

2016 - 2021

# Birchwood Town Council Strategic Plan



# Birchwood Town Council Strategic Plan

## 1. Introduction:

This plan has been put together by a task force of members of Birchwood Town Council for consultation and development with all our key stakeholders including residents. It is a way of ensuring the continued improvement of the area, principally for its residents, but also for local businesses. This is especially important at a time when local government expenditure is under severe pressure. It provides an analysis of the current situation in Birchwood, and a resulting framework for local action to potentially improve the general quality of life for all who live and work in the town. It is intended that this plan should be updated annually to take account of any changes which may have an impact on the actions needed and to add any new actions resulting from resident consultation and through our work with key partners.

## 2. Our mission:

To work together effectively as the elected leaders in our community, to achieve the goals and objectives set out in our Strategic Plans through the implementation and regular review of our accompanying action plan and to achieve our vision within two elected terms.

## 3. Our Vision:

It is our vision as a town council to operate at the highest possible standards. In this way, we will add more value for our residents and make Birchwood a highly desirable place to live, work, socialise and play. We will help create a safe, attractive, prosperous and healthy environment, where the different communities are aligned, integrated and supportive of each other.

Our main way of reaching this goal will be by putting into place standards required for NALC quality gold accreditation. The Quality Gold Award demonstrates that a council is at the forefront of best practice and achieves excellence in governance, community leadership and council development. Quality Gold councils provide leadership for their communities, bring people together, have excellent business planning processes, ensuring value for money as well as constantly seeking new innovations and opportunities to improve. Currently there are only 18 councils in the country which are Quality Gold accredited and of these, Knutsford and Holmes Chapel are the only ones in Cheshire. Sandbach has foundation status. The process of achieving the standard will take six years and will be carried out in three phases: Foundation standard, Quality Standard and Quality Gold.

## 3.1 Our Strategic Objectives

The following is the list of our key strategic objectives which are examined in more detail in the accompanying action plan and which will help us to achieve our vision.

**Objective 1:** To ensure that the best possible image of Birchwood is projected to the wider community throughout Warrington and beyond

**Objective 2:** Build further on the green environment enjoyed in Birchwood by protecting what we already have, enhancing the environment where possible and by helping ensure that our residents can benefit from it to the full

**Objective 3:** Ensure that the work of the council is of the highest possible standard and provides the best possible outcomes for residents while providing excellent value for money

**Objective 4:** To build a greater sense of community and belonging in the residents of Birchwood

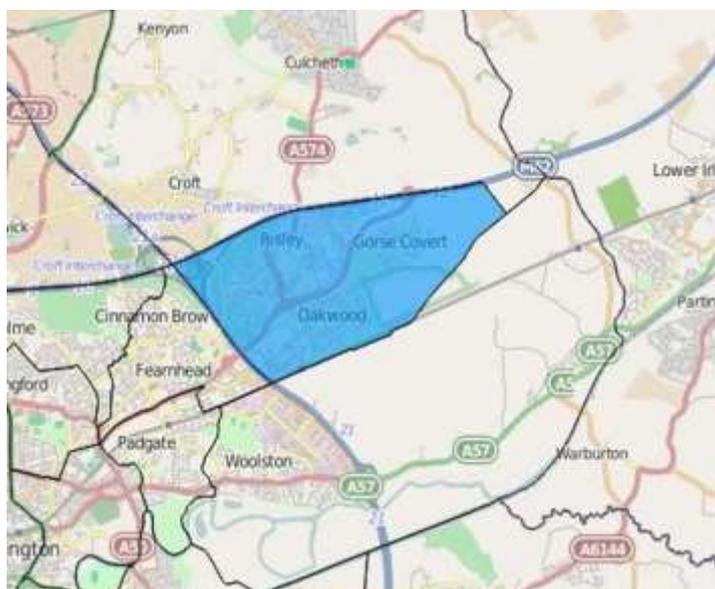
**Objective 5:** Work more closely with local businesses and other stakeholders to positively impact the lives of those who live and work in Birchwood

**Objective 6:** Seek sources of additional funding to allow additional development of Birchwood as an area

**Objective 7:** To Work to Improve community safety

## 4. Birchwood Town Profile:

This profile has been extracted from data published by Warrington Borough Council and seeks to

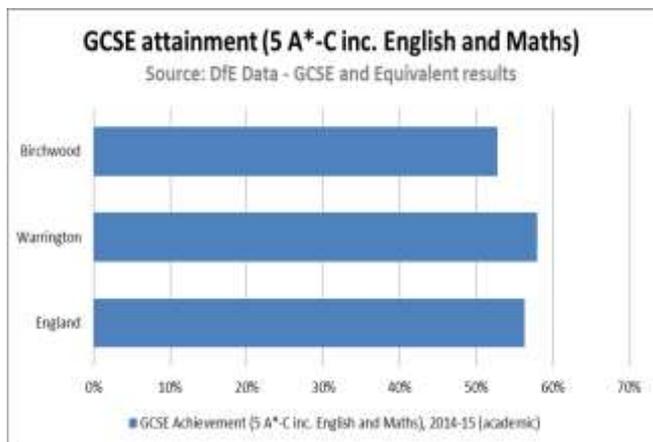


summarise the key demographic data for Birchwood from the 2011 Census and later sources. Birchwood is one of 22 wards within Warrington. In the map below, Birchwood is the area shaded blue.

All data within the profile is provided from the Office for National Statistics unless stated otherwise. Figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

**4.1 Size and population:** Birchwood is an area of Warrington which was developed mainly in 1970s and 1980s as a part of Warrington New Town, and measures 810 hectares. At the time of the 2011 Census, it was home to 13.20 persons per hectare.

The latest midyear estimates suggest that there were 10,680 people living in Birchwood in 2013, and Census 2011 indicated that the area contained 4,839 households. In 2011 the average size of a household in Birchwood was 2.20 people per household.



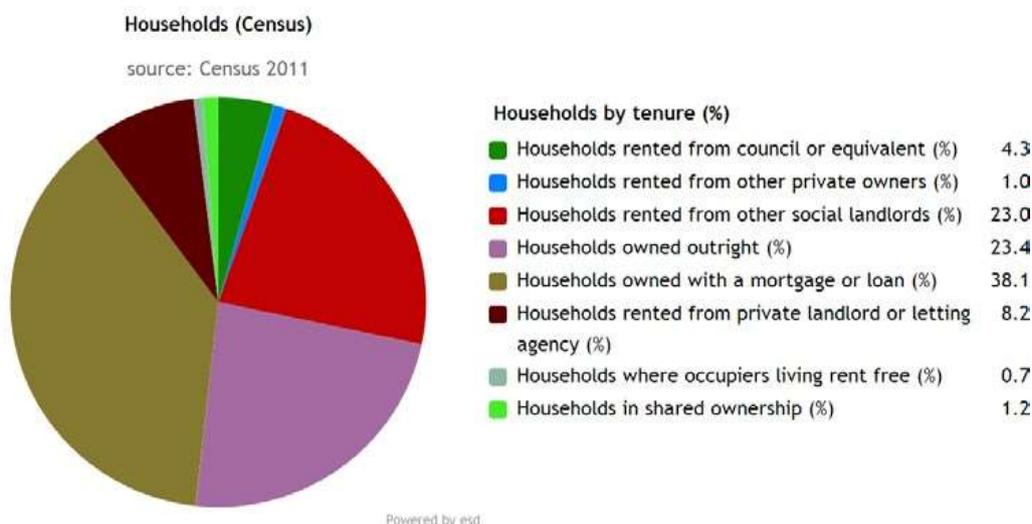
Residents from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups formed a relatively small 4.3% of Birchwood's population.

According to the 2013 midyear population estimates, 18.2% of residents in Birchwood were aged under 16, 66.8% were aged 16 to 64, and 14.9% of residents in Birchwood were aged 65+. These figures are similar to Warrington as a whole.

There is currently some further development planned in the Oakwood area and possibly in Chatfield. These could lead to an increase in residents of up to 400, and will need to be taken into account for local services.

### 4.2 Housing:

In Birchwood at the time of the 2011 Census, the main housing tenure type was 'Households owned with a mortgage or loan' (38.1%). Most of the social housing is operated by "Your".



### 4.3 Education and Skills

In 2015, 52.8% of pupils living in Birchwood achieved at least five GCSE passes at grades A\*-C (including English and Maths). This was significantly below the Warrington average of 57.9%, and an England average of 56.3%. The provisional figures for 2016 however, have shown significant improvement to 69% which is significantly above the Warrington and England figures of 63.2% and 58.7% (note: there were changes in the way this is reported, so the absolute figure is not directly

comparable, but the relative scores are relevant) The last OFSTED report categorises the school as “requiring improvement”. Many of the issues relate to governance/leadership and results for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

According to the 2011 Census, 19.6% of Birchwood residents aged 16+ had no qualifications, compared to a Warrington average of 20.70%. In contrast, 27.1% of Birchwood residents aged 16+ had a Level 4 qualification (e.g. a degree or NVQ 4 or 5 qualification), compared with 27.4% for Warrington overall. The national figure for people with Level 4 qualifications or above was 27.4%.

#### 4.4 Economic Activity:

According to the Census, 45.1% of Birchwood residents aged 16+ were employed full-time in 2011, compared with 42.7% for Warrington. A total of 4.4% were unemployed in Birchwood, compared with 4.00% for Warrington. In Birchwood 5.4% were long-term sick or disabled (this compares with 4.1% across Warrington and may reflect some of the localised health issues mentioned later).

	Birchwood	Warrington
	2011	2011
	%	%
Employee: Full time per cent	45.10	42.70
Employee: Part time per cent	13.90	14.60
Full time student per cent	2.60	3.00
Long-term sick or disabled per cent	5.40	4.10
Looking after home or family per cent	3.40	3.30
Retired per cent	13.30	14.80
Self-employed per cent	6.60	7.80
Student (including full-time students) per cent	3.80	3.60
Unemployed per cent	4.40	4.00
Other economically inactive per cent	1.60	2.10
Long-term unemployed per cent	1.90	1.50

In 2011, the main occupational group amongst employed residents in Birchwood was professional occupations (16.94%, compared with 18.10% for Warrington). Across England the main occupational group was also professional occupations (17.49%).



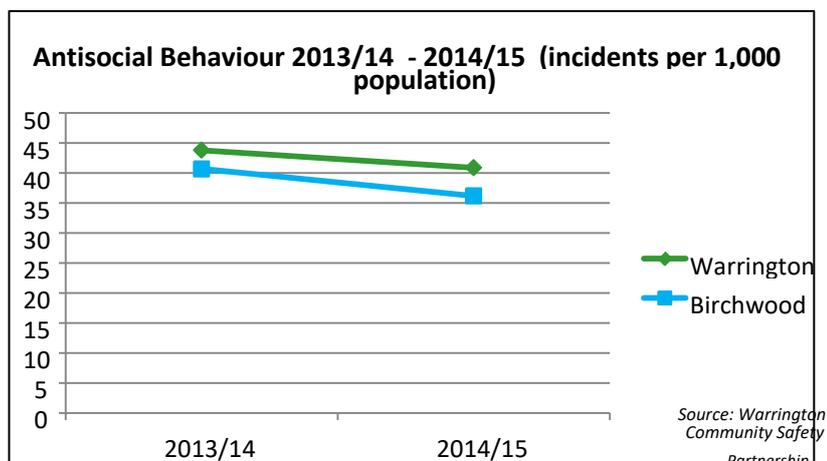
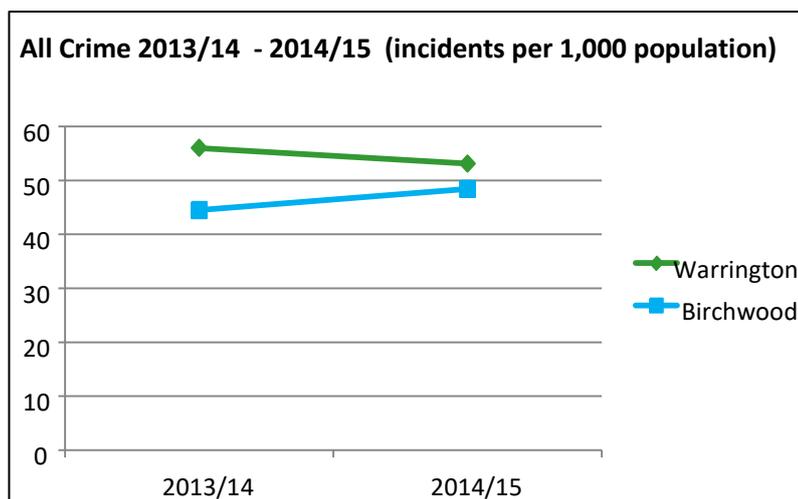
In February 2015 there were 10,750 residents in Warrington claiming out of work benefits, representing 8.2% of the population aged 16 to 64 years. It is estimated that of these, 765 were living in Birchwood Ward, representing 10.7% of the population aged 16 to 64 years. The ward ranked 6 across the 22 wards of Warrington for out of work benefits (where 1 is the worst performing).

#### 4.7 Crime and Antisocial Behaviour:

The All crime rate in Birchwood (measured as incidents per 1,000 residents) has risen but remains below the Warrington average. In 2014/15 there were 48.4 crimes per 1,000 residents in Birchwood ward,

compared with a rate of 53.1 crimes per 1,000 residents across Warrington.

The number of Antisocial behaviour (ASB) incidents per 1,000 residents declined in Birchwood during 2014/15, following the Warrington trend. Last year there were 36.2 incidents per 1,000 residents, compared with an average of 40.9 incidents per 1,000 residents across Warrington which is good. While crime is relatively low, residents feel that the area is not very safe for walking especially at night. This may reflect the significant number of footpaths which are poorly lit and which do not follow main roads. (see health and well-being section)



#### 4.8 Health:

According to Public Health England data, men in Birchwood are expected to live for 77.6 years on average, and women for 81.3 years. This compares with an average of 78.1 years for men and 81.8 years for women across Warrington.

46.0% of residents in Birchwood reported their health as 'very good' and 34.6% reported it as 'good' in the 2011 Census. This compares with figures of 49.8% and 32.7% respectively amongst residents across Warrington overall.

**4.9 Childhood Obesity:** Under the National Child Measurement Programme, a child is classed as obese if they fall within the top 5% for Body Mass Index on the 1990 national child growth charts for a child of their sex and age. According to the Programme, 7.6% of Birchwood children measured in Reception year

between the academic years 2012/13-2014/15 were obese, compared with 7.9% across Warrington and 9.3% across England. Amongst Year 6 children measured, 13.0% were classed as obese in Birchwood, compared with 16.4% for Warrington and 19.0% for England which compares favourably.

Childhood obesity has decreased in Birchwood over time, which is in line with the Warrington and England trends. Between 2011/12 and 2013/14 in reception year 8.9% of Birchwood children were obese, compared with 8.2% across Warrington and 9.4% across England. In Year 6 over the same period, 15.6% were classed as obese in Birchwood, compared with 17.9% for Warrington and 19.1% for England.

#### 4.10 Health and wellbeing ward profile – (Public Health Team’s publication - January 2016)

The health profile has highlighted a number of indicators where health and wellbeing outcomes in Birchwood ward as a whole are worse than the Warrington average and where there should be future focus. These include;

- Percentage of adults who are obese
- Percentage of adults who feel unsafe out in their neighbourhood after dark
- Percentage of adults who had to borrow to cover necessities
- Percentage of adults receiving income support/social security benefits
- Planned hospital admission rates
- Emergency hospital admission rates

As highlighted within the deprivation section, Birchwood is a ward of variation and this is also reflected in health and wellbeing data. The following list highlights indicators which are significantly worse in the Oakwood/Birchwood Centre area (coloured red and orange on the deprivation map), when compared to the Warrington average

- Percentage adults reporting that they currently smoke
- Percentage adults obese
- Percentage of adults going without food to manage financially
- Percentage of adults who had to borrow to cover necessities
- Percentage of adults receiving income support/social security benefits
- Percentage of adults who feel unsafe out in their neighbourhood after dark
- Percentage of adults having poor neighbourhood connections/perceptions

These are all areas which warrant further examination. Some may be areas to include in resident consultation processes.

## 5. Local facilities and usage:

### 5.1 Primary Schools

Locking Stumps

Gorse Covert

Birchwood C of E primary school (Oakwood)

## 5.2 Secondary and other schools

Birchwood High School

Birchwood College

## 5.3 Churches

### **Church of the Transfiguration, Admirals Road, Oakwood (Church of England)**



Unfortunately, this church has been closed for some time now, although the town council recently provided a small grant to enable them to hold a function.

### **Thomas Risley Church, Glover Road, Locking Stumps (United Reformed Church)**



The church has a number of activities which it operates directly including Tommy's Tots and a coffee shop, as well as hosting several community groups including Brownies.

### **Birchwood Community Church (Evangelical)**

This is a community-focussed evangelical church which was temporarily based at Birchwood High School. The new Encounter Centre officially opened its doors in October 2016. It is at the former housing office opposite BetFred (Spectrum Arena) just a short distance from its previous location at the former Silver Birch. The organisation also runs the Fusion Youth Group.

## 5.4 Sports facilities

Livewire, Birchwood. This facility houses one of the few indoor tennis centres in the North West of England as well as having 4 outdoor hard courts. There is a large gym facility as well as other halls for playing other sports. The high school has a number of well-used 3g pitches for football and other sports. There are also several MUGAs in the area.

## 5.5 Parks and recreation

Birchwood is blessed with an extraordinary variety of green and open spaces from woodland to meadows, ponds, gardens and parks. The following provides a short summary of some of the main attractions.

### Risley Moss and visitor centre



Risley Moss is a remnant lowland raised bog that was created following the last Ice Age. It is locally referred to as the 'mossland'. It is part of the Manchester Mosses Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) because of its rare mossland habitat and plants. It is also a Local Nature Reserve.

The site is open for 6 days a week (closed Fridays) and is an important local asset and used by both residents and visitors from outside the area.

Risley Moss is managed by the Ranger Service of Warrington Borough Council under the guidance of Natural England, with the objective of the restoration of active lowland raised bog.

### Oakwood Gate Walled Garden



The walled garden is a part of Birchwood Forest Park, but has not been properly maintained for some years. It was built in the original water reservoirs of the old ordnance factory. It originally housed a large number of very attractive and exotic plants and shrubs and was very much appreciated by those who used it. The cost of restoring it to its former condition would be very high. A local group of volunteers has been carrying out some limited work to remove dead branches and some of the overgrowth.

### Birchwood Forest Park

This is the main park for Birchwood and incorporates playing fields, play areas for skateboard, MUGA (under construction), children's play area and outdoor exercise machines. This is arguably one of the best parks in Warrington, although the buildings which house toilets, changing rooms and showers are in a poor state currently. WBC is currently looking at upgrading the facility although there appear to be issues with finding sufficient funding. There is a part-time ranger who works on the site. A friends group has been set up recently.

## Gorse Covert Mounds and Pestfurlong Hill



This suburban site is a delightful mosaic of mixed woodland, meadows and ponds, and supports an amazing variety of plants and wildlife. Its network of accessible paths allows you to enjoy woodland and waterside walks, and some stunning views from Pestfurlong Hill. On a clear day, you can see as far as the West Pennine Moors. There is a group of friends which carries out work at the site and organises occasional special walks.

## 5.6 Public Houses

There are five public houses within the Birchwood boundaries



### **Nelsons Quarterdeck,**

Admirals Road,  
Birchwood



### **Turf and Feather**

Glover Road  
Locking Stumps



### **The Peacock**

Dewhurst Road  
Birchwood



### **The Poacher**

Gorse Covert Road,  
Gorse Covert



### **The Noggin**

Warrington Road  
Risley

## 5.7 Local community groups (Does not include commercial groups)

Friends of Birchwood Forest Park

Friends of Gorse Covert mounds

Rimag ( Risley Moss Action Group)

Birchwood Carnival Committee

Walking group – Oakwood Community Centre

Birchwood Seniors –Birchwood Youth & Community Centre

Age Concern

Birchwood Library – Adults & young persons reading groups

Birchwood Leisure & Tennis centre – Pilates, Group kick, junior gym, Boot camp, Body condition, Indoor cycling, Zumba, Circuits, Insanity, Stop Smoking

Sure Start

Women's/ Craft Group – Oakwood Hub

Oakwood Community Association /Oakwood community centre

Parkers Farm Village Room (Town Council Offices)

Community room at the Fire Station

Peace/ community garden at Birchwood fire station

Asda Elevenses – Asda café

Read & Relax – Asda community room

The Centre at Birchwood (includes a large canteen and a commercial gym – Alive and Well)

Alcoholics Anonymous – Oakwood Community Centre

Woodlands Children's Centre?

Treats Café – Thomas Risley Church

Toddler Zone- Mums & Tots

Spectrum Striders – more than 200 members both male and female. Organise the Birchwood 10K.

Birchwood Juniors football club

Scout Huts, cubs, brownies, etc. – 12<sup>th</sup> Warrington East scouts/cubs/beavers. Warrington Road

Parents & Toddlers Group

Fire Cadets at Birchwood fire station, has 15 young people who meet on Wednesdays from 7 to 9.30pm

Birchwood youth and community centre – Delenty Drive

## 5.8 Local business organisations and facilities

### **Birchwood forum**

Birchwood Forum is a UK business forum that was established to enhance and maintain Birchwood as a strong economic community with businesses working in partnership and investing in the future together. It has more than 40 members and holds regular meetings

**Birchwood Park – North West Nuclear Forum** – this was formed as a separate, but closed aligned group to the forum.

### **The Centre, Birchwood Park**

The centre at Birchwood Park is a top class facility which is mainly for employees within Birchwood Park, but which is also used by some local residents. The centre is placed within a very attractive environment



with a lake with ducks and other water birds. There is also a gym – Alive and Well. The main building houses a restaurant with excellent quality food, a coffee bar and conferencing facilities. Birchwood Park also has the only allotments within the Birchwood Town Council area.

### **Birchwood Partnership**

This group has been recently reformed and consists of members of the forum, Birchwood High School, Birchwood Shopping Centre, Birchwood Medical Centre and other key stakeholders, including the other property owners in Birchwood. The group is currently looking at putting together a “business improvement district” proposal which could be of considerable benefit to the area.

## 6. Analysis:

The following analysis includes aspects over which the town council has no direct control, but are included for completeness and to ensure that the issues are taken up with key stakeholders.

### 6.1 Good features of Birchwood as a town council area – areas to build on

- Birchwood has a high proportion of green spaces and is generally a very pleasant environment for both residents and local businesses
- Birchwood is very well communicated as it is very close to the M62 and M6, and is close to Manchester airport and railway stations on both North/South and East/West routes.

- Birchwood has important and thriving business parks
- Cheshire Science Corridor Enterprise Zone has launched at Birchwood Park with the potential to lever £100m investment
- Traffic flow through Birchwood has been significantly improved by the new pinch point improvements
- Residents very much like the bulbs and wild flowers planted by WBC and by BTC

## 6.2 Issues which need to be addressed

- There will be a need to consider the potential impact which the building and construction of HS2 may have locally on Birchwood, especially the construction of the planned bridge over the M62.
- There are clear pockets of deprivation in Birchwood which coincide with areas of poor health – diabetes, obesity.
- Continuing litter problems especially alongside certain main roads through Birchwood, especially Birchwood Way and Birchwood Park Avenue. (note that there some issues due to the speed of traffic)
- The general upkeep of the green spaces has deteriorated in the last couple of years as Warrington Borough Council has had to reduce costs. This has made the area look untidy and somewhat neglected.
- There is limited communication/engagement with residents
- There is only limited feeling of community both within and between the different sections of the town – Locking Stumps, Oakwood, Gorse Covert, Delenty Drive and Chatfield.
- The walled garden and the two ponds beyond it are in a poor state
- The main building in the forest park is in poor condition
- Green spaces are not always used as much as they could be and are rather invisible from main roads.
- The Youth Club building at Delenty Drive could be better utilised for the benefit of the community
- There is substantial traffic noise in some areas closest to the M6 and M62
- Signage could be improved throughout the town
- Birchwood Way runs through the centre of the town and acts to some extent as a divider of the communities and there is substantial traffic noise generated due to the relatively high speed of traffic both on this road and on the A574. (70 mph and 50 mph respectively.)
- Parking at the commercial centre/medical centre/dentist and in other business areas is becoming increasingly difficult.
- There are no allotments in Birchwood for residents
- Residents find it difficult to identify like-minded individuals with whom they can associate.

## 6.3 Opportunities

- Create improved level of pride in Birchwood and a commitment to making it better
- Formation of residents' panels
- Publish a newsletter to keep residents informed at least annually

- Use the Birchwood community group as a vehicle for communicating with residents
- Carry out relevant surveying of residents to establish needs and priorities
- Provide a range of community volunteering opportunities
- Work to facilitate a Business Improvement District model for Birchwood as a means of bringing more money into improving Birchwood, by working constructively with Birchwood forum.
- Make sure that employees of the business area are fully aware of the local facilities so that they used more often (e.g. outdoor exercise machines) and they appreciate the community in which they work
- Encourage the uptake of non-carbon based energy sources within Birchwood
- Further development of Birchwood partnership.
- Work towards taking on more grass cutting from Warrington Borough Council so that Birchwood is in better control
- Work in partnership with Birchwood Medical Centre, Livewire and Warrington Clinical Commissioning Group to investigate ways of improving the health of residents.
- Greatly expand the BTC website to make it a window on the town and promote what we have to offer as well as making local job vacancies more visible.
- Complete the works on the dogbone pinch point on the south approach
- Grants etc. as a source of funding
- Traffic calming measures in problem areas.
- Crime reduction
- Internet access for those without
- Encourage formation of residents' associations for all the areas of Birchwood
- Explore the options for a Birchwood park and ride
- Potential to reduce local traffic at morning peak and 3 pm to 4pm by encouraging school pupils to use public transport or other means rather than using cars.
- Possible opportunity for BTC to take on increased responsibility for local services/facilities

## 6.4 Threats

- Further reductions in local government expenditure
- Increasing traffic could further degrade the general quality of life
- Further commercial development of the Birchwood Centre could make parking more difficult
- Competition from business parks in other areas of Warrington
- Limitations on infrastructure investment

## 7. Action plan

**Objective 1:** To ensure that the best possible image of Birchwood is projected to the wider community throughout Warrington and beyond:

Actions	Responsible	Completion date	Resources required	Status
1.1 Work with local publications to ensure that all local good news stories are well publicised.	Designated member for liaison with publications/Town Clerk	On-going	Requires input of stories	
1.2 Work to find a way to develop a new and informative website that effectively informs about Birchwood, it's facilities, things to do, local transport, volunteering opportunities, jobs etc. (explore possibility of doing this in partnership with Birchwood Forum, Partnership etc.) The site could be a development of the current birchwood.org.uk	Link member with Birchwood Forum/Partnership	April 2018	This would require manpower to maintain the site, but could be funded via a BID.	
1.3 Send out regular updates to residents about progress on our plans so that they can see what is happening and feel that they are a part of what is being achieved.	Town Clerk/members	Annual hard copy to be included in newsletter and six monthly via website	Cost of newsletter	

**Objective 2:** Ensure that the work of the council is of the highest possible standard and provides the best possible outcomes for residents while providing excellent value for money

Actions	Responsible	Completion Date	Resources required	Status
2.1 Initially put into effect all the necessary processes and documentation to allow BTC to achieve NALC Foundation status (with the eventual aim of achieving parish/town council quality gold status (NALC) as a way of ensuring best practice and giving residents the highest level of confidence in what we do as a town council. All documents etc. to be on council website	Chair together with councillors and officers	December 2017	Work required to conform with requirements. £50 registration with NALC and £80 for registration	
2.2 Establish processes and operating methods consistent with achieving NALC Quality status. All appropriate documents to be on council website	Chair together with councillors and officers	Dec 2019	Work required to conform with requirements. £100 for assessment	
2.3 Establish processes and operating methods which allow BTC to achieve NALC Quality Gold status. All appropriate documents to be on council website	Chair together with councillors and officers	Dec 2021	Work required to conform with requirements. £200 for assessment	
2.2 Carry out regular surveys of residents/high school pupils etc. on relevant issues to the implementation of this plan and keep them informed of the results.	Strategy committee	On-going, but first consultation to be completed by June 2017	May be worthwhile subscribing to the second tier of memberships of Survey	

			Monkey - £300 per year	
2.3 Use the results of surveys to organise facilities and services that residents want	Strategy committee	On-going	Will not be clear until completed	●
2.4 Engage with residents as widely as possible by attending meetings of groups/clubs etc. to explain what we are proposing as a council, and gain their feedback through surveys.	Members/Officers	Prior to consultations. First round of meetings to be completed by April 2017	None	●
2.5 Set up a Birchwood focus group to work with on future consultations. Will require identification of a suitable group.	Strategy committee	On-going 1 to 2 meetings per year Identify a group of people by April 2017	None	●
2.6 Encourage the formation of residents' associations in Locking Stumps, Gorse Covert	Members/officers	Target to have in place by Dec 2017	None	●

**Objective 3:** Build further on the green environment enjoyed in Birchwood by protecting what we already have, enhancing the environment where possible and help to ensure that our residents can benefit from it to the full.

<b>Actions:</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Completion date</b>	<b>Resources required</b>	<b>Status</b>
3.1 Find ways to make our green spaces more obvious or more visible (Forest Park is not obvious to those driving through), through better signage.	Member with liaison responsibility with Birchwood Partnership	March 2019	If included a part of a BID, there would be no cost	●

3.2 Find ways to help reduce rubbish and improve landscaping/grass cutting especially from M62 to Moss Gate – work with Birchwood Partnership to include as part of a BID	Member with liaison responsibility with Birchwood Partnership	March 2019	If included a part of a BID, there would be no cost	●
3.3 Publicise public footpaths better so they are used more often. Produce map of pathways. Look at possible expansion of signage.	Member with liaison responsibility with Birchwood Partnership	March 2019	Could be part of a BID proposal	●
3.4 Continue to plant bulbs and wild flowers	BTC	Annual	Annual cost of bulbs and seeds is £ xx	●
3.5 Survey residents on what facilities/activities they would like to see in our green spaces that would make them more likely to use them.	BTC strategy group	March 2017	£300 per year if we want to use Survey Monkey	●
3.6 Ensure that information about what is on in Birchwood is displayed prominently both physically and electronically	Town Clerk	On-going	None	●
3.7 Work with Rimag and WBC to find ways to widen the scope of the displays in Risley Moss.	Member with responsibility for liaison with Rimag	July 2017	None	●
3.8 Work further to identify locations with traffic speed issues and work with WBC to establish appropriate calming measures.	Town Clerk/ Members	Dec 2017	None	●
3.9 Work with WBC to enable BTC to take on some responsibility for grass-cutting so quality can be improved	BTC Chair and Birchwood members of WBC	March 2017	Any equipment?	●

3.10 Consider how BTC could encourage the use of PV panels for electricity generation on public buildings such as primary schools	BTC Chair/members/officers	March 2018	None	●
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**Objective 4:** To build a greater sense of community and belonging in the residents of Birchwood

Actions:	Responsible	Completion date	Resources required	Status
4.1 Find out what kind of activities people would like to get involved in, so that we could look to help provide these and better use the facilities that are available. (e.g. The youth club/community centre.) Look at the possibility of BTC helping with funding of these activities.	BTC strategy group	April 2017	Survey tool cost - £300  Some funding for room hire.	●
4.2 Make a list of all the volunteering opportunities we have in Birchwood.  Contact and work with Warrington Voluntary Action to put potential volunteers in contact with local opportunities	Town Clerk/members/etc.	April 2017  On-going	None  None	●
4.3 Recognise volunteers in some way – perhaps an annual event – volunteer of the year award. Etc.	BTC members  Recognition to be given by Chair of BTC	Have a scheme in place by Dec 2017	Cost of award	●
4.4 Continue to provide small grants for community groups from an annual fund of £10,000 (subject to annual reappraisal)	BTC	On-going	Annual fund of £10,000	●

4.5 Examine the feasibility of running an annual residents' celebration event (Note that this could be same event for recognising volunteers.	BTC members/Town Clerk	Dec 2017	Cost of event – Budget £ xx	●
4.6 Ensure that all existing local activities are well publicised	Officers/BTC Members	On-going and regular	None	●
4.7 Examine the possibility of bringing back a free Christmas pantomime for local children	Chair, Members and officers	Nov 2017	Venue plus performers	●
4.8 Ensure that younger people are involved in survey work to identify activities they would like to see and evaluate volunteering opportunities they might be interested in. This, with a view to helping them become good citizens	Chair, Members and officers	On-going, but first engagement by March 2018 at the latest	Survey cost. Could be done partly through Birchwood High School.	●
4.9 Identify community events which residents would like to see	BTC Strategy group	April 2017	Survey cost	●

**Objective 5:** Work closely with local businesses and other stakeholders to positively impact the lives of those who live and work in Birchwood.

<b>Actions:</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Completion date</b>	<b>Resources required</b>	<b>Status</b>
5.1. Work in cooperation with Birchwood forum to look at the possible establishment of a Business improvement district in Birchwood (BID)	Member with responsibility for liaison with Birchwood Forum	Dec 2017	Possible £750 from BTC to carry out a scoping exercise and another possible £3K to put together	●

			the initial proposal both of which would be refundable if it went ahead	
5.2. Work with local businesses to see how they might be more involved in the neighbourhood in terms of exercising their corporate responsibility. This could include possibility of volunteering. Make sure that local businesses are aware of all local facilities available.	Member with responsibility for liaison with Birchwood Forum	On-going, but presentation during Q3 2017	None	
5.3. Look at the feasibility of establishing a Park and Ride to help take traffic out of the area and help resolve some of the parking issues.	Officers/chair/members/WBC	Dec 2017	None – funding would have to come from outside BTC	
5.4. Work with the appropriate authorities to ensure that phase 2 of the works on the “dogbone” roundabout is completed, so that traffic flow can be	BTC and WBC councillors	April 2018	None – funding would have to come from outside BTC	

optimised especially at peak times.				
5.5. Work with Birchwood Partnership board to identify new signage to make areas easier to find and facilitate traffic flow	Member with responsibility for working with Birchwood Forum	Dec 2017	None – funding would have to come from outside BTC	
5.6. Work with the Birchwood Medical Centre and Warrington CCG to see if there are ways in which specific projects might be funded which would have a positive impact on local health inequalities. For example, prediabetes, fitness, smoking cessation, etc.	Designated member	Dec 2017	None	
5.7. Work with Birchwood Medical Centre and WBC to look at running an extended presence of the public health team at the practice or in local community facilities	Designated member	October 2017	None	
5.8 Work closely with local centres of education and local businesses to identify ways of ensuring that as many local people	Member liaising with Birchwood Partnership Board	On-going	None	

are employed locally as possible.				
5.9 Continue to work closely with YOUR housing group to identify issues through local walkabouts and monitoring comments through the Birchwood Facebook page, and try to work to resolve them. Consider potential survey of residents	Members/officers	On-going Walkabouts should be at least 4 per year.	None	
5.10 Carry out walkabouts in other areas (private housing etc. to identify issues)	Representative member, where possible	On-going walkabouts – 4 per year	None	
5.10 Work through Birchwood Forum/Partnership Board and Birchwood High School/ Birchwood college to bring local businesses to our centres of learning to help inspire our young people.	Member responsible for liaison with BF/BPB etc.	On-going but started by October 2017	None.	
5.11 Monitor the issues of local parking and identify potential solutions to the problems identified to WBC and seek funding.	Members/officers	On-going	None	

5.12 Ensure that there is still the facility for the public to access the internet if there are changes in Library services provision	Officers/members/WBC	February 2017	None	
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**Objective 6:** Seek sources of additional funding to allow development of Birchwood as an area

Actions:	Responsible	Completion date	Resources required	Status
6.1 Seek a heritage grant for the 50 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sale of the land for the development of Birchwood for residential/business use with a “big” project that would make a significant contribution to Birchwood and help to project the town positively. Need to identify a game-changing project	Members/Officers/Birchwood forum	Dec 2018	Resource to put together a bid – could include Birchwood Forum	
6.2 Continue to identify possible sources of funding to help to further develop amenities (such as BIFFA Grants etc.)	Officers/members	On-going	Resource to put together bids	

**Objective 7:** To Work to Improve community safety

Actions	Responsible	Completion Date	Resources required	Status
<p>7.1 Work with Birchwood partnership group to identify potential security improvements and report back to BTC.</p> <p>(Note: There is a current idea of a texting service about suspicious vehicles/individuals)</p>	<p>Member with responsibility for liaison with BTC</p>	<p>Dec 2017</p>	<p>None</p>	
<p>7.2 Ensure that all the new street lighting is fit for purpose by checking;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Impact of tree canopies</li> <li>2. Light strength/dark areas</li> <li>3. Any lights which are not functioning</li> </ol> <p>Feedback to WBC. This will improve public safety and confidence in going out at night</p>	<p>Members to check a zone within their own constituency (to be agreed).</p>	<p>April 2017</p>	<p>None</p>	
<p>7.3 Consider traffic issues through Birchwood, especially regarding traffic speeds which are affecting both noise levels and safety</p>	<p>Members/officers. WBC</p>	<p>On-going, but reviewed annually by end of financial year</p>	<p>Data on speeds, accidents etc.</p>	
<p>7.4 Ensure that Birchwood has the most cost effective measures in place to minimise the level of crime in the town.</p> <p>Examine possibilities of smart water marking of property</p>	<p>Members/Officers/ Cheshire police</p>	<p>Dec 2017</p>	<p>Information on effectiveness of potential measures</p>	

7.5 Support improved bus services within Birchwood which could have a positive impact on traffic flow and parking issues (e.g. At the high school in the mornings and at 3.15pm)	Member with responsibility for liaison with Birchwood forum/partnership	Dec 2017	Cost of service ( BID?)	●
7.6 Consider ways in which it might be possible to provide free/low cost public transport around Birchwood. (Note that this and 7.5 might be included as part of the BID)	Member with responsibility for liaison with Birchwood forum/partnership	Dec 2017	Cost of service ( BID?)	●
7.7 Examine the possibility of installing radar speed signs	Members/Officers	Dec 2017	Cost of signs is about £3-5K, but may attract partial funding	●

Note that there are several initiatives in previous sections which are expected to have a positive impact on crime, vandalism and safety.

- - Action completion is not due for more than 3 months or is completed
- - Action is due within the next month and not completed
- - Item is overdue or cannot be completed

## What we currently do for residents:

Our current range of operational activities relevant to this strategy, vision and statement of objectives are set out in the following summary of work and project related activities:

We employ, and train our staff to certified standards, a local workforce to provide and undertake environmental type activities to meet several of our objectives, e.g.

1. Some community maintenance work.
2. Provide a free local bulky household waste collection and disposal service to residents. (currently under review)
3. Provide hedge and minor tree cutting/maintenance service in the area.
4. Sweep, clean and litter pick the main footpath network and local amenity areas in Birchwood.
5. Dog waste and litter bin emptying service.
6. General maintenance to Town Council premises, vehicles and equipment.
7. Cleanse and check local play and recreation areas (funded all or in part by the Town Council).
8. Remove/liaise regarding the removal of graffiti.
9. Provide and maintain floral displays – planters, hanging baskets, bulbs and wildflowers.
10. Provide and maintain some benches in the local area.

The Town Council also own and provides a central Council office to provide administration, liaison and help deliver services to meet the Council's service requirements and resident issues.

Additionally, the Town Council provides:

- A. Communication with residents using the following:
  - Website
  - Facebook
  - Local noticeboards
  - Public participation session – Town Council Meetings
  - Town Councillor Surgeries
  - Newsletters
  - Stand at the local Carnival
- B. Funding towards the cost of a PCSO within Birchwood.

- C. Provide/facilitate access/liasion meetings for Police issues to be raised formally by residents/ on behalf of residents.
- D. Active liaison with Warrington Borough Council on agency service issues, Including infrastructure problems, traffic related matters and other environmental/local matters.
- E. Community development / asset maintenance initiatives.  
The current community development programme, whereby the Town Council is providing capital funding to fully, or partially, install facilities for residents has recently concentrated on recreational play and fitness equipment in Birchwood Forest Park.

It has provided funds towards the local Conflict Remembrance Memorial in Birchwood and assists with its ongoing maintenance and memorial services.

The Town Council will continue to campaign to protect local open spaces and encourage/support any moves to achieve Village Green status

An extensive five phase programme is being implemented in partnership with Warrington Borough Council to introduce further enhancements:

- a. Existing hard surface football pitch.
- b. Enhancement of the skateboard and BMX track.
- c. Improvements to the public facilities at the Ranger Centre.
- d. Potential improvements to footpath lighting in the park.

Other community development schemes under consideration include a new footpath mechanical sweeping service (3 employees have been trained), footpath repair needs in Birchwood with other potential projects e.g. The Walled Garden and local ponds which are currently under consideration.

The Town Council is considering whether some asset transfers from the Borough Council to the Town Council could be beneficial and feasible to the development of services and facilities for the local community.

It will continue to seek local sites where allotments might be established.

In recent years, the Council has provided funds to install several local play and multi-use games areas where no funding was available elsewhere.

Additionally, the Town Council has, in the past, provided funding support towards local bus shelters, some street lighting improvements, footpath installation and supported other general schemes e.g. Encounter Statue, the Remembrance Memorial at the Shopping Centre and Locking Stumps Youth and Community Centre.