



Neston
Town Council



STRATEGY 2022-2025



FOREWORD

Welcome to Neston Town Council's latest Strategy. It sets out our vision for the future of the town and our aims and priorities over the next four years to help take it in that direction. As you would expect, it builds on other partnership and community ambitions such as the Neighbourhood Plan, we have not thrown away good ideas from the past. We have consulted widely, listened and made a number of changes from our Consultation Draft.

In this document, we have firmly nailed our direction of travel by highlighting the role of the Town Council in achieving our Vision for the Town. In doing so, we acknowledge it will take a strong partnership with a number of organisations to attain our goals. As the local authority closest to the people of the town, we are uniquely situated to best represent the views of our communities and to help coordinate the actions of those who can deliver improvement. The document is the recognition of where we are and what needs doing. It is a commitment to tackle the issues identified with vigour, over a realistic period of time. The Council will be careful with public money, but will not be afraid to invest in the future. We are backing this up by reviewing our governance, and increasing transparency in our decision making.

We recognise that it will take us time to build up our resources before we can do everything we promise. We are deliberately developing a wider role in the community that is expected of town councils in today's world. Government have given us wider powers than formerly and we intend to use them wisely. We will supplement this with our Delivery Plan, which will add the "how" we are going to deliver our Strategy and give more detail about the many actions we will take to achieve our aims. This will be accompanied by a 5-year financial plan to identify the longer-term fiscal implications of our decisions. We will report back to you regularly on progress

Our Parish has many distinctive features which makes it attractive and unique, a strong heritage and most importantly a friendly community that enjoy the benefits the Town offers. Great as our Town is, there are issues which require attention if it is to truly benefit from its recognition. The planned growth of the Town will bring benefits but will also provide challenges.

Pat Kynaston

Town Mayor

The Council Strategy 2022-2025 was adopted by Neston Town Council on 4 October 2022

Our Vision: An engaged community working together and with others, to bring about continuous and sustained improvement which ensures the Town is an attractive place with a strong identity where people want to live, work and visit.

We believe this can be achieved, by the Town Council engaging with and supporting its communities, and coordinating the efforts of key stake holders to stimulate economic growth, improve the public spaces and protect and grow amenities and the environment.

Our Mission: (purpose) We are helping to create an environmentally sustainable and thriving market town for Neston’s residents, businesses and visitors by fostering a strong community spirit and improving and increasing the range of locally run services.

We will provide strong, fair, open and honest leadership. Councillors and officers will work together and jointly with others, to champion the needs and wishes of the community by direct provision, partnership, facilitating others and lobbying. We will manage resources effectively, operate sustainably and be an advocate and campaigning voice for the Town.

OUR CORE VALUES

The principles by which we will operate the Council are:

*** Transparency & Accountability**

*** Working with others to maximise effectiveness**

*** Inclusiveness & Accessibility**

*** Flexibility and Proactivity**

*** Robust with Resources**

Strategic Goals:



1. A TOWN TO LIVE IN

Helping to ensure the town has a balanced mix of housing to cater for its diverse population, with improved health and wellbeing and where people feel safe and have easy access to all facilities.

2. A TOWN TO WORK IN

Encourage economic prosperity by assisting businesses to provide a spread of quality and sustainable employment and a modern, vibrant town centre. Neston will continue to embrace digital technology and have improved services to meet the additional demand as it grows.

3. A TOWN TO ENJOY

Promoting the improvement of the Public Spaces, addressing climate change issues and protecting the local environment and heritage. Improved leisure assets and development of arts and culture provision.

4. A COMMUNITY WITH PRIDE

Developing a sense of civic pride across all age groups, improving the level of public engagement and providing a place where people feel positive and engaged.

5. A COUNCIL IN TRANSFORMATION

Developing the capacity and skills within the Council, to equip it to deliver the outward facing priorities, efficiently and effectively. Striving to work differently and for continuous improvement.

OUR FUTURE DIRECTION

The Council's **4 "outward facing" Strategic Priorities** are about improving Neston for the benefit of residents, businesses and visitors and therefore the ones of particular interest to our communities. The Council wish to see the town continue to develop as a great place in which to live, work and do business, or just to visit and enjoy. In other words, a place to be proud of.

Within these Strategic Priorities are supporting corporate objectives. For each of these we have listed the key broad actions we intend to take. These will be given more specific targets in our Delivery Plan, which will also identify dates by which they will be delivered, as well as outcomes and action champions.

In addition, we have identified **a fifth priority** to transform the potential of the Council-our efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency to enable us to commit to our firm intention to deliver our 4 outward facing priorities.

For each Strategic Priority we have given some relevant information to provide context on which we have based our decisions. This will be updated as newer data becomes available.

There are practical limits on what we can achieve as a Town Council, with our own legal powers or resources. However, where we are able, we will act decisively to deliver services and activities to the best of our ability. Where there is greater benefit in engaging in partnership with other groups and organisations to deliver change, we will take that route. Where we cannot directly make things happen, we will use 'our voice' to try and influence those bodies in the driving seat. Our actions to make this Strategy a reality, will increase over the term, as we build up both financial and personnel resources.

We see the role of the Town Council is to support and enhance the energy and commitment of its community. We will strive to enable others to be successful. We will support and champion causes that improve the Town's resilience and protect against those that erode it. We will encourage everyone to get involved. Participation and engagement will be central to our thinking, and we will work hard to expand and improve how we do this. We will look for new ways to listen to Neston's residents and businesses and bring forward those voices that are not always heard.

We will aim to be bold, responding to identified needs and making decisions based on what we believe is best for Neston. We will be nimble, taking opportunities as they emerge. To do this, we will ensure our staff are empowered and that both staff and councillors have the range of skills and experience they need to succeed.

We will practice what we preach. The Town Council will create an ethical policy to enhance our current approach. We aspire to provide our staff with a great place to work and to be a local employer of choice. We will do this by creating a culture of professionalism and respect, embracing diversity, offering development and training opportunities as well as recognising achievement and contribution. We will continue to support local businesses through our procurement processes wherever possible. We will work hard to minimise our own environmental impact and to support local businesses and residents to do the same.

Lastly, we are committed to ensuring that our processes, as a group of Councillors, exemplify this commitment to engagement and participation, embracing diversity and

allowing debate, interaction and challenge. We want neither to stifle discussion nor ignore disagreement. We will work together effectively, be fair and participative and allow space for enthusiasm, learning and initiative.

We are: Proud of our past, proud of our present and will create a future to be proud of.

GOAL 1: A TOWN TO LIVE IN.

Helping to ensure the town has a balanced mix of housing to cater for its diverse population, with improved health and wellbeing and where people feel safe and have easy access to all facilities.

CONTEXT

Neston is a town and civil parish located on the Wirral Peninsula, in Cheshire. Parkgate the only coastal resort in the County is located to the north west and the village of Little Neston to the south of the town. Whilst we await the 2021 Census results later in the year, the total population is estimated to be in excess of 15,300, which is growing slower than Cheshire West & Chester (CW&C) and the North West Region (NWR).

There has been a significant reduction in the population of children with a commensurate rise in the pensionable adult population. This may in part be explained by the fall in the 25 – 59 age group during the period. Two principal reasons seem likely; the first is there is a lack of suitable housing accommodation at affordable prices and the second is there is a lack of appropriate employment opportunities.

There is a largely white, British population (96% in 2011), with the remainder a mix of ethnicities. In 2011 there were 6,777 households and 7097 dwellings, with a higher % of detached homes than CW&C and a higher number of owner-occupiers.

The 2013 Strategic Housing Market Assessment identified that there are high levels underoccupancy in Neston, above the level for Cheshire West and Chester (CW&C) as a whole. Neston's tenure pattern is heavily skewed towards owner occupation with relatively low levels of renting. The social rented sector within the North West Region accounts for 18% of all households whilst in Neston it is just over 13%.

There is a need for houses with less bedrooms for emerging and concealed households and for elderly households to downsize. However, analysis shows that the past and current provision has predominantly been towards higher bed spaced properties. The provision of affordable market and social housing including affordable homes and single person accommodation is a key objective for the Neighbourhood Plan.

The respondents of the 2011 Census were asked to rate their health. The percentage of residents in Neston rating their health as 'very good' is more than the national average. Also, the percentage of residents in Neston rating their health as 'very bad' is less than the national average, suggesting that the health of the residents of Neston is generally better than average.

Healthwatch Cheshire West, undertook a survey of Neston & Willaston residents from October 2020-March 2021. 40% felt comfortable attending appointments but 30% expressed concern about overburdening the NHS. 70% have experienced video or phone

appointments of which 75% approved for certain appointments but 25% do not like them with GPs. Two-thirds had not experienced issues with medication & prescriptions but 25% had experienced some disruptions with hospital services. There was a mixed response as to the effect of Covid on their mental health.

The Cheshire West Integrated Care Partnership is now responsible for health care but provision continues to straddle the boundary with many services coming from Wirral NHS rather than Chester. There are 3 GP practices each with a Patient Participation Group. The Neston and Willaston Community Care Team covers patients registered with Neston Medical Centre, Neston Surgery or Willaston Surgery. The team includes district nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and social workers. There are 4 dental practices, 6 care homes, 4 pharmacies and 1 optician as well as a number of providers of complimentary therapies and professional support.

There are some 27 Defibrillators in Little Neston, Ness, Neston, Parkgate and Willaston. There is no hospital in Neston, for Accident and Emergency people usually go to Arrowe Park or Countess of Chester.

The overall crime rate in Neston in 2021 was 45 crimes per 1,000 people. This compares favourably to Cheshire's overall crime rate, coming in 61% lower than the Cheshire rate of 72 per 1,000 residents. The Police have a visible presence around the town. The Borough's Community Safety Partnership, works to continue Neston as a safe place. Through the Community Safety Partnership, Neston is committed to developing a zero-tolerance policy to crime motivated by hostility or prejudice. There are 12 CCTV cameras that serve the Town Hall, High Street, Market Square and the car park.

For road accidents, Neston is in the lowest risk category however residents are still concerned about the speed of traffic in the town.

We will

1. Work to influence the housing that Neston needs

- Use our influence in an attempt to obtain the necessary mix of sustainable housing types, for our diverse population as the Local Plan is refreshed and to ensure its design preserves Neston's character.
- With our partners, support the provision of more affordable and social housing.
- Promote connectivity between neighbourhoods.

2. Work to improve health and wellbeing

- Support initiatives which encourage residents to live a healthy lifestyle and to re-emphasise advice from partners through our communications channels.
- Reduce social isolation and loneliness by supporting "befriending" schemes and community transport.
- Seek to engage with young people through the local youth groups and schools.

- Recognise the needs of people with disabilities, seek to empower them and support better access and facilities for them.
- Work with partners such as Neston & Willaston Care Community Steering Group to address shortfalls in provision of health and social care.

3. Work to make our Town Safer

- Look at opportunities to work with Cheshire West & Chester Council to improve CCTV services.
- Work with the Police to maintain the PCSO and Officer presence to prevent anti-social and ensure residents feel safe.
- Work with Police and other partners on community safety initiatives, disseminate information and report matters of concern.
- Work with the community & principal council to develop a Town Emergency Plan.
- Issue home safety advice/information through our communications channels.
- Undertake a Crime Reduction Audit on the Council's activities & facilities, to lead by example.
- Utilise the Council's assets and resources to benefit the most vulnerable in our society, including potentially a "Safe Place" in the next development of the Town Hall.
- Support Cheshire Fire and Rescue fire safety campaigns through our communication channels.
- Use our influence for traffic management and speed reductions which improve safety.

GOAL 2: A TOWN TO WORK IN.

Encourage economic prosperity by assisting businesses to provide a spread of quality and sustainable employment and a modern, vibrant town centre. Neston will continue to embrace digital technology and have improved services to meet the additional demand as it grows.

CONTEXT

There is a higher proportion of Neston residents economically inactive than in CW&C and the North West Region (NWR), substantially retired persons. Of the economically active population, a higher proportion work part time or are self-employed within Neston than work full time as compared to CW&C and the NWR. There is a higher proportion of Neston residents within the professional and managerial categories of employment as compared with CW&C and the NWR. Conversely, the proportion of residents in nonskilled jobs is lower in Neston than in CW&C and the NWR. As there are limited opportunities for the former level of employment within the parish, it results in a high number having to travel a distance to work. They are therefore dependent on a good reliable transport system and infrastructure. A significant proportion (almost 77%) of residents use a private motor vehicle to travel to work. Journeys by train are higher than that for CW&C but are similar to the NWR average. It is believed that journeys by train could be higher if the services on the Borderlands line had direct connections to Liverpool and Chester.

Neston is well-represented in education, public administration, professional, science and technological industries and health and social work compared with CW&C and to some extent the NWR. It is under-represented in retail, manufacturing, accommodation and food

and administrative and support services. Although the retail sector in Neston is lower in proportional terms compared with CW&C and the NWR it has the highest number of residents working within it. This may in part explain the relatively high levels of part time employment.

A key sustainability issue for the Town is the limited employment opportunities, with the majority at Clayhill Business Park, Neston town centre and Parkgate. Neston High School and Aldi Distribution are the largest single employers although the majority of staff commute in. Leahurst Veterinary School is located just outside the area but again it is thought that only a small number of staff come from within Neston. There is however concern about the increasing extent of non-traditional employment businesses such as retail locating to Clayhill Business Park, with the potential to affect the health of Neston town centre as well as altering the nature and function of the Business Park. There remains around 4ha of undeveloped employment land available plus additional refurbished or redeveloped space at Clayhill Business Park. To be in a strong position to provide business space and jobs it will require improvements to the site and to the infrastructure around it to enable it to come forward.

In the last few years, the town has had the feel of a place that is absolutely on the up. Gradually more independent shops and cafés have emerged to compliment larger shops such as an Aldi, Sainsbury's and other amenities including opticians and a building society. The historic charter outdoor market has kept its heart with up to 35 stalls, withstanding competition from on-line trading and remaining an attractor in the town centre, with other smaller shops to discover in Little Neston and surrounding areas. There is a recognition that the function of the town centre must keep developing so that it is not solely a place for people to do their daily shop but a place to live and visit.

Parkgate, a popular tourist attraction on the coast with some small shops to explore. There are a number of outstanding pubs and restaurants to enjoy in the area, and a newly refurbished hotel at Parkgate.

Neston no longer has Town Centre Manager. A distinct competitive advantage of Neston town centre over some of its competitors is its free long-stay car parking. This asset is supported by businesses, residents and visitors alike.

Superfast broadband through fibre to cabinet is available to most areas, and in theory ultrafast is also available to many areas although most providers are not currently offering it. Neston has the lowest fibre access out of all small towns in Cheshire but is still among the top 100 small towns in the region for fibre access. Ofcom coverage data shows that Ultrafast broadband is available to 71% of residents, whilst Superfast is available to 99% of households.

Despite good broadband infrastructure, Ofcom see low test speed averages in Neston postcodes CH64.

We will

1. Seek to promote a spread of employment with more quality and sustainable jobs and enhance economic prosperity.

- Promote the visitor economy by working with stakeholders to raise the standard of the offering in Neston and supporting the messaging to internal and external audiences, in-line with any Brand Strategy.
- Work with stakeholders to establish a Visitor Centre or Tourist Information Centre with links to all the major tourist attractors and information kiosks/interpretative panels at key locations.
- Proactively work with partners to encourage inward investment, which will result in an increased mix of employment opportunities.
- Assist Cheshire West and Chester Council in seeking funding from the Government and other sources to support businesses in Neston.
- Work with partners to help revitalise the Town Centre.
- Investigate the ambition to have a Business Improvement District in Neston.
- Use our influence to retain and enhance smaller employment sites particularly where they enable “start-up” activity or the expansion of existing businesses.
- Work with other stake holders to bring forward undeveloped employment land and additional refurbished or redeveloped space at Clayhill Business Park.
- Actively support the retention, maintenance, and enhancement of free parking in the Town, supported by proactive parking enforcement.
- Be instrumental in instigating a business forum and use the provisions of the Town Hall to facilitate business networking, and jobs fayres.

2. Seek to preserve existing services and facilities and support the establishment of new accessible local services and infrastructure.

- Continue to work with Cheshire West and Chester Council and other partners to ensure the development of Neston is planned and delivered in a strategic and holistic manner.
- Work to help the Town and its residents, visitors and businesses benefit from digital technology.
- Use our influence to ensure the necessary provision of additional services and infrastructure, as development is approved within and outside the Town.
- Work with partners to bring about improved and more integrated public transport.
- Work with partners to help re-establish a post office in the town.

GOAL 3: A TOWN TO ENJOY.

Promoting the improvement of the Public Spaces, addressing climate change issues and protecting the local environment and heritage. Promote leisure assets and development of arts and culture provision.

CONTEXT

Neston civil parish area, lies on the edge of a sandstone ridge of the Wirral peninsula at the north-west tip of Cheshire. The tidal salt marshes of the Dee Estuary, now largely Royal Society for the Protection of Birds reserve, extend all the way from Parkgate to local beauty spot Burton Mere. Beyond that is the Welsh border and to the south west, the Deeside Industrial Area in Flintshire. To the north and east is the Metropolitan Borough of Wirral with road, rail and ferry links to Liverpool across the River Mersey. The town of Ellesmere Port and the industries of the Mersey Valley lie to the south east. The city of Chester is ten miles to the south.

There aren't many places in the country where you get beautiful countryside and windswept coast in such close proximity, and it's a special combination. The surrounding landscape of the Wirral peninsula comprises largely agricultural fields that form gently undulating grassland, broken up by hedges and woodlands. The proximity of Neston to open countryside, of high visual and ecological value, is a key asset. This countryside provides an important green lung and valuable recreational resource. The high quality and varied green space provision of Stanney Fields Park, Park Fields, Ness Botanic Gardens, Wirral Country Park, the Wirral Way and accessible estuarial margins contribute considerably to making Neston a place to enjoy.

There are three conservation areas, each with detailed character appraisals namely Neston (2001), Ness (2007) and Parkgate (2008). There are a significant number of listed buildings which in the main are either public buildings, houses or buildings related to farming. Other listed buildings include churches and associated structures, a public house, a converted windmill, a former school and its chapel, a bridge carrying a disused railway and a telephone kiosk. Other important heritage assets include a Registered Park and Garden. There is however recognition that there are local historical and architectural assets that need identifying and protecting through the completion of a Local List.

Access to the Green Belt adjacent to the urban area is encouraged to provide additional recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. The network of green-spaces and countryside provide an important element of the Town's Green Infrastructure.

Parks Field features a wild flower meadow and two football fields. Neston Cricket Club can be found between Neston and Parkgate, and has been open since 1881. The prestigious club is also able to provide a number of sporting options and facilities including hockey, racket ball, squash, and tennis with a number of courts available. Zone Fitness gymnasium can be found close to Neston, while Neston Recreation Centre has a range of leisure facilities including a swimming pool, a sports hall, outdoor pitches and courts.

National government has set health-based objectives for a range of pollutants and, where these are not met, the local authority must declare an air quality management area (AQMA) and commit to improving local air quality through action planning. There are no AQMAs within Neston and no exceedances of the NO₂ or PM₁₀ objectives were identified in 2019 and 2020. CW&C have one monitoring site in Neston at junction of A540/B5134.

We will

1. Contribute to the protection and enhancement our local environment and public spaces:

- Adopt an Environmental and Sustainability Policy to support locally the climate change initiatives which are so important to our residents.
- Work with our communities and active local groups such as Neston Earth Group, to develop progressive local solutions in response to the climate and ecological crises.
- Improve our Town environment by ensuring the public spaces are clean, accessible and litter free, and to this end, introduce a Ranger service to work alongside CW&C.
- Work with partners to improve signage and interpretation.
- Seek to preserve and enhance the Town 's biodiversity through supporting the retention, creation, and improvement of water and green infrastructure networks.
- Work with stakeholders to develop proposals for Environmental improvement corridors.
- Act as an advocate and gateway to other agencies in order to resolve nuisance complaints.
- Undertake an Environmental Audit to determine the effect of the Council's activities and measure its carbon footprint as a simple benchmark against which to monitor future progress.
- Support the CWaC Local Plan Strategic Policies regarding retention of the existing Green Belt.
- Campaign to promote sustainable new development and conversions.

2. Protect and enhance our heritage:

- Support the continuance of significant public events.
- Work to ensure Neston's heritage is recorded and made accessible to all. Look to develop more online content on our website that captures the Town's look, memories, and history.
- Support Cheshire West and Chester Heritage Strategy.
- Explore with partners the concept of a "virtual" museum for Neston. It could be in several linked locations, extending the Town trails. It would provide access to the natural, built, cultural and industrial heritage of the Town.
- Support reviews and maintenance of the conservation areas and both listed buildings and buildings on a local list and list on the website.
- Use the planning system to preserve green open spaces and sightlines to key features.
- Look to implement a local Blue Plaque Scheme for Neston.

3. Recognise the range of leisure and sporting assets and seek to add to them.

- Oppose new developments where recreation or sports facilities are lost unless equivalent provision is provided.
- Support and promote the development of new sports and leisure facilities to meet the needs of the local and surrounding population.
- Work with partners and “friends of” groups to maintain and upgrade the various green-spaces in the town.
- Recognise the needs of pedestrians and cyclists and promote cycling and walking in the town, including helping to fund the updating of maps.
- Support local sports and leisure organisations to expand and play a greater role in meeting the needs of the population.
- Work to maintain and enhance the provision of allotments in the Town.

4. Develop Arts and Culture

- Stage directly or with partners, specific events which raise the profile of the town and encourage visitors.
- Promote Neston town centre’s role as the social and cultural hub for the area.
- Promote an upbeat, exciting programme of cultural and arts activity across the town.
- Provide opportunities to create and show new work and for artists and creatives to network.

GOAL 4: A COMMUNITY WITH PRIDE.

Developing a sense of civic pride across all age groups, improving the level of public engagement and providing a place where people feel positive and engaged.

CONTEXT

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) indicates Neston as a whole presents a place offering considerable advantages. 60% of the population are amongst the least deprived in the country, far exceeding CW&C as a whole. However, 38% of residents are not doing so well. Parts of north and east Neston and to a lesser extent Little Neston, show some levels of deprivation. No parts of Neston fall within the most deprived categories but there are some areas of need. Deprivation means more than just financial poverty. It measures a whole range of circumstances which grant or deny people access to opportunity. IMD combines a range of data to calculate a series of indicators which measure the extent to which low income, employment problems, health and disability, education and training, barriers to housing and other services, crime and environmental issues like pollution combine together to impact on people’s lives.

The affordability of housing within the NPA is a key concern resulting in young families having to move away.

The community values facilities such as its schools, doctor’s surgeries, dental practices, the Recreation Centre, the Neston Community and Youth Centre, halls, scout/guides huts

and playing fields. The Neighbourhood Plan provides a policy framework to protect these facilities and the nomination of these as Assets of Community Value as appropriate. The redevelopment of Neston High School was a significant achievement, with the school being oversubscribed and many students from outside the area adding to a varied and thriving community. Local transport routes in the Neston area open up schools across the rest of Wirral and Cheshire, as well as local sixth forms and colleges a short distance away in Birkenhead. There are also colleges at Ellesmere Port and Chester. There is also a selection of primary schools that can be found in and around the Neston and Little Neston areas. Neston Primary School is on Burton Road and includes afterschool clubs, while St Winifred's Catholic Primary School, Parkgate Primary School and Woodfall Primary are also close by.

The Town has an active community, who continue to maintain the "community" part of the Town Council's website. This lists a wide-ranging selection of community and voluntary group with categories including Music (13); Churches (12); History, Civic & Conservation (4); Luncheon Clubs (4); Open Spaces (9); Residents Associations (2); Special Interest (11); Sports (15); Women's Institutes (5); Men's Groups (1); Youth 15 and the Royal British Legion. There is also a good selection of pubs, clubs, cafes and restaurants to enjoy.

There are many regular events held at a variety of venues including the Town Hall and Market Square; Civic Hall; Library and Neston Community and Youth Centre. In addition, there is a programme of other community events, such as the Christmas Lights, now being provided by the Town Council and Neston Female Society's annual parade which the Town Council support.

It has to be recognised, that as the proportion of elderly people in the population increases and the proportion of families and young people decreases, the dynamics and needs of the community will change. The moderate development of houses will also bring in new people and increase diversity, but make engagement and inclusion ever more important.

We will

1. Build a single, engaged and empowered Neston Community

- Celebrate the diversity of our communities of place, origin, interest, or age, and proactively engage with them, ensuring they are consulted, and represented.
- Work with our community on determining how to best help it develop, possibly using the CH64 Vision Tree as a starting point. We will continue to work with other bodies which support, advise and develop community and voluntary groups and Cheshire Community Action.
- Engage with and support the wide variety of community organisations in the town which help us deliver our aims and continue to provide grants and donations.
- Ensure as a strategic partner, we are at the centre of proposals for the re-development of the Town Hall, to deliver a true community hub.
- Empower a volunteering culture within Neston by promulgating the benefits and promoting opportunities.

- Adopt a Social and Ethical Policy and a Community Engagement Policy to ensure our standards are exemplary and clear.
- Ensure our Equality Policy remains positive about diversity and inclusiveness and always reflects best practice in respect of employment, services, and democracy.
- Work with others to support young people and ensure they have things to aspire to, be it employment opportunities, safe activities, and place to engage with or an interest in their community.
- Support and develop networks which foster linked services and remove duplication.
- Develop community-focused programmes that support the wellbeing of residents, rebuild community engagement and cohesion, and help to build confidence levels of residents.
- Support local food banks and explore the idea of a community Fridge.
- Develop general principles in a Planning Policy to set out what the Council is striving to achieve for the Town, through the observations it makes on planning applications.
- Look at introducing annual awards including civic achievements, gardening and allotments.

2. Provide a voice for Neston

- Maintain either directly, in partnership or indirectly, a programme of events to promote the Town and promote the Council's other objectives and the shared values and common goals of a Neston Place Brand.
- Remain alert to concerns about the loss of community assets and offer support where possible.
- Promote or support events which build community cohesiveness or promote the town.
- Become an influential participant in dealing with others, working with, and holding to account partners.
- Ensure that we deliver the objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan for which we are the lead body and work with the community to undertake a mid-term review.
- Have an active and responsive programme of Mayoral engagements to support the community and promote the town.
- Maintain public participation at Council and committee meetings and continue councillor surgeries.

GOAL 5: A COUNCIL IN TRANSFORMATION.

Developing the capacity and skills within the Council, to equip it to deliver the outward facing priorities, efficiently, and effectively. Striving to work differently and for continuous improvement.

CONTEXT

Neston has been a seat of local government as we now know it, since the Neston and Parkgate Urban District was created in 1894. It was preceded from 1867 by the Neston and

Parkgate Local Board. In 1933, several civil parishes of the disbanded Wirral Rural District were added including Ness and parts of Burton. It was then called Neston Urban District Council which was itself abolished from 1st April 1974 under the Local Government Act 1972, when the area was absorbed into the Borough of Ellesmere Port and Neston. The entire borough was initially unparished, but in 1987 just one civil parish, Ince, was created.

Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council was abolished on 1 April 2009, along with Cheshire County Council when the new Cheshire West and Chester unitary authority was formed.

Neston Town Council (NTC) was set up in 2009 so that the town of Neston would have greater influence with the principal council. In Spring 2014, the Council took over the running of the Town Hall, the Market Square and the weekly Friday Market.

All out elections take place every 4 years, with the next due in May 2023. The Council consists of 17 councillors elected in 3 wards: Neston, Parkgate and Little Neston. The Town Council is the closest level of government to the community and takes pride in its ability to work in partnership with CW&C, the Town's residents, businesses, and voluntary sector.

Neston is part of the parliamentary constituency of Ellesmere Port and Neston.

Neston Town Hall was built in 1889 for Neston and Parkgate Local Board. On the formation of the urban district, it was used as the council's headquarters until 1974. Since its abolition, the town hall has remained in community use and is now also used by Neston Town Council and the Police.

The Town Council is a consultee to examine plans due for consideration by Cheshire West & Chester Council as planning authority.

Following the Covid Pandemic, the Town Council is looking at how it can do more for the Town and is defining this in its Corporate Strategy. It has had an independent "Situation Analysis" review undertaken, to guide it towards best practice.

We will

1. Develop performance-based management to get it right first time.

- Develop capacity and a diverse skill base through an active Member and Officer Training Programme.
- Build our Workforce structure to ensure it can adapt to the emerging needs of our residents as defined in our Strategy.
- Be innovative in finding external funding.
- Develop a Quality ethos to ensure a programme of continuous improvement.
- Gain accreditation under the Local Council Award Scheme.
- Deliver the Strategy objectives through an outcome focused Delivery Plan and related performance management.
- Define operational efficiency by developing a range of quality based operating procedures.

- Review our Codes of Conduct for councillors and Staff.
- Develop our Governance and Policies to ensure they are fit for purpose.
- Move to a 5-year financial plan to ensure best value, ensuring we build up resources to deliver our Strategy.
- Undertake a review of the Council's information technology.
- Look to develop a "job description" for our councillors to help prospective candidates understand what is expected of the role.

2. Deliver excellent services according to both need and consumer choice

- Determine priorities on both objective need and public choice, in the light of business and safety risk assessments.
- Continue to deliver our existing services and develop out-come based standards.
- Support or supplement essential services provided by others, but only take on devolved services from the principal council, where it is necessary to preserve or improve them and it does not create a "double taxation" burden.
- Introduce new services and initiatives where we can satisfy need and choice, cost effectively.
- Remain eligible for the general power of competence and embrace other new powers made available, which benefit our aims to increase our ability to offer services and local governance.
- Use our role in the planning system to the benefit of the local community.
- Continue the Winter Maintenance service to outside the Town Hall and Market Square and supplement for vulnerable people. Look in to the feasibility of a voluntary Snow Warden Scheme.

3. Provide excellent communications and transparency

- Continually improve the content of the Website, social media posts and other channels of communication to make the Council more accessible and efficient.
- Develop and adopt Communications and Marketing Policy.
- Evaluate the feasibility and benefits of reinstating a periodic newsletter for wide distribution.
- Keep our Publication Scheme and Information Guide current and exceed "data transparency" requirements.
- Continue to hold a public participation session at all public meetings.
- Develop a comprehensive Information and Data Protection Policy.
- Adopt a Performance Management Policy and regularly report performance data.
- Adopt a constitution, as a framework for the Council's governance and policy documents to help the public more easily understand how we operate.

HOW IT WILL BE DELIVERED

As we have already made clear, Neston Town Council recognises that it does not have the legal powers or resources to bring about all its priorities on its own. It will support all organisations and projects which take forward its priorities. It will put its corporate shoulder behind them and, where possible, help fill gaps in provision using its unique position.

It is emphasised this is Neston Town Council's Strategy, what they would like the town to become and their part in getting it there. The Council are committed to playing a key role in the delivery of other plans and strategies for the town developed in partnership, such as the Neighbourhood Plan which is featured strongly in our aims and we will work with our community to embrace the concepts of the CH64 Vision Tree. We also intend to review our own supporting policies and governance documents to ensure they align with this Strategy and add others to improve our transparency.

Each of its priorities will be delivered through one or more projects for which action plans will be developed. Implementation of the action plans will be the responsibility of the Council Manager, and will form the basis of more detailed and costed actions and will inform the proposed medium term financial plan.

The Council will use its Delivery Plan to translate its Strategy into actions, providing details of how it will achieve and fund its aims and specify targets and timescales against which its progress can be judged. Performance data will be collected each Council cycle and reported to councillors, together with financial management information.

The Council will continuously "up its game" to tackle enthusiastically the challenges which lie ahead.