



Penrith Town Council

Making a Difference in Penrith

BUSINESS PLAN

2017-2023

REFRESHED JULY 2019



1. Executive Summary

This document provides a focus for Penrith Town Council to deliver a coordinated approach for the best interests of all those who live and work in Penrith and make use of the Council's services. It is a statement of the Council's vision and priorities and provides an overview of the Council's plan to improve the quality of life for the Town's residents, businesses and visitors. The plan was developed in 2016 using feedback from the Penrith Community Led Plan that was approved in 2017. The Business Plan and its priorities are referenced, monitored and reviewed regularly and should be considered as a 'living organic document'.

The Business Plan will influence the budget process and resource allocation of the Council. The Business Plan is flexible to meet changing demands as the District Council further devolves services and has accommodated emerging feedback from the information gathered from the Statutory Regulation 14 consultation for the Penrith Neighbourhood Development Plan. The Council has recognised that some of the feedback from the Regulation 14 consultation does not fall under planning law but is important to Penrith residents, visitors and businesses. We believe that by including this information within the business plan, the Town Council demonstrates its commitment to Penrith and will make our organisation more effective in meeting the needs of Penrith.

Each standing Committee has a Work Plan that officers use to deliver the Council's priorities and report regularly upon the Plan's progress. This document is then refreshed accordingly. The Work Plan feeds into the officer's appraisal targets and performance management process.

The Council is committed to achieving equality of opportunity, social inclusion and parity of esteem in all areas of our work and have declared a Climate Emergency resolving to work with partners and stakeholders to reduce carbon emissions and single use plastics.

The Town Council has developed several different platforms to engage with the community and will continue engagement through the Council's dedicated website, social media, regular newsletters and noticeboards.

This plan is published on the Council's website and an infographic flyer published and distributed for the electorate and larger local community.

2. Vision



Penrith, Heart of Eden

A great place to live, work and visit

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.

3. Six Priorities for Penrith

Health & Wellbeing	Economic Development	Transport	Growth	Community Engagement	Council Business
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Protect and improve the Town, the environment, leisure and recreational community facilities, services and assets that contribute to our quality of life and its attractiveness as a place to visit■ Support arts and culture■ Encourage better health for everyone■ Reduce waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Improve the Town's prosperity through economic growth and tourism■ Encourage sustainable better paid employment, skills development and apprenticeships■ Increase the aspirations of our young people■ Pay the Living Wage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Support public and community transport schemes■ Improve connectivity throughout the Town by supporting pedestrian, wheelchair, pushchair and cycling experiences that are safe and reliable■ Improve signage and Town Centre Information■ Improve traffic flow and car parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Develop a Neighbourhood Plan■ Support the development of renewable energy, low carbon economy and sustainable appropriate developments■ Protect local amenity, green spaces and the environment■ Conserve the historic and notable buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Facilitate community engagement ensuring those members of the community with the smallest voice are heard■ Value the community's contributions and give these due consideration■ Strengthen local democracy and local decision-making encouraging inclusivity in decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Ensure that the Council is run in a lawful and business-like manner■ Give confidence in service delivery and decision-making■ Provide good governance that provides clear and effective decision-making; clarity about lines of responsibility and accountability for the different levels of decision-making



4. Description of Business

Parish and Town Councils are democratically elected local authorities with duties and privileges conferred by Act of Parliament.

In England and Wales, a parish council can resolve to call itself a 'Town Council' and its chairman the 'Town Mayor'.

Penrith Town Council came into being in 18 May 2015 and adopted Section 245(6) of the Local Government Act 1972 which gives parish councils the power by resolution to allow themselves the title of Town Council and the Chair of a Town Council be entitled to the title of 'Town Mayor'.

Local Government Act 1972 s.14 (2)

The Council is a corporate body with perpetual succession.

Decisions made by the Council are the responsibility of the Council as a whole.

General Power of Competence (GPC)

The Town Council resolved from 20 May 2019, until the next relevant Annual Meeting of the Council, that having met the conditions of eligibility as defined in the Localism Act 2011 and SI 965 The Parish Councils (General Power of Competence)(Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012, to adopt the General Power of Competence which gives Local Authorities including ... local councils "the power to do anything that individuals generally may do as long as they do not break any other laws". It is a power of first resort.



The Town Council holds sole responsibility for the services it provides. Through its committees, it formulates policies for action and decides how to raise and spend money on behalf of the local community. The Town Council is the tier of local government closest to the people and consists of individual councillors who contribute to the work of the whole Town Council by:

- Putting forward ideas and engaging in constructive debate
- Representing their constituents and responding to the needs of the community
- Acting in an ethical way and being open about interests
- Voting to enable the Town Council to make decisions
- Ensuring the delivery of cost-effective quality services for residents

The Council is made up of 15 Councillors representing six wards in the parish. The Council is elected every four years. Elections were held in 2019. The Council meets every two months, with committee meetings held more frequently. The Town Council's statutory duties are the provision of allotments.

The Council has invested a large degree of time and resources into its business development functions, working with local businesses and partnerships to stimulate and support the economy of the town in any way it can. The Council works with other partner organisations and attends joint committees as required, including Eden District Council, Cumbria County Council, two Penrith Business Improvement Districts and the Chamber of Trade.

Over the last three years the Council has assumed devolved assets and services from Eden District Council and has developed a diligent approach to asset management and improvement, with diligent internal controls and reporting.



5. Council Structure

The three main standing committees* are:

1. Finance

This Committee is appointed to make recommendations to the Council on all aspects of the Town Council's financial and budgetary management, staffing and resources.

2. Planning

This Committee is appointed to receive and respond to planning applications, planning appeals, rights of way, tree preservation orders, street naming, traffic regulation issues and applications for Eden District Council and Cumbria County Council planning authorities. In reviewing planning applications, its purpose is to ensure that they meet with current planning law, satisfy local development frameworks and published development guidance. The Planning Committee oversees the development of the Neighbourhood Plan via Penrith Neighbourhood Development Planning Group who have been appointed to prepare a Draft Plan which will be put to a public referendum.

3. Community, Culture and Economic Growth

This committee is appointed to encourage inward investment, growth and prosperity in Penrith.

Committees are appointed at the Council's Annual General Meeting in May each year. The committees have generally consisted of six appointed councillors and in some cases, other guest non-voting members of the community. The Council is at liberty to review, change or amend this committee structure at any point, through its democratic processes. From time to time the committees will appoint sub-committees or task and finish groups for specific purposes within their remits and the Council will appoint working groups for specific tasks.

Under the Council's approved Scheme of Delegation, committees have approved delegations of authority.

*PLEASE NOTE THAT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR COMMITTEES CAN BE FOUND IN THE COUNCIL'S SCHEME OF DELEGATION

6. Financial Overview

The Town Council is a precepting authority. This means that most of its finances are raised as part of the council tax paid by most households in the parish. The Budget for 2019/20, allows for a continuation (standstill) budget that identifies and provides for the current committed level of service to be maintained.

AUDIT

Since the Town Council was constituted, the governance framework and accounting systems have been audited internally twice a year by an independent auditor and once a year by an external auditor. The audits have been unqualified with no required action plan and provides impartial evidence of robust and diligent internal control and management procedures.

A full version of the budget report can be found here:

<https://www.penrithtowncouncil.co.uk/council-finance/council-precept/>



The precept for 2019/20 is £437,813; the increase of £20,074 from the 2018/19 figure can be explained as follows:

	£	£
2018/19 Precept		417,739
Planning Committee: removal of £11,000 brought forward from 2017/18 and £10,000 reduction to reflect less involvement with the Neighbourhood Plan	(21,000)	
Events Grants: Planned reduction of £14,000 in net budget, offset by £7,000 transferred from Inward Investment	(7,000)	
Greening: Removal of £15,000 brought forward from 2017/18 and £500 planned reduction, offset by £3,000 transferred from Inward Investment	(12,500)	
Re-allocation of Inward Investment budget	(10,000)	
Planned increase in Grants budget	4,500	
Salaries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2018 and 2019 pay awards Incremental advances 	7,529 4,958	
Removal of one-off Armistice Centenary Fund budget	(10,000)	
Provision for May 2019 Elections	5,420	
Reduction in IT/Data Protection expenditure following GDPR implementation	(1,000)	
2019/20 Growth Items	6,800	
Adjustment to contribution from General Reserve, mainly reflecting the use in 2018/19 to meet 2017/18 carried forward budgets	50,969	
Other minor variations (net)	1,398	
		20,074
Proposed Precept 2019/20		437,813

7. Penrith

Penrith lies in undulating countryside on the edge of the Eden Valley between the rivers Eamont and Petteril and, today, with its population of about 15,700 (2011 Census 15,200), is the largest of the four towns (Alston, Appleby-in-Westmorland and Kirkby Stephen) in the Eden District. The historic legacy of the market town of Penrith has developed around its strategic position at the junction of four routes entering from the north, south, east and west. Today, Penrith is strategically located adjacent to the M6 Motorway at its junction with the A66, the main east-west trunk road in the north of England. The motorway is the main north-south route linking the south and Midlands with the north of England and Scotland. In addition, Penrith is served by the West Coast Mainline Railway serving London and Scotland.



Over the centuries the settlement was the focus for invasion and, too often, destruction. First the Romans (110 AD), followed by the Saxons (616 AD), the Scots (945 AD) and in 1092 the Normans who, in the 1100s, granted Penrith back to Scotland. The Town remained a Scottish possession until 1295 when Penrith was seized by Edward I and restored to the jurisdiction of the English Crown. Evidence of the Town's Scottish heritage is carried on the original 12th Century brass Town seal which bears a saltire-like symbol.



The origin of markets in Middlegate and Dockray can be traced back to Medieval times (500 AD to the 15th Century). In 1223 Henry III granted Penrith its Market Charter, giving it the right to hold a market, the source of the Town's prosperity over subsequent centuries.

The Town is defined by its historic street layout which has survived despite constant redevelopment during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. The Town is further defined by its Westmorland slate roofed, red sandstone buildings.

The Town boasts a number of notable buildings including the remains of a 14th Century castle once home to Richard, Duke of Gloucester, the future King Richard III; the 14th Century Pele Tower of the former Hutton Hall; the 15th Century former merchant's house now known as The Two Lions; Dockray Hall (c1470) which also has links to Richard III; the Grade I Listed Beacon Tower constructed in 1719 on the site of earlier Beacons; and St Andrew's Church (1720).



8. Key Issues For Penrith Today

The key issues have been identified through the Neighbourhood Plan stakeholder consultations.

Growth

Sustainable Development

The key theme that emerged during consultation was the need to promote sustainable development through the Penrith Neighbourhood Development Plan. Sustainability is particularly important given the national commitment, through the Climate Change Act 2008, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 80% of 1990 levels by 2050 to reduce the risk of overheating from rising temperatures and the long-term implications for water supply, biodiversity, landscapes and flood risk. The latter is particularly significant given recent flood events in Cumbria, such as those in 2015. Sustainability runs as a thread through the Council's Neighbourhood Plan's planning policies and it's key issues which are:

- ❖ **Nature** – Protect and provide greenspaces, trees, hedgerows, wildlife.
- ❖ **Heritage** – Conserve the Town's history, character, views, landscape.
- ❖ **Air quality and climate change** - Improve air quality and support the transition to a low carbon future.
- ❖ **Water** – Reduce water consumption, maximise surface water collection and reduce the impact of flooding.
- ❖ **Housing** – Provide affordable homes with a range of high-quality community and social facilities.
- ❖ **People** – Recognise and respond to the needs of all, especially families, young people and our growing older population.
- ❖ **Wellbeing** – Increase individual and community wellbeing by providing high quality community facilities, greenspaces, and facilities for walking and cycling.
- ❖ **Inclusiveness** – Foster inclusiveness.
- ❖ **Employment** – Encourage better paid jobs, support local and small businesses, and help improve skills and training
- ❖ **Infrastructure** – Include appropriate energy, waste, road, public transport and other infrastructure.



Housing

The main sustainable development issues facing the Town are those of managing the scale and affect of recent and future housing development, whilst ensuring the delivery of infrastructure to serve current and future needs. This is particularly important given that few new properties are being constructed to the highest sustainability standards that can be achieved. For example, all large developments feature heating systems fuelled by gas rather than air source or ground source heat pumps or biomass-based community heating systems.

Housing delivery across Eden has been well below the previous Core Strategy (2010) target of 239 homes per year. Between April 2003 and March 2015, a total of 1,916 dwellings were completed, resulting in an undersupply of 713 properties or more than 25%. An estimated 1,554 new homes are to be built in the Town over the plan period. Delivering an appropriate housing supply is fundamental to maintaining the workforce necessary to support the economy. The Eden Local Plan (ELP) 2014-2032 (Policy LS2 – Housing Targets and Distribution) identifies that 2,178 new homes, 50% of new housing in the District, should be concentrated in Penrith with much of this in large scale, new developments to the east and north of the Town. A key issue is to ensure that this housing is appropriate in terms of size, type and tenure

House prices in the Eden district are amongst the highest in Cumbria. A combination of high house prices in relation to incomes is making it difficult for many, particularly the young, to buy their own home. The average house price in Eden is 6 times the average gross annual income of those in full-time employment for Penrith and the Borders (Source: EDC August 2018). To put these ratios in context, 20 years ago house prices were about 4.4 times average annual income. A shortage of high value jobs means that people may seek employment and housing elsewhere. 441 households (source: Penrith Housing Need Survey 2018 – Cumbria Choice Based Lettings) are on the waiting list (June 2018) for social housing in Penrith. Most households in need are singles or couples without children, with demand mainly for houses followed by flats. The Housing Need Survey 2018 and public consultation identified need for 1, 2 and 3 bedroomed accommodation. Average rents represent as much as 23% of the net income of those at the lower end of the wage/salary scale

Public consultation identified that there is a need to provide affordable housing for younger people to enable them to remain in the area and for a housing offer for older people that is appropriate to their needs, e.g. one to two bedroomed bungalows and ground floor flats. Currently, many older people are living in properties that, if vacated, could become available for young families (Housing Need Survey 2018).

Greenspaces

A key issue is to protect important greenspaces, play areas, more formal outdoor sport and recreation areas and facilities. These are important not only for the open space they provide, but also for the opportunities they offer for all forms of recreation and relaxation that support the continued health and wellbeing of the Town.

Town Centre Heritage

A major element of the character of the Town is red sandstone and stucco, the predominant materials in which the Town's older buildings were constructed. The Town is at risk of losing some of this character as an increasing number of buildings are being constructed with other, often more incongruent materials, for example UPVC windows and other man-made materials where previously they would have been timber.

Penrith is a historic Town, but many shop fronts are out-of-keeping with their setting, this puts Penrith at risk of appearing to look like 'just another Town'.



9. Health & Wellbeing

Health Centres

Currently Penrith benefits from two medical practices and a community hospital with an assessment unit for minor injuries. However, all three primary healthcare facilities are located on one site to the south of the Town so are not easily accessed by communities located to the north of Penrith, other than by private car or the Town bus. There is some capacity in one of the two existing health centres to accommodate new patients, however, there is more capacity in practices adjoining the parish and whose catchments extend into the parish boundary. There is no specific 'drop-in centre' for socialising, counselling and community meetings in the Town and indoor provision such as the Youth Zone facility that can be found at Carlisle, is lacking. On some of the more peripheral housing areas such as Pategill, Raiselands, Scaws and Wetheriggs there appears to be a lack of immediate access to community facilities.

Greenspaces

All public open greenspaces provide an opportunity for an exercise, whether it be for walking, jogging, or children's play. Some areas include more formal equipment such as that at Wetheriggs Country Park (outdoor gym) and Frenchfield (jogging track) whilst goal posts are located at Frenchfield, Carleton, Fairhill, Castletown and The Crescent. The Town is expanding. There are few developed land sites available centrally to meet economic and residential development needs, and as a consequence some greenspaces may be at risk of development unless protected.

Culture and Leisure

Penrith Leisure Centre is an important asset in the Town, however, the consultation identified that there is a concern that the needs of young people are not being met, particularly during the evening. Respondents felt there was a need for more indoor facilities, such as a bowling alley or venue for live music. There was also felt to be a need for areas for young people to congregate, such as a BMX track. Other than the Leisure Centre, existing facilities are limited. There is a small skate park to the rear of Penrith Leisure Centre. Many of those consulted also expressed the view that the cost of using existing Leisure Centre facilities (swimming pool; gym; climbing wall) and the tennis courts is unaffordable, particularly for young people.

The Leisure Centre is also the largest multipurpose building in the Town and can host either a 570 seated or 1,000 standing audience for live music events, exhibitions or plays although these events are very rare. Other venues include the churches which have capacity for 330 persons (Methodist Church) and 500 (St. Andrew's Church) and Penrith Playhouse which has a capacity of 160. Penrith also offers several public houses, a three-screen cinema which offers live screening of cultural events, restaurants and fast food outlets

The Rheged Discovery Centre at Redhills, 2 miles from Penrith town centre, is the main 'cultural' attraction. The venue offers live screenings of cultural events staged in London and other major centres, art exhibitions and lectures. The theatre has tiered seating for 258 people. In addition, there are meeting rooms and an exhibition venue with the capacity to accommodate from 10 to 250 people. The centre offers free parking for 200 cars and is served by an hourly bus service to and from the Town.

Although Penrith is on a national cycle route, there are few designated cycle lanes in the Town. The only designated outdoor exercise areas, the jogging track at Frenchfields and the outdoor gym at Wetheriggs Country Park, are to the south of the Town. The Town hosts several public events such as May Day, Artists in Penrith, Sparkle as well as the nationally recognised Winter Droving. There is a need for a joint arts and culture strategy.



10. Transport

Car Parking and Public Transport

Figures from the 2011 Census show that the average number of cars/vans per household is 1.1:1, as it is nationally (England). In 2011 21.9% of households did not have a car. However, in Penrith, unlike in other areas of Eden District, many households do not have access to a car or van. Despite this, and undoubtedly because of the number of multicar households and poor provision of off-road parking, car parking is a major problem in Penrith, particularly in the town centre and the nearby older residential areas that were not built to accommodate cars. The development of areas that previously served as car parks (Southend Road - 440 spaces) alongside the infilling of individual spaces in the Town and the building of more houses has resulted in increased demand for car parking but with fewer spaces to serve this demand.

Lack of affordable long-stay car parking for those working in the Town has resulted in drivers leaving their cars in the residential streets near the town centre which causes a problem for residents and vehicles accessing these areas. There is some on-street car parking which is free-of-charge and time limited and some short-stay free car parking (1 to 3 hours) within supermarket car parks, however this is insufficient to allow time for exploring the Town, shopping and enjoying a meal or coffee. Long-stay car parking is available within pay and display car parks. Season ticket parking is very limited, and there is a long waiting list. It must be paid fully in advance with no option to pay monthly. Many people employed in the Town are in low paid jobs/on short term contracts or part time, this means that buying a parking permit is not an option. There is limited car parking in the town centre for blue badge holders which is accessible to local shops and facilities. Visitor numbers are compromised because of the lack of parking for tour buses, campervans and cars towing a caravan. Currently, none of the Town's car parks offer charging points for electric powered cars. The nearest charging points (2) are at the Rheged Discovery Centre.

The decline in public transport connections to outlying communities has resulted in increased car use both for shopping and employment purposes. The Town and outlying villages are poorly served by local bus services, creating challenges for employees and employers. The Town benefits from a regular bus service provided by a national company to/from Carlisle and to the west coast. The Fell Runner voluntary bus service which provides transport from local villages also comes into Penrith. Penrith is also served by a local bus company.

Traffic Management

To reduce traffic congestion there is a need to divert through traffic using the A66, A6, M6, away from the town centre. However, this needs to be achieved without discouraging visitors to the Town by using appropriate signage.

Interruption to traffic flow on either the M6 or A66 results in traffic displacement, and severe congestion, on the approaches to Penrith and in the Town itself. There is a need for improved connections that divert through traffic, in particular HGVs, away from the Town.

There is a need for improved connections between Penrith and the surrounding villages, including increased usage of Junction 41 of the M6 motorway. Junction improvements have been made to ease traffic flows to the Gilwilly Industrial Estate and Eden Business Park from Junction 40 of the M6. Highways England are considering dualing the A66 (2024 to 2032) and are considering improvements at the junction of the A66 with the A6 (Kemplay Bank).



11. Economic Development

Penrith Town Centre

Other than during “Penrith in Bloom”, the centre of the Town and its approaches are almost devoid of vegetation, and trees. During the day, the town centre can be congested with traffic creating dirt and noise pollution which has a negative impact on the pedestrian experience. Much of the street furniture is in a poor state of repair (e.g. damaged seating). Visitors unfamiliar with the Town need signage to direct them to banks, retail outlets (by specialism) and places to eat and drink.

With online shopping continuing to grow, consumers are redefining what is regarded as a good shopping experience. Penrith, like all town centres, is having to face up to this significant challenge. As more people shop online there is an opportunity to create alternative retail offerings such as antique shops, local artisans selling their products and local coffee houses/places to eat (e.g. locally sourced food products, gifts) which will attract visitors and locals alike.

Penrith has a good mix of local shops, but public consultation has revealed that the absence of outlets selling, for example, clothing for women and children, results in other local businesses losing footfall to Carlisle and Kendal. While Penrith’s retail offering needs to satisfy local needs, as well as those of visitors, the footfall is insufficient to attract specialist national companies and department stores. Empty shops (11.4%), particularly in New Squares, are a significant issue and may detract from vitality of the town centre.

Penrith Farmers’ Market appears to have decreased in size from some dozen stallholders to currently five.

Respondents to the public consultation suggested that the town centre is not geared towards pedestrians and their safety. Specific examples cited are the very narrow pavements at The Narrows and the popular crossing points at Little Dockray (Skipton Building Society to Newcastle Building Society) and between the banks (NatWest and HSBC).

The Town approaches or gateways are being considered by many as areas in need of improvement. Specific examples cited are Castlegate, Sandgate and Bridge Lane immediately after the Kemplay Roundabout.

Employment

Penrith supports a largely low wage economy with a high proportion of younger workers employed in the hospitality sector. Unemployment is low (58 persons in March 2018 [source: Cumbria Observatory]) which is thought to be due to the high demand from hotels for housekeeping and waiting staff, as well as younger people moving out of the area to find accommodation and better-paid employment. However, the low figure for those unemployed and claiming benefits disguises, to some extent, the fact that there are vacancies for professionals (e.g. doctors, nurses, solicitors) who are not attracted to the area. Penrith is in the lowest quartile (nationally) for wages. The dominance of jobs offering the minimum wage alongside a lack of opportunities that attract and retain, economically active lower skilled residents, has resulted in an imbalance in the job market. To grow the local economy and meet the needs of employers there is a need to raise and retain the proportion of young people achieving higher level skills. In England, in the year after taking an A level or equivalent at Key Stage 5, overall 89% of students were in sustained education, employment or apprenticeship destinations, i.e. for at least six months, at both age 16 and after they take A level or equivalent qualifications, in the academic year 2016/17 according to the Department for Education. In 2017/18 the figure, provided to us by the schools in Penrith, was only 76%.

Alongside tourism, service businesses, such as warehousing, distribution and skilled manufacturing to supply the nuclear industry, should be encouraged. There is a need to ensure that local employment opportunities are provided to support the sustainability of the Town. Graduates should be a particular target, both in terms of retaining graduates from higher education establishments and attracting back those young people who have grown up in the Town but left to study in other Towns and cities.

The accessibility of the Town by key road links (the M6 / A66 junction), the West Coast Main Line and the bus service to/from Carlisle and west along the A66 makes Penrith an attractive location for both new and existing businesses. The Eden Local Plan (ELP) 2014-2032 allocates strategic employment sites to seek to capitalise on these strengths as unfortunately, employment land to accommodate offices and factories and warehouses is not currently available on the three industrial estates.

The opening of Carlisle Lake District Airport (approximately 25 miles from Penrith) presents opportunities for the future. Commercial passenger flights are due to commence in Spring 2019 to and from airports including Southend, Dublin and Belfast.

Tourism

Penrith is an attractive market Town that has an interesting place in history and several historic buildings that could be used in marketing Penrith as a visitor destination and generating benefits from heritage tourism. For example, by making more Town trails linking historic locations such as the castle, the yards, the Two Lions and Dockray Hall. The tourism sector can provide many jobs for local people if the skills are there. Askham Bryan College at Newton Rigg Campus provides courses in tourism as well as land-based courses and Kendal College provides courses in catering. Coach Companies have informed the Council that there is little provision for the parking of tour buses or incentives for drivers (meal vouchers) with the consequence that many tour companies omit Penrith from their itinerary.

The Town does not offer any wet weather attractions other than shops, the small museum, the cinema and Penrith Leisure Centre. Signage both to and within the Town is inadequate. The Tourist Information Centre is located on the edge of the shopping area and is open 7 days a week during the main season. During the year, there are several events that take place in the Town that attract visitors from Cumbria and beyond;

- Marmalade Festival (Spring)
- Mayday (May)
- Penrith Show (July)
- Cumbria in Bloom (Summer)
- Britain in Bloom (National BID Gold 2017 and Large Town Silver Gilt Winner 2018) (Summer)
- Artists in Penrith (Summer)
- Winter Droving (October/November)
- Christmas Events (December)



12. What are we going to do?

We are determined to improve the life chances for everyone in Penrith and we have consulted widely with the community, visitors and businesses who have provided Penrith Town Council with a mandate to deliver and lobby for change. The Neighbourhood Plan consultations started in March 2017 and was followed by an interim consultation in July 2018 and the statutory Regulation 14 Neighbourhood Development Plan consultation in February 2019. This consultation information has been collated and included in this plan.

To make a difference in Penrith, to mitigate financial, political and bureaucratic restraints to growth and to avoid duplication of effort it is essential the Council will:

- Draw together a collective understanding of Penrith
- Allocate money to facilitate and deliver the Council's priorities
- Deliver services and projects with partners in the most efficient way
- Shares the electorates priorities with other agencies, and local government
- Exchanges priorities, shares information, tests ideas and pools resources with stakeholders
- Collaborate with stakeholders and partners to ensure that our aspirations will be realistic, practical and sustainable.

A Tripartite Group and Town Working Group have been facilitated by the three tiers of local government, Cumbria County Council, Eden District Council and Penrith Town Council. Highways England, Penrith Chamber of Trade and the two Penrith Business Improvement Districts are involved and are united by their passion for the Town and an ambition to shape the Town's future to ensure that it thrives. We have come together to collate all the visioning work that has informed the Local Plan, Neighbourhood Plan, Community Plan, Traffic Management plans, and Town Centre business plans, in a new exciting way that has not happened before and will endeavour to see that the aspirations of all these organisations are delivered. There is a genuine willingness of all the key partners to work in partnership, and to pool resources to plan for the Town's future.

13. How

The Town Council will:

- ❖ **Represent Penrith and be actively engaged to find solutions which best meet local needs and priorities affecting the town's future .**
- ❖ **Work towards agreement to deliver these priorities, establish common goals with partners and stakeholders.**
- ❖ **Be prepared to reassess and adjust goals to facilitate success.**
- ❖ **Work with the local community and partners to ensure that the Town becomes a more vibrant, better served, more prosperous, cleaner, greener, safer and inclusive place in which to live, work and enjoy life.**
- ❖ **Provide inclusive facilities and services which support and develop a well-connected Town promoting health and wellbeing.**



14. PRIORITIES 2019-2023

Health & Wellbeing

- Protect and improve the Town, the environment, leisure and recreational community facilities, services and assets that contribute to our quality of life and its attractiveness as a place to visit
- Support arts and culture
- Encourage better health for everyone
- Reduce waste



1. All major new developments, developers will be encouraged to liaise with the Northwest Ambulance Service to provide Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs)
2. Work with EDC, CCC and the NHS to encourage the expansion of healthcare facilities at the Old Fire Station site
3. Support Social prescribing for people with one or more long-term conditions, who need support with their mental health, who are lonely or isolated, and young people who have complex social needs which affect their wellbeing

Support and contribute to the social fabric of the town, enhancing community facilities and supporting arts and culture by:

4. Developing a Culture and Arts Strategy
5. Securing external funding, where possible, to develop and improve amenities, leisure, art and cultural facilities. Fund new and existing events and provide match funding support to sports, recreational, culture and arts and work to improve their funding base
6. Providing funds to support initiatives that raise the profile of Penrith nationally and for marketing activities that support and encourage tourism
7. Encouraging local retailers and restaurants to use, and publicise their use of local products in order to encourage a reputation with residents and visitors of Penrith as a "Food Town"
8. Securing external funding, where possible, to develop the existing offer for sports, recreation, arts, entertainment and culture
9. Publishing and promoting a Hire Policy for the use of the Cornmarket Bandstand to allow use for community, commercial use and events
10. Working with education providers, groups and organisations to increase volunteering, building on the work taking place with existing groups
11. Exploring and developing international cultural and art exchanges

Health & Wellbeing

- Protect and improve the Town, the environment, leisure and recreational community facilities, services and assets that contribute to our quality of life and its attractiveness as a place to visit
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 - Encourage better health for everyone
 - Reduce waste



Increase the Town's attractiveness as a place to visit for both the local community and visitors by:

- 12.** Developing a sense of "Penrith Self", consistency of approach and a town identity by developing guidelines on future street furniture, signage, soft and hard landscaping, lighting and their maintenance in the town centre
- 13.** Developing action plans to manage/operate/support the Towns heritage – for example The Two Lions, Museum, Great Dockray, Town Hall
- 14.** Encouraging improvements to the gateways A6, A66 and M6 using signage, greening and maintained verges
- 15.** Considering and encouraging improvements to the Town Centre, Middlegate, Burrowgate, Devonshire Street, Great Dockray, The Narrows, London Road, King Street, Sandgate Bus Station, Bridge Lane (Gateway) Portland Place and Wordsworth Street for signage, greening, verge maintenance, shopfront improvements, parking, public realm and the pedestrian experience
- 16.** Developing Penrith as an accessible and friendly Town
- 17.** Assuming responsibility for devolved assets and services that contribute to the quality of life for residents and the visitor experience of Penrith. Completion of Tranche 2 Devolution of Assets from Eden District Council to include Coronation Gardens, play areas, and recreation spaces
- 18.** Monitoring and reviewing the Community Caretaker Contract ensuring the outcomes meet the service standards as set out within the job role and provide additional resources to keep the town clean and in good upkeep when the need arises
- 19.** Supporting Keep Penrith Tidy campaign and Plastic Clever Penrith; Conservation volunteering events, , community gardening and in-bloom greening events. Work with community groups and stakeholders to participate in these and similar campaigns, acting as the lead organisation for the Town when required. Facilitate Penrith in Bloom/Cumbria in Bloom/Britain in Bloom, encouraging vibrant and sustainable planting throughout the year.
- 20.** Working closely with EDC, and its contractors to ensure cleanliness standards are met, investing and maintaining the Council's assets

Health & Wellbeing

- Protect and improve the Town, the environment, leisure and recreational community facilities, services and assets that contribute to our quality of life and its attractiveness as a place to visit
- Support arts and culture
- Encourage better health for everyone
- Reduce waste



Green Spaces

- 21.** Monitoring and reviewing the Grounds Maintenance Contract for the Fairhill Playing Field ensuring the outcomes of the specification are met
- 22.** Agreeing a management plan for the planting area as transferred from United Utilities at Fairhill
- 23.** Working in partnership with the Fairhill Community Group to install inclusive play equipment and footpaths
- 24.** Provide opportunities for volunteers to actively get involved with improving Penrith's sports facilities, open spaces, working with community groups to maintain sports, green spaces and recreation facilities.
- 25.** Providing support for Castle Park Development Group, Fairhill Community Group and similar groups who support green spaces
- 26.** Supporting events to showcase the town's parks & green spaces such as open days with the Allotment Society. Provide grants and on-going support to Penrith Greening Projects, Penrith Community Gardeners, and Penrith in-Bloom
- 27.** Ensuring that all green spaces are accessible to all

Economic Development

- Improve the Town's prosperity through economic growth and tourism
- Encourage sustainable better paid employment, skills development and apprenticeships
- Increase the aspirations of our young people
- Pay the Living Wage



Support and contribute to the economic growth and prosperity of the Town through encouraging inward investment, sustainable employment, tourism and provision of devolved services by:

- 28.** Working with stakeholders to develop effective strategies such as rate reductions/set up grants/marketing assistance/rent free period offers and shopfront improvements
- 29.** Identifying support packages to encourage a mix of retail premises in Middlegate, Devonshire Street, King Street, Corn Market, Great Dockray and the pedestrianised area centered on Angel Lane
- 30.** Exploring with the owners the impediments to the letting of the empty retail units in New Squares and to explore the option of using open space in this area for events and functions
- 31.** Remaining committed to the Living Wage Foundation
- 32.** Developing a youth advisory group
- 33.** Installing Town Council branded signage to Council managed sites, assets, street furniture, and facilities
- 34.** Reviewing Tourism product/marketing/Heritage/Interpretation offer and develop a strategy for tourism and marketing
- 35.** Developing a thriving monthly market/farmers'/themed market and exploring the potential transfer of the Town's Market Charter to the Town Council
- 36.** Working with EDC and other stakeholders to rekindle interest in improvements to Castle Park and developing the park as a major tourist attraction
- 37.** Exploring the Beacon being developed as the icon for the town, visible from every area and recognisable from a distance. Explore suggestions in partnership with the landowner and stakeholders for improved public access and to identify potential uses for community and recreational purposes

Transport

- Support public and community transport schemes
- Improve connectivity throughout the Town by supporting pedestrian, wheelchair, pushchair and cycling experiences that are safe and reliable
- Improve signage and Town Centre Information
- Improve traffic flow and car parking



Public and Community Transport Schemes

38. Working with partners to secure and encourage improvements in public transport services, look for real alternatives to public transport, promote community transport schemes and workable schemes for lift and car share
39. Providing grants for community bus services

Connectivity

40. Maintaining footpaths and bridleways
41. Improving all pedestrian, cycle, wheelchair, electric buggy infrastructure into the Town

Safety

42. Providing traffic signs and other objects or devices warning of danger
43. Contributing financially to traffic calming schemes
44. Facilitate community speed watch schemes

Signage and Information

45. Lobbying via the Cumbria Association of Local Councils for the adoption of the Community Infrastructure Levy to result in parishes receipt of developer contribution to ensure infrastructure is developed and targeted appropriately
46. Promoting accessibility & inclusivity and inviting Penrith Access Group to participate in the Neighbourhood Plan
47. Securing the delivery of new signage of high-quality design appropriate to the local context and suitable for directing users to key locations and builders

Transport

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- Improve connectivity throughout the Town by supporting pedestrian, wheelchair, pushchair and cycling experiences that are safe and reliable
- Improve signage and Town Centre Information
- Improve traffic flow and car parking



Traffic Flow and Car Parking

- 48.** Working with partners to improve highways infrastructure in and around Penrith, reviewing the town centre traffic flow to allow for full or partial pedestrianisation, improve/reduce traffic congestion and reduce carbon emissions. Identify infrastructure shortfall by contributing to a joint Parking and Movement Survey which will be instrumental for the Town Centre improvements and implementing the recommendations from the survey with stakeholders and partner authorities
- 49.** Working with Eden Housing Association, Eden District Council and Cumbria County Council to create more off street private/residential parking
- 50.** Supporting the provision of electric charging points in public car parks. Encourage developers to include electric vehicle charging points for sustainable lifestyles
- 51.** Utilising an existing car park, in a non-residential area, for overnight parking for camper vans and touring caravans.
- 52.** Reducing on-street parking by providing modern car parking infrastructure appropriate to the size and role of Penrith
- 53.** Exploring opportunities to improve car parking for Town residents and provide low cost long-stay car parking (for example: £1 a day for vehicles parked before 9.00am) for those commuting into the Town in connection with employment.
- 54.** Supporting the provision of affordable long-stay car parking for visitors and additional disabled car parking facilities

Growth

- Develop a Neighbourhood Plan
- Support the development of renewable energy, low carbon economy and sustainable appropriate developments
- Protect local amenity, green spaces and the environment
- Conserve the historic and notable buildings



55. Developing and implementing a Neighbourhood Plan

Sustainable Appropriate Development

- 56. Representing the interests of Penrith during the planning application process
- 57. Actively participating in planning consultations and encouraging developers to talk to PTC prior to submitting their applications so that we can encourage all new developments to include an element of affordable housing, housing that matches the demographic and other features such as open spaces and play areas for the benefit of the people who will live there and which fit in with the vernacular of the Town
- 58. Working with Eden District Council to ensure that developers deliver on their commitments identified in planning obligations, agreements and conditions
- 59. Encouraging the development of initiatives to address energy loss in new builds and existing older homes
- 60. Discussing with planners the creation of integrated sustainable low carbon routes as part of design briefs
- 61. Develop a Planning Document that requires tree planting and landscaping in respect of new developments which considers environmental improvements, biodiversity, flora and fauna as part of any future site improvement plans

Growth

- Develop a Neighbourhood Plan
- Protect local amenity, green spaces and the environment
- **Support the development of renewable energy, low carbon economy and sustainable appropriate developments**
- **Conserve the historic and notable buildings**



Protect local amenity, green spaces and the environment

- 62.** Develop management and improvement plans for all parks and protected open spaces , working with relevant organisations to ensure that green spaces are fully accessible for pram/pushchair or wheelchair use
- 63.** Pursue the freehold transfer of green open spaces and play areas with the relevant authority
- 64.** Develop an Open Spaces Strategy as part of the Neighbourhood Plan process which would include inviting developers to include green open spaces in perpetuity and landscaping using native trees and fruit trees in design briefs
- 65.** Work in partnership with stakeholders, community and residents' groups to develop management improvement plans for individual open areas and spaces
- 66.** Consider best value and quality of service when preparing management plans for individual sites as they enter the Council's ownership
- 67.** Protect & improve Penrith's tree-lined streets for future years and generations and to improve flood prevention
- 68.** Create functional maps of Penrith's green spaces and green links and create online interactive route maps
- 69.** Research and plan a network of corridors linking Penrith's open spaces and the river as part of the Neighbourhood Plan process
- 70.** Register open spaces and use national agencies to support their preservation such as spaces in trust for additional protection

Heritage

- 71.** Support/facilitate initiatives and projects that invest, preserve or interpret Penrith's heritage for the inspiration, learning and enjoyment for all
- 72.** Work with EDC to review the Penrith Conservation Area boundary and seek the incorporation of Drovers Lane, and Croft Avenue
- 73.** Work with EDC to investigate the desirability of designating some of the residential properties in Castletown a Conservation Area and the potential for Heritage Actions Zones

Community Engagement

- Facilitate community engagement ensuring those members of the community with the smallest voice are heard
- Value the community's contributions and give these, due consideration
- Strengthen local democracy, local decision-making encouraging inclusivity in decision making



Increase the community's access to information and improve transparency and accountability by:

- 74.** Using a variety of communication channels to disseminate information about the different roles of the Town, District and County Councils
- 75.** Publishing good news press releases describing what the Town Council is doing
- 76.** Developing Community and Events pages on Council website
- 77.** Creating regular newsletters and post on Council website
- 78.** Create "Have we made a Difference" bi-monthly news summaries or videos and publish on website pages of the Council website
- 79.** Using leaflets & posters to provide information offline and online

Increase opportunities for engagement with hard to reach individuals and groups by:

- 80.** Producing a Youth Engagement Strategy
- 81.** Developing effective relationships with local schools, colleges, sports clubs, youth groups and youth council
- 82.** Developing a Youth Advisory Role and encourage more youth involvement in the work of the Town Council
- 83.** Organising face to face opportunities for young people to express their views and identify priorities, e.g. an annual event, an Open Day/Youth Forum
- 84.** Developing partnerships with other agencies

Increasing Pride in Penrith by:

- 85.** Engaging with and encouraging local people to use different offline techniques to document local history and culture
- 86.** Developing a 'Community Memories' Section on the Community pages of the Council website to capture Penrith's rich history using digital approaches and mixed media e.g. audio recordings, written stories, photos and videos
- 87.** Developing a local photos page on the Community Section of the Council website and inviting members of the public to submit their own recent photos along with descriptions/stories about each image

Community Engagement

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Recognising the local community as experts on local life, needs and priorities by:

- 88.** Developing opportunities and checks and balances for Citizen Journalism which is the collection, dissemination, and analysis of news and information by the general public, by means of the Internet
- 89.** Encouraging the use of innovative methods to engage the community, collect information about local needs and identify the strengths and weaknesses related to how the Council currently involves them
- 90.** Identifying local organisations and community groups, note their goals and create a community assets map, illustrating where community groups are based and where community projects are taking place to help in addressing community needs and projects
- 91.** Engaging with the community to identify existing strengths, build community assets and establish Community Connectors who can help friends, family, colleagues and neighbours find support in their own communities. They help lots of people get health support and advice on things like housing, local groups, opportunities, education and debt advice etc.
- 92.** Organising 'engagement spaces' online via radio and face-to-face in local venues, for example, Councillor Surgeries, for local people to gain information about what the Council is doing, discuss ideas, local issues and priorities

Council Business

- Ensure that the Council is run in a lawful and business-like manner
- Give confidence in service delivery and decision-making
- Provide good governance that provides clear and effective decision-making; clarity about lines of responsibility and accountability for the different levels of decision-making

93. Applying for the Local Council Award Scheme Quality Gold Award





Penrith Town Council

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For Councillor Contact details

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