

What follows is a list and description of the documents that help us plan and develop our community and the environment.

The reason for producing this list is to assist residents to understand the role the Town Council plays in planning for the future of the Town and its surrounding areas.

Relevant Documents

Congleton Town plan	Published	Mar 2008
Congleton Public Realm Strategy	Published	Oct 2011
Congleton Town Strategy	Published	Aug 2012
Cheshire East Local Plan (Pre submission Core Strategy)	Published	Nov 2013
Congleton Neighbourhood Plan	Published	Not completed

None of these documents define exactly what is going to happen with regard to development or redevelopment of our Town and the surrounding area. They merely set out the ambitions and aspirations and offer guidance to people who wish to assist us in improving and growing our environment.

All documents have been widely publicised, have all been consulted on by the public, and are available on Congleton Town web site, Cheshire East web site and in hard copy in the town Hall and Library.

Congleton Town plan

The **Town Plan** was produced in March 2008 and is intended to be the strategy for the development of the Town Centre which sets out the vision and objectives for the Town.

Its broad aim is to provide a strategy for the Town Centre encompassed within a framework of projects which cover the retail heart, cultural quarter, Lawton Street, Leisure Hub, Roodhill and Ropewalks and West Street. This document also identified the need for a Public Realm Strategy which was subsequently produced in 2011 (see below) and both are available on the website for viewing.

Congleton Public Realm Strategy

The Public Realm Strategy was a direct result of the Town Plan. It was published in Oct 2011 after much work by the many stakeholders involved and after public consultation earlier that year.

The objective of the document is to set out a cohesive approach to the refurbishment and or development of the Streets and Public Spaces within our Town Centre. It is designed to provide guidance to ensure that an integrated strategy is in place to improve the quality of the environment for those who live, work and shop in the Town.

As it currently exists, the Strategy focuses on 12 projects which are designed to deliver transformational change within the Public Realm. All of the projects will require significant amounts of external funding. This could be achieved by developers, investors or grants or a combination of all of these.

During the recession this kind of exercise has virtually ground to a halt in the UK. However, there are now signs that money is beginning to be released to begin to improve our environment. Congleton Town Council and Cheshire East are currently working on plans to attract funding to make a start on the important and more pressing projects within the Strategy.

Congleton Town Strategy

A stakeholder panel of some 25 people consisting of a cross section of the community, including representatives of Somerford, Astbury and Brereton Parish Councils, local businesses and community groups met between November 2011 and February 2012 to produce a vision for the Town for the next 20 years.

Cheshire East were obliged (by Central Government) to produce a Borough wide **Local Plan** and needed the input from the Towns and Parishes to achieve this. The original intention was to produce what is known as a **Neighbourhood Plan** but Cheshire East officers concluded that the **Borough Local Plan** would carry sufficient weight and deemed that a **Town Strategy** would meet the needs of the exercise.

The objective of the panel was to take an holistic view of Congleton and the surrounding area and set out the future needs of the Town over the next plan period in terms of economic prosperity and how this should be sustained and enhanced, including housing needs and infrastructure needs such as schools, doctors surgeries etc. At this stage the notion of a bypass or Link Road was included in the final proposals. The strategy also highlighted the development options in terms of proposed employment and housing sites in the area.

This document is intended to inform or in other words contribute towards the **Cheshire East Local Plan** – it has no legal significance or powers in its own right.

Having completed the initial work by Feb 2012, announcements were made about the public consultation on the plan - which would run from March 2nd to April 2nd. An exhibition also ran during the same period - first in the library and then in the Town Hall. Notification was given in the Chronicle, Town Notice boards, Bear Necessities (winter edition 2011/12) and by a post card delivered to **every** household in Congleton.

The results and feedback from the **Town Strategy** Consultation were considered by the Stakeholder Panel and the final Town Strategy was then submitted for approval to the Town Council on the 23rd August 2012. The results of the consultation were also published and are available on the web sites and hard copy.

Cheshire East Local Plan

There have been a variety of documents produced by Cheshire East leading up to the Pre Submission Core Strategy which was published in November 2013 and finally the Core Strategy itself which is yet to be published.

In the three years since the consultation of the Local Plan began about 28,000 responses have been received which is unprecedented and illustrates the level of public involvement and interest in the Plan

Consultations on the Pre Submission Core Strategy ran from 5th November to 16th December 2013

The Local Plan is the Cheshire East spatial interpretation of its vision for the Borough and sets out how they intend to see the economy thrive by providing new land for development, new homes and jobs whilst improving transport connections across the Borough

In essence then the Plan will set out the following:-

- How much employment land is needed and where it should be provided
- Protecting and improving important open spaces and providing new ones
- Defining how many new homes will be required and where they should be located
- Providing new transport infra-structure including roads, cycle routes and footpaths
- Determining how town centres and community facilities in the Borough could be improved

With The Local Plan or Core Strategy in place it is understood that any new housing developments will be only allowed or permitted if they fall within one of the designated areas within the plan. Unfortunately, Central Government has decided that this cannot be enforced unless the Borough can demonstrate that it has a backlog of 5 years supply of houses where permission has already been given but development not yet completed.

Cheshire East believed that they did have a 5 year supply but through Central Government it was argued that the method that Cheshire East had used to calculate that figure was wrong. Cheshire East has now used a new Government approved formula and believes that the 5 year supply can now be proved. This has yet to be tested in a live case.

Congleton Neighbourhood Plan

Cheshire East dismissed the need for a **Neighbourhood Plan** during the early phases of the development of The Town Strategy as being unnecessary in light of the Borough Local Plan.

However, it now seems likely that without such a plan it will be difficult for the Town to claim a significant portion of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). CIL was introduced by Central Government last year with the intention of encouraging developers to contribute towards the improvement of infrastructure and local facilities and amenities in the vicinity of new developments.

The Town Council has already completed much of the work that will help us produce a new Neighbourhood plan and we expect this to be published within the coming months. There will be a consultation on the plan and residents will be able to vote on its' acceptance.

This document was prepared by

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