annual Assembly	Statutory requirement Petty cash for refreshments	To promote local community activities. In 2021 we will see our first Community Conference which will underpin the Annual Assembly	Community groups and residents	Number of groups sending in reports, number of groups attending and number of other members of public attending	May/June each year

Project Title	Date of Approval and Funding	Nature of Scheme	Partners	Measure of Success	Timescale
Planning					
Neighbourhood Plan	February 2020 saw approval of £2030 for 2020/2021	Designation of NP has been received and work has begun on detailed questionnaire to go to community	RTC CCDC Power 4 All Community Groups	Regular groups to discuss policies relating to CCDC Local Plan	June 2022 ongoing
Planning Application responses		To improve the quality of responses by Rugeley Town Council on various planning applications by improving training to Councillors	RTC	Responses forming part of officer reports	ongoing
Planning Applications and community involvement		Improving public consultation and involvement on planning applications	RTC Local Community	Responses forming part of officer reports	ongoing
Market Hall		To lobby CCDC to encourage the redevelopment of the Market Hall in the town centre.	CCDC Stakeholders	Meetings held with officers at CCDC re the Market Hall	ongoing
Proposed redevelopment of the power station site		To lobby and undertake consultation with CCDC and LDC on the strategic planning documentation	CCDC LDC Stakeholders Power 4 All	Meetings held and representations made	Ongoing

		which will cover the site and be a guide for redevelopment			
Links between power station site and the town centre		To work with stakeholders on improving and creating links between proposed new residential development and the town centre	CCDC LDC Stakeholders Power 4 All	Meetings held and representations	ongoing

Project Title	Date of Approval and Funding	Nature of Scheme	Partners	Measure of Success	Timescale
Community Events					
Bringing people back to the High Street	CCDC/ERDF funding from national recovery funds	Installation of social distancing measures, hand sanitizer units and bunting to encourage people back to the town. Development of monthly Artisan Markets to support local makers.	Sketts – holding the markets and coordinating with traders	Numbers of community attending. Social feedback	Following the pandemic, need to look at more frequent smaller events rather than one off large events.
Christmas Lights	March 2019 agreed a 3 year contract for new festive lighting in the town through Community Eng. Committee £39,000	Work with partners to provide a Christmas Market and festive town centre lighting scheme Autumn 2021 need to start looking for new contract for 2022, 2023 and 2024.		Numbers of community attending – police estimate. Feedback from the community.	26 th November 2021 18 th November 2022* *to be confirmed. New contract to be in place
Remembrance Day	Main community projects budget	Installation of reusable roll out display waterfall of poppies to hang from clock tower, 2 reusable banners and 150 reusable poppies for lamppost decorations.	Royal British Legion	Feedback from community via Facebook and comments	Continued amount for installation and replacements required

<p>Bunting / tree wrapping / solar lights</p>	<p>Main community projects budget</p>	<p>To place bunting in the town centre from summer to Christmas.</p> <p>Place solar lights in trees to encourage evening economy</p> <p>Work with knitting group to 'wrap' trees</p>	<p>Rugeley Lotto</p> <p>Knitting Groups</p>	<p>Community feedback and appearance of town centre</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
---	---------------------------------------	--	---	---	----------------

Project Title	Date of Approval and Funding	Nature of Scheme	Partners	Measure of Success	Timescale
Community Grants					
Urban Greening Grants	£4,000 for both grant schemes	Grant awards to schools and community to develop fruit and vegetable growing in the parish and for community activities.	Schools Landowners Community Groups	Amount of money given in grant aid and numbers helped by the grants – use monitoring forms	February each year
Community Grants	£4,000 for both grant schemes	Small grants for community groups to support good works in the community	Community Groups	Amount of money given in grant aid and numbers helped by the grants – use monitoring forms	February each year

Project Title	Date of Approval and Funding	Nature of Scheme	Partners	Measure of Success	Timescale
Rose Theatre Activities					
Seniors Afternoon Tea	Self funding	Working with partners to provide afternoon tea for local senior residents	Community	Numbers attending and verbal feedback from those taking part.	To be confirmed when social distancing allows
Rugeley Fringe Festival	Cultural Recovery Heritage Fund secured to operate virtually in 2020/2021 £75,000	To provide a weekend of comedy, spoken word and music events via online.		Numbers attending Number of acts booked	May 2021 for virtual recording May 2022 and May 2023 – live performances
Pantomime	£10,000 to cover expenses but ticket sales will recoup a lot of the expenses.	To give the community and the youth of the parish, the chance to experience live theatre productions		Numbers attending from the schools and number of general tickets sold.	Booked for 6 th – 12 th December 2021. Future dates to be advised
Free Art Courses	November 2017 delegated decision at Rose Committee In kind support	Encouraging intergenerational community engagement through art classes and a week long summer art course and exhibition	Rugeley Arts Society	Numbers of individuals attending the weekly courses and numbers attending the annual show of work.	Ongoing

	offered by RTC through use of space at theatre				
Learning Difficulties and Disabilities Group	Room hire support	The LDD group have been offered free room hire to support the ongoing work of this much needed group in Rugeley	LDD Group	Numbers of children and young adults benefiting from the support scheme	Ongoing
Pop Up Cinema / Drive in Cinema	£19,000 funding from Heritage Funds	Change from Pop up in theatre to drive in to comply with government restrictions. This has been repackaged as Food and Film Festival for 2021	ROSA Rugeley Rugby Club	Numbers attending events	Ongoing and should be self funding if a success. Pop Up Cinema to return to Rose Theatre when restrictions allow.
Energy Arts Project	£23,500 from Arts Council	Promotion of Rose Theatre as exhibition space supported by creation of 'cooling' tower models as collars around trees forming a walkway	Arts Council Engie Schools Den101 Businesses	Creation of the cooling towers, holding of the exhibition, evaluation of the scheme	Part 1 - June 2021 Part 2 – Autumn 2022

Project Title	Date of Approval and Funding	Nature of Scheme	Partners	Measure of Success	Timescale
Project Development					
Dementia Friendly Rugeley	None as yet	To promote Rugeley as a Dementia friendly town supporting training of individuals and businesses	Dementia Friendly Rugeley	Community feedback	ongoing
Youth Council		To continue working with the youth council with young people from the local schools to operate smaller local youth focussed projects.	Hart School	Achievement of projects being brought forward by the Youth Council	Ongoing
Zero Carbon Rugeley	None as yet	Working with partners to promote ZCR measures around the town and increase awareness.	ZCR Ambassadors, Keele University Engie	Community feedback and evaluation work undertaken by Keele University	March 2022