

## **A vision for Frodsham, and a strategic vision for Frodsham Town Council to fulfil the aspirations of the community.**

**The Vision for Frodsham is that of a thriving market town anchored in the principles of sustainability and resilience.**

A sustainable community is a community that doesn't decline or decay over the passage of time, either through change or status quo. Sustainable communities are planned so that the culture, processes, and assets that give the community its value are maintained or enhanced for future generations.

A resilient community is a robust community; strongly bound and able to cope with resource demands, environmental pressures and long term change, capacity limits, natural and human induced events.

The drivers that support the themes of sustainability and resilience are:

Community **well being** (health, happiness and fulfilment).

An **infrastructure** and **environment** that supports the needs of the community, physically and culturally.

**Economic** prosperity.

An informed and **educated** community.

A sense of **community ownership** and **self determination**.

**Each of these drivers is interwoven into the strategic vision for Frodsham Town Council.**

### **A Strategic Vision for Frodsham Town Council**

#### **1. Health, Wellbeing and the Leisure Economy**

##### **What**

Frodsham is surrounded by a hinterland of fabulous recreation and leisure opportunities, and areas of outstanding natural beauty. The Weaver Valley, Sandstone trail, Delamere forest and Frodsham Marshes are assets attracting walking, cycling, equestrian, water borne and many other outdoor pursuits. FTC manages several play areas, the condition of which are described in the 'Play Strategy for Frodsham' (2012) report. Other play facilities include those managed by the Local Authority, and sporting facilities include a leisure facility in the town centre and a privately run leisure facility and swimming pool associated with a hotel complex.

##### **Why**

Although some of the recreational assets around Frodsham are extensively used and known about from much further afield, others are little known, underdeveloped and relatively inaccessible. There is a lack of safe connectivity for non motorised traffic between many recreational assets and Frodsham, especially the Delamere Forest and Weaver valley. This deprives the community of enjoyable and healthy leisure opportunities, and additionally opportunities for increased revenue and inward investment to the local economy are missed.

The 'Play Strategy for Frodsham' report years identified years of underinvestment in the FTC managed play areas. Properly designed play schemes promote community cohesion across generations, engage children with outdoor activities and are vital to a balanced upbringing. Play Areas that are attractive and enriching incentivise potential incoming families to move to the region, and help redress the imbalance that is a feature of Frodsham's evolving demographics. Good play facilities attract inward investment.

Sporting facilities in Frodsham and surrounds, along with latent demand are described in the 'Market Insight Report (2013) by Sport Cheshire. The report summarises a latent demand for cycling and swimming facilities in particular, and this is further evidenced by the 2014 Frodsham Consultation document. Other leisure and sporting pursuits with latent demand include walking (Frodsham Consultation), and improved playing pitch facilities as identified by local football teams and research conducted at the Helsby High School.

### **How**

FTC will work with neighbouring Parishes, the Local Authority and other organisations including the Canal and Rivers Trust in order to develop and optimise sustainable routes linking Frodsham with the Weaver Valley, Delamere Forest, and other recreational zones that will support inward investment. FTC will ensure existing assets, such as the Sandstone Trail and other local trails and walks are promoted externally so as to maximise their utilisation.

Delivery of our play strategy. Frodsham play areas are to be developed with appropriate levels of investment and in accordance with the strategy and needs of the community. Play area upgrades will be financed where possible through the match funding of seed capital generated from the sale of redundant assets and FTC revenue streams. Play areas and recreation facilities will be fit for the following generation, and generations thereafter.

Additionally, FTC will support the creation of an A56 corridor of sporting excellence. Sport and recreation facilities will be developed to provide for all age groups, and FTC will work with the necessary authorities to ensure that strategic gaps are identified, funding mechanisms are investigated, and there is no unnecessary duplication of facilities. FTC will actively support the business case and any further demand studies to consider the viability of a community swimming pool.

FTC will work with the Local Authority to identify those leisure and sporting assets that would benefit from local or community management. FTC will where appropriate seek to have management devolved on a local basis, and if necessary local ownership.

## **2. Town Planning (Commercial, Spatial and Visual)**

### **What**

Frodsham is designated as a Key Service Centre in the Rural part of Cheshire West. A broad range and variety of services are offered, and the retail mix is varied. Local independent retailers are diminishing in favour of the service sector and High St brands. There is an increased presence of charity shops and vacant premises.

Frodsham is well endowed with bars and restaurants with a fairly good range of offerings to support the day, evening and night time economies.

## **Why**

Local shops have lost some of the relevance they had only a few years ago. They suffer reduced patronage and are fighting against online services and out of town retail for custom. Some segments of the service industry are under similar pressure, yet Frodsham has an ageing demographic, and there is a clear need to maintain a core of key retail provision to satisfy the local need.

Over reliance on the retail offering to support the viability of a town has proven to be a strategy that is extremely vulnerable to economic recession. The community should have a variety of reasons to access the town centre and use the services offered, which should be an attractive place in itself so as to encourage footfall.

Accessing the commercial hub from the station car park is difficult for people with reduced mobility, and entails crossing busy roadways. From the railway station all visitors to the town centre have to cross or walk along busy roads with no pedestrian protection. Accessing the town centre from the station car park for people with reduced mobility is especially difficult. Signage is generally poor, and there is lack of natural connectivity between the station and main car parking area, service hub, and arts and cultural facilities.

The visitor experience in parts of the town centre varies from excellent to poor; much pride is taken in floral displays and general upkeep of gardens and facades, however the Station car park has an atmosphere of dereliction and the waste transfer facility imposes a significant visual and physical presence. There are several other small 'grot spots' of dereliction, neglect and untidiness within Frodsham.

## **How**

Frodsham Town Council will work in harmony with local businesses and business support organisations to ensure the retail and visitor offerings are relevant, able to adapt to change, and constantly attracting custom. FTC will support, in conjunction with the availability of high speed broadband connectivity, the promotion of 'click and collect' schemes and other initiatives to reduce the carbon foot print.

FTC will work in conjunction with local commerce groups to ensure Frodsham is promoted as a great day out / good night out. Frodsham will have a strap line.

FTC will work proactively with the Local Authority to ensure retail outlets that become unviable in the long term are returned to residential use with appropriate expediency.

FTC will in conjunction with the Neighbourhood Planning process establish the layout of the town; identify the centre, service points and radials of improved connectivity. Have a town square, or piazza location identified and developed with connections to the retail precinct, the service hub, and Castle Park. FTC will work with the Local Authority and other land owners to ensure land holdings in and around the town centre are maintained to an attractive standard and developed appropriately in a way sympathetic to the surrounding environment.

Frodsham Town Council will encourage property owners to maintain their assets to an acceptable standard, and encourage community groups to participate in 'town tidy' schemes that fall outside the work of the Local Authority.

### **3. Town Planning (transport infrastructure)**

#### **What**

Frodsham's roads are vehicle dominated, frequently congested and in parts the provision for pedestrians is poor, for cycling very poor / nonexistent.

The railway station supports a considerable number of commuter journeys at peak times, and the regular bus services along the A56 through Frodsham are well patronised, there are less frequent services to Northwich that are generally poorly utilised.

Local Authority provided car parking is free to the user.

#### **Why**

Significant pressure exists on the car parking resource at present. Car parking at Helsby station is inadequate, and Frodsham Station car park is seen as an attractive place to leave a car in relative safety by commuters. Demand is expected to intensify when the Halton Curve rail line is reinstated. Development of major employment and educational facilities, especially along the M56 axis from Runcorn to Ellesmere Port will increase the demand for more regular rail services, and in turn demand for more frequent public transport connections to surrounding villages will to and from Frodsham will intensify.

There are significant opportunities for improved cycle access from Frodsham to the High School and beyond to Stanlow, Ellesmere Port and also Runcorn. Within Frodsham, the current roading infrastructure does not support cycling unless on surfaces prepared primarily for pedestrian use.

#### **How.**

Frodsham Town Council will continue to support development and ongoing upgrading of key transport links. Through representation both directly and through relevant user groups FTC will lobby to ensure the Halton Curve rail link is upgraded to a standard suitable for regular 2 way traffic, and the current frequency of public transport services is increased to provide for improved connectivity.

FTC will work with relevant organisations and the Local Authority to promote the development of sustainable transport links to work, education and leisure amenities, including the production of a strategic transport plan for the town.

FTC should continue to support the Local Authority with other longer term transport initiatives that support sustainability, including the installation of electric vehicle charge points at selected locations.

FTC will continue to act as an effective consultee for any highway works undertaken in and adjacent to the parish by the Local Authority.

### **4. Town Planning (Buildings and Structures)**

#### **What.**

Frodsham abounds with buildings and structures of heritage character used by the community and in private ownership. Structures vary in condition and status, from Grade 1 listed St Laurence's Church to the recently renovated Castle Park House and vacant Local Authority owned assets. Other buildings, although more recent constructions, are extensively used by community groups and for event hosting.

**Why.**

Statistics show there is a shortage of affordable space for fledgling business and enterprise, whilst feedback indicates the community treasures preservation of its heritage architecture. An example is the significant support for the renovation of the goods shed building in the Station car park and its return to use as a facility for the promotion of local enterprise, learning and community uses. There are additional non heritage premises that would be suitable for business and enterprise incubation.

**How.**

Frodsham Town Council will work closely with property owners, particularly the Local Authority, and those organisations promoting the return of buildings to community use.

FTC will work with the Local Authority to see that management of suitable property assets is devolved to a community level.

**5. Natural Environment and Safeguarding the Future.****What**

Frodsham is inset in the North Cheshire Green Belt. There are areas of outstanding natural beauty within the green belt, and extensive woodlands within the parish. There are extensive footpaths and easy access to key open areas. Frodsham overlooks heavy industry to the North West, but is generally considered a pleasant environment to live in.

Frodsham is proximate to the heavy industries that surround the Mersey basin. The on shore wind farm planned for the Marshes will impact the visual environment and position major structures close to the urban environment. Additionally, there are believed to be significant deposits of shale bed hydrocarbons close to Frodsham, also an energy from waste incinerator has been constructed nearby in Halton Borough, and a further one is proposed near Ince.

**Why**

One of Frodsham's key USP's is easy access to an attractive environment, It is vital this is preserved at all costs, whilst balancing the future energy and large scale infrastructure requirements.

**How**

The Neighbourhood Planning process cannot over rule large scale infrastructure projects. However, through Neighbourhood Planning Frodsham Town Council can help identify those tracts of Green Belt that the preservation is deemed essential, those that could be designated Green Belt that are currently not, and sites suitable for development. FTC will in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan seek to ensure future housing development is tailored for the demographic need and if necessary challenge the assumptions laid in the Local Plan to achieve this. FTC will input to the Neighbourhood Plan to ensure future housing is constructed as near as possible to 'passive' status.

**6. Community (Architecture)****What**

Frodsham has a diverse range of organisations performing services for the community ranging from education and guidance to faith groups, and those promoting business and enterprise. Some organisations perform a number of functions within one group.

## **Why**

Lack of effective coordination of community activities can lead to duplication, untapped capacity, missed opportunities and confusion. Frodsham has potential for community capacity building, however not all community groups are aware of each other's function or existence, and some struggle to revitalise their membership. If community groups fail to attract new members they potentially lose vigour and miss opportunities to maximise the benefits of the information age such as on line profile, publicity and promotion. Community groups that interact freely with other groups and the wider community around them tap into valuable support networks and help promote community cohesion.

## **How**

Frodsham Town Council will work proactively with community groups to ensure barriers are broken down and capacity is optimised, whilst recognising the importance of individual branding and profile. FTC will work to enable a single point of information for all community groups and relevant services to promote their profile and advertise on, and ensure that there is a readily accessible platform available for this purpose.

Frodsham Town Council will work with community groups to actively promote and financially enable the arts, activities, events and our cultural legacy so as to engage, provide for educationally enriching experiences and attract inward investment.

## **7. Community (Enabling Knowledge and Resilience)**

### **What**

Frodsham has 4 primary schools providing curriculum based learning and guidance. Additionally, there are other organisations providing skills and development for younger people, and a number of organisations that provide other ad hoc training in a targeted way.

High speed broadband is available in Frodsham, and much community information is now only available online. Important safety bulletins, up to date road traffic information, weather warnings and police information are primarily promulgated online. Access to many core services, including local employment information is primarily online. The online social media is not only an important source of community information but also valuable feedback and a useful barometer; we live in an Information Age.

Frodsham Town Council provides practical community resilience schemes additional to those provided by the Local Authority; funding the PCSO's work in the community, Winter Gritting and Community Defibrillators are such examples.

### **Why**

Frodsham's ageing demographic means some who do not have the ability to access the Internet on a regular basis can feel disenfranchised of information and denied potential social interaction that's taken for granted by the remainder. Those not in employment, education or training might lack the confidence, equipment and skills to navigate the on line processes to further education or employment. Also, there is potential to explore extra curricula learning opportunities in the cutting fields of Technology, Design and Engineering.

## **How**

Frodsham Town Council will actively support schemes to enable the whole community to benefit from IT age. These schemes could range from basic IT literacy as provided already by external organisations, to the extra curricula development of a Digital Academy, potentially through the FTC financing of youth support.

FTC will continue to actively supply membership of the Boards of Governors to the local primary schools, and through such membership will assist the schools in engaging in such extra curricula activities as described above.

Frodsham Town Council will, with the assistance of external organisations lead in the creation of a comprehensive Community Resilience plan.

## **8. Frodsham Town Council**

Frodsham Town Council will be a responsive, progressive, modern council. Internal processes will be effective, efficient, and fully compliant.

Frodsham Town Council will listen, learn and act.

The Town Council will be structured in such a way as to deliver the strategic vision with the above principles the main drivers. Full use will be made of relevant legislation and other tools to support the business strategy.

It is expected Chairs of committees / Members with portfolio will have published year by year vision statements to meet with the overall vision. This will be an accountable process.

Being a member of FTC will be an enjoyable and fulfilling role.

**The vision statement is a living document. It is produced as a result of community inputs, and will evolve as a result of community aspirations. Frodsham Town Council will never fail to, if necessary; stop, question, and respond.**

**The business plan for FTC is also a partnership plan.**