



Penrith Town Council

COUNCIL PLAN 2019-2023

2022-2023 UPDATED EDITION

Making a Difference in Penrith

Viv Tunnadine



Welcome

This business plan is about our future.

This has been a particularly challenging year. The Council's primary focus, both for this year and beyond, is on a strong and healthy recovery from the pandemic, for our residents, communities, businesses, and partners, whilst continuing to successfully deliver and develop services for Penrith efficiently and effectively, as we move through democratic changes in Local Government in Cumbria.

The Council's growth is inevitable, and we will be focussing on how we deliver services through this period of change and uncertainty.

Whether focusing on the recovery of the local economy or choosing which assets and services should be devolved, decisions will be made through the lens of a looming environmental crisis that cannot be ignored as the climate emergency continues to shape the way we want our town

and county to develop for future generations to enjoy.

This refreshed business plan is a high-level document covering the period 2022 to 2023 and describes the Council's priorities that will make a real difference to the quality of lives of Penrith residents, and the environment. The Business plan sets out what the Council can realistically achieve rather than what it seeks to influence and its aspirations. It informs schemes of work to be delivered by Council Officers and committees and is supported by:

- The 2022-2023 precept and budget.
- The priorities of the Town Working Group and associated stakeholder projects
- The framework to deliver and support arts, culture, heritage, tourism, and recreation.
- The Climate Change strategy
- The terms of the Strategic Working Group for Local Government Reorganisation.

Executive Summary

Penrith Town Council provides a democratic and representational voice for the community and works with its residents, principal authorities and other service providers, businesses, and community organisations to ensure that:

"Penrith will be a successful, vibrant market town providing a sustainable environment for quality of life, attracting investment and tourism whilst enhancing the best of its built and natural character."¹

The aim of the Business plan is to give residents a clear understanding of what the Town Council is trying to achieve and deliver. The Plan details what the Town Council intends to focus on over the next few years and provides an agreed strategic framework for the Town Council to work within, enabling it to operate a coordinated approach for the best interests of all those who live and work in Penrith. It is a statement of the Council's vision and priorities and provides an overview of the Council's approach to improve the quality of life for the town's residents, businesses, and visitors.

The first Council Business plan was developed in 2017 using feedback from the Penrith Community Led Plan. The second plan was developed in 2019 when a new Council was elected and was broadly populated using community feedback from the Penrith Neighbourhood Development Plan Regulation 14 consultation. The 2019 Plan went out to public consultation and was duly adopted. It is essential that for the Council to be responsive to important matters and consequently the 2019-2023 Council Business plan has been reviewed and refreshed to consider:

- Council Operations and Local Government Reorganisation in Cumbria
- Recovery from the effects of Covid-19
- Climate Change

1. Neighbourhood Draft Development Plan

The successful delivery of the Business plan requires collaborative working with new and existing partners, sharing resources to improve outcomes through joint priorities, and commissioning activities, such as the Town Working Group, Borderlands Projects, and Parking and Movement Study.

The Covid-19 Pandemic has highlighted how important it is that the Council has the power and resources to respond and support community resilience.

The business plan helps the Council to minimise risks. It clearly justifies the budget and shows that the Council has planned its activities with care.

The Council will continue to:

- Promote and represent the community's views and aspirations at local, county, and national level.
- Provide high standard, cost-effective services, and amenities to help meet the needs and wishes of residents.
- Ensure that the Council can support the community and accept growth because of Local Government Reorganisation.
- Work to retain the General Power of Competence and maintain the standards required within the Local Council Award Scheme.
- Work in partnership, to ensure and improving standard of services and facilities to meet the needs and expectations of the community.
- Influence service delivery and development in the town to ensure that the best interests of Penrith are considered.
- Seek a fair share of investment in the town by local and regional authorities.
- Encourage and accept the devolution of services to the Town Council.
- Enhance and promote the historic and cultural heritage of Penrith and safeguard its unique identity and its natural and built environment.
- Encourage and promote the economic and commercial vitality of the town.

- Promote and support local voluntary groups and clubs that seek to assist residents and encourage visitors through advice, guidance, and the provision of grants.
- Be well-informed about the needs and opinions of the town's residents, businesses, and local organisations by consulting them on relevant issues.
- Improve services to the public by encouraging members and staff to develop their skills, by undertaking appropriate training and ensure councillors are offered the opportunity to keep abreast of new opportunities and policies.
- Continuously promote public participation in all Town Council meetings and initiatives.
- Deal with enquiries, complaints, and fault reports from members of the public effectively and efficiently.
- Continue to review policies and procedures to ensure that the Council operates and delivers services in an open, transparent, legal, and business-like manner.
- Encourage and promote the social, economic, environmental, and commercial vitality of the town to support its future prosperity, sustainability and enhance the cultural wellbeing of its residents and local businesses.
- Work towards agreement to deliver these priorities, establish common goals with partners and stakeholders and be prepared to reassess and adjust goals to facilitate success.

The plan will be updated and adapted to take account of changes along the way.

Opportunities 2022-2023

Local Government Reorganisation in Cumbria

Plan for local government reorganisation and the devolution of services, resources, and assets so that the services and assets are retained in Penrith and are managed, maintained, and delivered efficiently.

Maintain high quality services while balancing the Council budget and delivering Local Government Reorganisation.

Living Well - Vibrant Town and Economy

A growing economy contributes to a healthy population. We will work with partners and stakeholders to build on our approach for business growth, branding and promotion of strong, sustainable tourism.

Encourage Penrith's economic and social growth by working collaboratively to encourage business, health, arts, culture, heritage, tourism, and recreation, initiatives, and projects, that are essential to enjoying a good quality of life, for well-being and the vitality of Penrith.

Focus on everyone matters, encouraging best possible inclusive quality of life.

Climate Change

Valuing our environment by responding to climate change, safeguarding our heritage and developing schemes to adapt to climate change and encourage sustainability.

Reduce Penrith's carbon footprint by delivering the Council's Climate Change Strategy.



Local Government Reorganisation

Since 2015, we have been actively involved in devolution of services and assets from Eden District Council and Cumbria County Council.

Devolving powers and responsibilities has the potential to foster greater degrees of civic pride. The devolution process is about to change in Cumbria as we undergo Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). This is an exciting opportunity for Penrith and is the Council's most significant priority for 2022-2023. LGR will have a direct impact on the governance, resources, growth, and operations of the Town Council. From 1 April 2023, the current six district councils and Cumbria County Council will be replaced by two new unitary authorities. The new unitary councils will provide all the services currently provided by district councils and the county council. There will be one new council covering Allerdale, Carlisle and Copeland. The council's name will be Cumberland Council. A second new council will provide services to those in the current areas of Barrow, Eden and South Lakeland and will be called Westmorland and Furness Council. Westmorland and Furness will have 65 members. A shadow authority will be elected in May 2022 to become the vested Council in May 2023. Shadow arrangements are designed to ensure that members safely manage the transition from seven councils into two. The primary task of the shadow authority is to monitor the delivery of their implementation plan.

Penrith Town Council want to provide good public services that local people and businesses can rely on. To do this, we must ensure that the Council organises itself and uses its resources effectively, to effect positive change for Penrith. We want to provide accessible and efficient local services, that people and partners can have confidence in .

What are we going to do?

- Support the transition to a unitary authority with the Council accepting devolved services and assets that are delivered efficiently to provide satisfaction to users.
- Through the Council's Local Government Reorganisation Strategic Planning Group proactively plan for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and the devolution of services, resources, and assets so that the services and assets are retained in Penrith and are managed, maintained, and delivered efficiently and effectively.
- Work alongside the shadow authority, stakeholders and partners representing the interest of the Council at formal meetings with the shadow authority and their representatives, to establish a positive and constructive relationship at the earliest stage of its operation.
- Keep Council Members and the community apprised of developments and their implications.
- Plan for growth to enable the Council to become a larger Town Council on an exemplar governance and business footing.
- Continue as an open, transparent, inclusive, and enabling Council.
- Work constructively and effectively with partnerships.
- Ensure a balanced budget and stable council finances.

How will we measure improvement?

- Be a role model for good governance and best practice.
- Performance Management is embedded to ensure that we deliver on our commitments and that regular reporting of performance is taking place.
- Employee satisfaction with the Council as an employer.
- Resident satisfaction with the Council and our services.
- Financial Reporting.
- Assumption of devolved services.

How will we achieve this?

- Continue to provide high quality, resilient services that are continuously improving to address the changing needs and expectations of residents, visitors, and businesses across Penrith.
- Continue to give all our residents the opportunity to make their voice heard especially during the period of Local Government Reorganisation in Penrith when we will actively consult to help shape and influence future Council services.
- Plan proactively for change, involving stakeholders and community to shape service direction and growth.
- Continue to involve the public, businesses, and stakeholders in the design, deliberation, and decision-making process.
- Ensure that meaningful consultation with a diverse range of groups forms the basis of decisions made by the Council.
- Continue and further develop effective partnership working with the community, voluntary groups, partners, stakeholders, organisations, local businesses, our suppliers, and other public bodies.
- Enhance technology and the digital service to enable online forms, payments for customer transactions to support growth and the assumption of responsibilities from other authorities supported by a Customer Charter.
- Ensure that Council decisions, our services, assets and developments take account of disability, diversity, and accessibility.
Continue regular reporting to Council on performance.
- Invest in our staff and Members making the most of their skills and talents.
- Maintain and improve the community's access to information and ensuring transparency and accountability.



Living Well – An Inclusive Vibrant Town

We want to ensure the town is vibrant and that it offers the right mix of facilities, services, businesses, and events to support the town’s recovery from the Covid 19 Pandemic and raises the town’s profile as a destination for arts, culture, heritage, recreation, and tourism.

The Council recognises that arts and culture are a major contributors to Penrith’s growing visitor economy and are important in terms of health, wellbeing, and quality of life.

We want Penrith to be an area where there is opportunity for all, and everyone can fulfil their potential. This can only be done if we work together to support our communities, businesses, and organisations on what matters most.

City and town centres have a key role to play in driving the local economy as we rebuild after Covid-19, but the look and feel of town centres is changing, with less focus on retail and more on a mixed use of shops, offices, community facilities, places to live and leisure.

The Council has been supporting and working with stakeholders and public bodies to prioritise and deliver key projects that will bring growth and vitality to Penrith, as well as raising the town’s profile locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally.

We want to ensure that Penrith is a place for everyone to visit, spend time and enjoy

What are we going to do?

- Provide a wide range of high-quality sustainable community inspired and tourism-based events, activities, resources, and festivals to provide inclusive community benefit, economic benefit, and social enjoyment.
- Support residents, local businesses, and organisations to create a town full of great life, opportunities and choices, business growth and economic security.
- Encourage increased opportunities for job creation, new and relocating businesses and enterprises, local spend and active travel.
- Encourage diversity of stakeholder, partners, residents, and businesses involved in ensuring that our services work for all to support the town's vitality whilst protecting and enhancing its heritage.
- Provide well-managed attractive public facilities and green spaces with space for relaxation and play that enhance wellbeing and quality of life
- Support the town's economic growth through increased opportunities for high quality, well-paid employment across the town.
- Younger people choosing to live and work in the town and to improve and prospects for young people.
- Hear the views of all in our communities so that our plans can factor in a balance of views to benefit the broadest range of people.

How will we measure improvement?

- Visitor numbers at venues.
- Footfall.
- Number of events and projects
- Jobs/growth created
- Number of vacant shops and new businesses
- Value of inward investment
- Number of activities and events in neighbourhoods to promote social integration and create opportunities for engagement.

How will we achieve this?

- Encourage, facilitate, and offer a wide range of accessible activities, projects, and events for all, working in partnership with a community-led stakeholder group who will lead this priority on the Council's behalf via the Council's Arts, Culture, Heritage, & Tourism Delivery Framework.
- Support communities and community groups to extend the range of sports and cultural facilities across Penrith, upgrading and enhancing open spaces, parks, maintaining assets and providing grants via the Council's Grants Scheme.
- Enable and promote safe cycle ways and pathways to make it safer and more appealing for residents and visitors to cycle and walk to their destination.
- Deliver actions for the Borderlands Project and Parking and Movement Study.
- Work with key stakeholders to position Penrith as a centre for digital, creative, knowledge networks.
- Use partnership working to strengthen the appeal of Penrith by promoting and marketing Penrith's cultural, heritage and natural environment assets.
- Consider how to reduce inequalities within local decisions by strengthening our Equalities Impact Assessments.
- Encourage young people, people from the LGBTQ+ community, and people from different nationalities to shape and influence decision-making by reviewing equality and accessibility practises. Provide opportunities for people to give their opinions to inform the Council about issues they feel are important and to identify local priorities.
- We will continue to listen, and we will strive to make a difference in Penrith, changing the way we operate to meet our community's needs whilst balancing budgets efficiently.
- Promote independent businesses and supporting start-ups
- Deliver the Neighbourhood Development Plan.



Climate Change

The climate and ecological crisis remains a significant, long-term challenge. Penrith Town Council has committed to playing its part to tackle this global challenge.

Our commitment to addressing the climate change and ecological emergency is a key priority for the Council.

The details of this work are included in our Climate Strategy, and we are looking to our residents and businesses to help us find solutions to cut the town's carbon footprint.

We will reduce the carbon emissions of the Council to become carbon neutral by 2030 and aim to achieve the same for the Town by 2030.

We recognise the importance of working with others on this journey; We will work with partners and contractors, businesses, visitors, and community groups to support them in reducing their carbon footprint and to help find new ways of doing things to reduce, manage and mitigate the impact of climate change.

The Council will review and if necessary change its current working practices to reduce its carbon emissions to the minimum.

In recent times, we have seen the value of green and open space for recreation, health, and wellbeing.

We place the highest emphasis on the natural capital of our stunning environment – the Lakes, mountains, and countryside – and the value and importance of biodiversity within it. As custodians for future generations, preserving and enhancing our natural environment is key.

We want to provide a healthier, more beautiful natural environment that inspires, educates, and involves residents and visitors. We will implement and support re-wilding, nature recovery and conservancy schemes to enhance our precious environment, where appropriate.

What are we going to do?

- Penrith to be carbon neutral by 2030.
- Reduce levels of waste and increased recycling.
- Reduce the usage of single use plastic and food waste.
- Everything most residents in Penrith need should be in reach by foot, bike, or public transport
- Safeguard and enhance Penrith's green spaces and extensive natural habitats.
- Encourage a greener, more sustainable economy.
- Prepare the community for climate change so we can all become more aware.

How will we measure improvement?

- Number of passenger journeys on public transport
- Use of infrastructure and facilities such as recycling, repair cafes and training/awareness workshops.
- Improvement in air quality.
- Lower carbon emissions, Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) and Particulate Matter (PM) 2.5/10 levels.
- Percentage of household waste recycled.
- Improved energy and thermal efficiency in homes.
- Number of grants awarded for "green" projects.
- Number of trees planted on Council owned land.

How will we achieve this?

- Deliver the Council's Climate Strategy, which sets out our approach to carbon neutrality. The community-led principles behind the strategy underpins all activities of the Council and are reflected in all its strategic aims and policies, including this Council Plan as carbon neutrality is central to everything we do.
- Promote and support through the planning process and Council's Neighbourhood Development Plan low carbon development, sustainable travel, and increased biodiversity.
- Encourage and provide grants for green projects.
- Continue to work and collaborate with partners and stakeholders through the Zero Carbon Cumbria Partnership, Penrith Action for Community Transition, and Cumbria Action for Sustainability to deliver projects that mitigate climate change.

- Assist the delivery of the actions from the joint authority Parking and Movement Study and the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan to improve the pedestrian experience, foot flow, reduce town centres emissions, improve, and provide safe cycling and walking routes, and support community transport schemes.
- Encourage the energy efficiency of new and existing homes towards zero carbon.
- Supporting business in meeting the challenge of carbon neutrality and encouraging 'green growth'.
- Improve the Town's natural environment.
- Ensure that all planning and development decisions take account of environmental and sustainability considerations.
- Ensure Penrith is a "bee-friendly" town with suitable habitats.
- Work with local groups to publicise 'fix-it' days, recycle, clean up, reuse projects
- Reduce plastic use by continuing to participate in and supporting the water bottle refill scheme and making the Council single-use plastic free.



Monitoring the Business plan

The Business plan is a 'live' document, which the Town Council will update regularly, enabling it to track and monitor its progress. Penrith residents will also be able to monitor progress as the plan will be publicly available. The successful achievement of the Council's objectives is dependent on the Council, and Council Officers managing and delivering projects, processes, strong governance, and activities to a high standard. This was born out when the Town Council achieved the Local Council Award Scheme Quality Award in 2020 and is the first Council in Cumbria to achieve this level of sector excellence.

Penrith Town Council will provide consistent, quality services and strive for continuous improvement for all activities, processes, operations, policies, and decisions that support the Council's business plan.

The Council provides a democratic and representational voice for the community and services are provided to a good quality standard, in an efficient, effective, and responsive way, at an affordable cost. Where others provide services, the Town Council will endeavour to ensure that they are dealt with effectively, and in accordance with the wishes of the community. The Council works with its residents, principal authorities and other service providers, businesses, and community organisations with the aim of achieving a safe, healthy, prosperous, and sustainable community.

The Council's performance is monitored by several mechanisms:

- Evaluating progress at regular Town Council and committee meetings.
- Internal and external audit reports.
- Eligibility for the Power of General Competence.
- Publicly reporting performance via newsletters, annual reports, and social media posts.
- Undertaking satisfaction surveys on its services.
- Retaining the Local Council Awards Scheme Quality Award and working towards the Quality Gold Award.

Our Values

The Town Council has 5 core values:

Equality Everyone is of equal value and should be respected according to individual needs and abilities in accordance with Council Policy.

Reasonableness To be fair, reasonable, and just in all Council activities

Accessibility Provide equal access for all in employment and service delivery.

Empowerment - Assist individuals take on responsibility so that they can influence and participate in the decision-making process.

Quality Obtain the highest standards in service delivery.

A person's mental health or disability is only one aspect of who the person is. Our actions and the words we choose and the meanings we attach to them, influences attitudes.

Our language choices have a powerful effect on how mental health and people living with mental health conditions and other disabilities are viewed.

The Town Council will act respectfully, using language which emphasises the person, not the condition or disability and will encourage partners and stakeholders to do the same.

This plan is published on the Council's website and is available in hard copy from the Town Council Office.

It is our intention to review the Business plan regularly, publish progress and make any changes considered necessary as a result.

For budget reports and precept information, please contact us or view our website use the underlined link below

[This link will open our website - https://www.penrithtowncouncil.gov.uk/](https://www.penrithtowncouncil.gov.uk/)



Tel: 01768 899 773

Email:
office@penrithtowncouncil.gov.uk

If you wish to raise any matters concerning Penrith this can be done by contacting the Town Council at:

Penrith Town Council,
Unit 1, Church House
19-24 Friargate
Penrith
Cumbria
CA11 7XR

