



Council Summons

Wednesday 15th October 2025

11.00 am

**Council Chamber, SKA Observatory, Jodrell
Bank, Lower Withington, SK11 9FT**

To all Members of the Council

You are hereby invited to attend a meeting of the Cheshire East Council for the transaction of the business specified in the agenda below.

Yours faithfully

Rob Polkinghorne
Chief Executive

Agenda

The agenda is divided into two parts. Part 1 is taken in the presence of the public and press. Part 2 items will be considered in the absence of the public and press for the reasons indicated on the agenda and at the top of each report.

It should be noted that Part 1 items of Cheshire East Council decision making meetings are audio recorded, and the recordings are uploaded to the Council's website

PART 1 – MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS PRESENT

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

To provide an opportunity for Members and Officers to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests, other registerable interests, and non-registerable interests in any item on the agenda.

3. Minutes of Previous Meetings (Pages 5 - 24)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meetings of Council held on 16 July 2025 and 17 September 2025.

4. Mayor's Announcements

To receive such announcements as may be made by the Mayor.

5. Public Speaking Time/Open Session

In accordance the Council Procedural Rules, a total period of 30 minutes is allocated for members of the public to speak at Council meetings. Individual members of the public may speak for up to 2 minutes, but the Chair will have discretion to vary this requirement where they consider it appropriate.

Members of the public wishing to speak are required to provide notice of this at least three clear working days' in advance of the meeting and should include the question with that notice. Requests to speak and questions should be submitted via the [Register to Speak form](#).

Petitions - To receive any petitions which have met the criteria - [Petitions Scheme Criteria](#), and falls within the remit of the Committee. Petition organisers will be allowed up to three minutes to speak.

6. Leader's and Deputy Leader's Announcements

To receive such announcements as may be made by the Leader and Deputy Leader.

7. **Recommendations from Finance Sub Committee: First Financial Review of 2025/26 - Supplementary Revenue Estimates Requests and Supplementary Capital Estimate Requests (Pages 25 - 32)**

To consider the recommendations from the Finance Sub Committee.

8. **Political Representation on the Council's Committees (Pages 33 - 40)**

To determine the political representation on the Council's committees.

9. **Annual Report of the Audit and Governance Committee 2024-25 (Pages 41 - 54)**

To receive the annual report of Audit and Governance Committee 2024-25.

10. **Notices of Motion (Pages 55 - 56)**

To consider any Notices of Motion that have been received in accordance with the Council Procedure Rules.

11. **Questions**

In accordance the Council Procedure Rules, opportunity is provided for Members of the Council to ask the Mayor or the Chair of a Committee any question about a matter which the Council, or the Committee has powers, duties or responsibilities.

At Council meeting, there will be a maximum question time period of 30 minutes. A period of two minutes will be allowed for each Councillor wishing to ask a question. The Mayor will have the discretion to vary this requirement where they consider it appropriate.

12. **Reporting of Urgent Decision taken by Chief Executive (Pages 57 - 58)**

To note the urgent decision taken by the Chief Executive on behalf of Council.

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Council**
held on Wednesday, 16th July, 2025 in the Council Chamber, SKA
Observatory, Jodrell Bank, Lower Withington, SK11 9FT

PRESENT

Councillor D Edwardes (Mayor/Chair)

Councillor J Snowball (Deputy Mayor/Vice-Chair)

Councillors S Adams, L Anderson, R Bailey, M Beanland, S Bennett-Wake, J Bratherton, M Brooks, D Brown, C Browne, L Buchanan, C Bulman, A Burton, R Chadwick, C Chapman, D Clark, J Clowes, A Coiley, N Cook, S Corcoran, L Crane, T Dean, B Drake, S Edgar, M Edwards, H Faddes, A Farrall, R Fletcher, A Gage, S Gardiner, M Goldsmith, M Gorman, K Hague, E Hall, A Harrison, G Hayes, A Heler, S Holland, M Houston, T Jackson, R Kain, A Kolker, N Mannion, G Marshall, A Moran, R Moreton, R Morris, H Moss, M Muldoon, C O'Leary, J Pearson, J Place, B Posnett, J Pratt, J Priest, B Puddicombe, J Rhodes, H Seddon, M Sewart, M Simon, L Smetham, G Smith, J Smith, J Smith, L Smith, R Vernon, L Wardlaw, M Warren, H Whitaker, F Wilson, J Wray and B Wye

21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors J Bird, L Braithwaite, P Coan, K Edwards, E Gilman, D Jefferay, P Redstone and J Saunders.

22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In relation to Item 7 – Letter from Assurance Panel, in the interest of openness Cllr S Gardiner and Cllr N Mannion declared that they were a member of the Assurance Panel.

In relation to Item 14 Notices of Motion – Housing Targets, in the interest of openness Cllr S Gardiner declared that he was a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute.

In relation to Item 14 Notices of Motion- Housing Targets, in the interest of openness Cllr N Mannion declared that he was a retired member of the Chartered Institute of Housing.

In relation to Item 14 - Notices of Motion, Cllr A Kolker indicated that he wished to declare a personal pecuniary interest, but he felt unable to publicly state the reason for doing so. Officers advised that the matter could be discussed with the Council's Monitoring Officer, separately. Cllr Kolker stated that he would not take part in the consideration of the Notice of Motion.

23 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Mayor Making and Annual Meeting held on 14 May 2025, and the Special Meeting of Council held on 14 May 2025 be approved as a correct record.

24 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor referred to the death in June of Councillor Chris Hilliard and stated that it had been a privilege to attend their funeral. The Mayor invited representatives from each political group to pay tribute and then asked those present to stand for a minute's quiet reflection.

25 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

The Mayor stated that he had decided that the public speakers wishing to speak in relation to the Notice of Motion on Housing Targets would be invited to speak when that item was considered.

Mr Robert Douglas expressed his concern about the loss of detailed Pay-by-Phone car park income data due to a system change and asked if procedures were now in place to ensure that data would not be lost whenever there was any updating or swapping of I.T. systems. Mr Douglas asked whether the impact on footfall in Congleton was due to the increase in car parking charges. He referred to the public consultation on extending car parking charges and stated the results of this had not been discussed at the committee and was enacted via delegated authority. He asked that this be not repeated.

In response Cllr Goldsmith, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, stated that access to real time and historic data from Pay-by-Phone was lost when the Council changed supplier to Ring Go, following a competitive procurement process. The provisions for access to information at the end of this contract had been defined in contract documents, following advice from ICT officers.

The decision to introduce evening and Sunday charging was made in January 2024. The public consultation in August 2024 was therefore only to review operational matters, such as maximum times of stay at car parks. The consultation was not intended to be a review of the January decision. As these changes were operational matters, they would not be discussed by the Highways and Transport Committee, which focused on strategy.

Cllr Goldsmith stated that regarding the Town Centre footfall in Congleton, this was recorded by a company called Visitor Insights, which tracked the total number of connections to local mobile phone masts to track visitor numbers. Cllr Goldsmith undertook to forward the data for Congleton to Mr Douglas. Cllr Goldsmith reported that this data was obtained for all towns

in Cheshire East and encouraged other councillors to seek out the data because it was very informative.

Cllr Goldsmith reported that the data for Congleton showed that from July 2024 onwards there was a footfall increase every year vs the corresponding month in 2023. This increase ranged from 5% to 27%, the latter being over the key Christmas retail period. Therefore, there was no adverse effect on footfall. Additionally, the data showed that council car parks in Congleton were visited +2% between June 2024 and June 2025.

Cllr Goldsmith stated that In January 2024 the Highways and Transport Committee gave authorisation to officers to review and change parking charges depending on inflation and other relevant factors. This is to ensure any changes were conducted in a timely and efficient manner. He stated that no one liked price rises but inflation was a fact of life, and this had to be acknowledged and acted on accordingly. He, therefore, did not expect this procedure to change in future years, where car park tariffs would be reviewed by officers alongside other council fees and charges.

Ms Sue Helliwell asked if this Council could pass on her thanks to all involved in the Linley Road appeal in Alsager as the planning inspectorate had turned down the appeal on the grounds of Cheshire East Council Good Design Guide and stated that this proved beyond reasonable doubt that the design guide document was a fantastic document. Ms Helliwell thanked all involved in writing this document and Councillors for voting in support of it. She asked if the Protected Open Space land at Linley Road would be maintained by Cheshire East Council. She asked what was the latest information on the Cheshire East Local Plan and when residents would know what the call for sites would be, and what were the timings for the Local Plan go out to public consultation.

In response Cllr H Seddon, Vice Chair of Environment and Communities Committee, thanked Ms Helliwell for recognising the hard work of the officers, and for her support of the Cheshire East Design Guide and stated that the Council had put great weight on ensuring that new developments were of a high design quality, adhered to strong environmental guidelines and had a focus on place making. It was encouraging that the Planning Inspector took account of these principles in rejecting the recent appeal.

Cllr Seddon stated that the Council would continue to maintain the Linley Road public open space in accordance with the current grounds maintenance policy and the designated classification of the area.

Cllr Seddon stated that the Council was progressing work on a new Local Plan under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, as outlined in the Local Development Scheme 2025-26 and whilst the Council awaited national regulations and policy guidance, expected later this year, was intensifying project planning and undertaking preparatory work, including an initial assessment of sites submitted through the 'Call for Sites' process from last year. These sites would be published in due course as part of the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment which did not confer

any planning status but formed part of the evidence base. It was anticipated that the new regulations would introduce mandatory consultation events, and the Local Development Scheme would be updated accordingly. Residents would be kept informed as the process developed and consultation opportunities are confirmed.

Mr Stuart Redgard asked how the Council complied with the Public Sector Equality Duty with regard to planning applications. He stated that he had looked earnestly and could not find any evidence whatsoever that it did. He referred to a development in Wilmslow which had now been completed and stated that there was no access for people with disabilities on the public footpath through the site.

Cllr H Seddon, Vice Chair of the Environment and Communities Committee undertook to provide a written response.

26 LEADER'S AND DEPUTY LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader, in summary:

- 1 paid tribute to the late Cllr Chris Hilliard acknowledging their contributions to the work of the Council.
- 2 stated that this council meeting marked one year since he had been elected as Leader and acknowledged the challenges and tough decisions faced over the past year.
- 3 highlighted the Council's reliance on exceptional financial support to balance the 2025-26 budget and warned of a £51m funding gap to 2029
- 4 highlighted the Government's Fair Funding Review consultation and urged councillors to respond
- 5 confirmed that the Council, Cheshire West and Chester Council and Warrington Borough Council remained part of the devolution priority programme for a Mayoral Combined Authority and the Councils had requested that the Mayoral elections move from May 2026 to May 2027.
- 6 referred to the Government's decision to introduce legislation to mandate a leader and cabinet model for councils in England and that the Council would need to prepare for this change
- 7 highlighted the improvements in the Children and Families services following Ofsted monitoring.
- 8 acknowledged the work of councillors and officers in driving the transformation programme.

The Deputy Leader, in summary:

- 1 paid tribute to the late Cllr Chris Hilliard.
- 2 reported that the traCE system would be launched on Wednesday 23 July, which was a new, map-based online tool to report potholes, fly-tipping, abandoned vehicles and streetlighting and would replace the current Fix My Street platform.
- 3 reported that the Council had received long awaited approval and grant funding from the Government for the Middlewich Eastern Bypass.
- 4 referred to the ongoing regeneration work in Crewe.
- 5 announced the launch of four new community grants - Cost of Living Community Response Fund, Digital Communities Fund, Enabling Prosperity and Wellbeing in Cheshire East Fund and Healthy Neighbourhoods Fund
- 6 reported the launch of a new SEND strategy which had been developed by the Cheshire East 0–25 SEND Partnership.
- 7 reported that additional DfE funding had been secured for supported internships for young people with SEND.
- 8 highlighted that the AI transformation programme was underway which was expected to say £40m over three years. AI would be used in customer services, adult social care and children’s services.
- 9 reported the launch of the “We Still Need You” project for male veterans by Mentell, funded by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust.
- 10 highlighted that the Active Travel consultation was open until 31 August 2025.

27 ASSURANCE PANEL PROGRESS UPDATE LETTER

Consideration was given to the update letter from the Chair of the Assurance Panel on the Council’s process since the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge in March 2024 and establishment of the Panel in August 2024.

As part of the LGA’s Corporate Peer Challenge process, a one-day revisit had taken place in mid-February 2025, and the revisit report was appended to the report.

RESOLVED:

That Council note the progress letter from the Assurance Panel, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report, and the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge revisit report, as set out at Appendix 2 to the report.

28 OFFICER DECISION RE FUNDING FOR PHASE 3 OF THE TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the report on the circumstances around the publication of the Officer Decision Record following an officer decision in relation to funding in respect of the Transformation Programme and the requirement for Council to approve a virement of funds to cover the expenditure approved by Council in February 2025 as part of the MTFS.

RESOLVED: That Council

- 1 note the contents of the report, and the opportunity provided by the use of the decision-referral process to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Constitution.
- 2 approve a virement of up to £3.5m from earmarked reserves; this potentially to include sums of over £1m but which will not exceed the total virement without a further decision by full Council.

29 RECOMMENDATION FROM CORPORATE POLICY COMMITTEE: CONSTITUTION OFFICER SCHEMES OF DELEGATION

Consideration was given to the recommendation from the Corporate Policy Committee on 12 June 2025 in relation to the Officer Schemes of Delegation in the Constitution.

The revised and expanded officer Schemes of Delegation were aimed at improving clarity, consistency, and accountability in decision-making across the council departments.

RESOLVED: That Council

- 1 approve and adopt the new officer Schemes of Delegation, as set out in Appendices A to G to the report, to be incorporated into the Constitution at Chapter 2 Part 5 to replace the existing schemes and the revocation of all former officer schemes of delegation, including local or service specific schemes.
- 2 delegate authority to the Governance, Compliance and Monitoring Officer to make any minor necessary amendments to the Scheme of Delegation.

30 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FINANCE SUB COMMITTEE: FINAL OUTTURN 2024-25 - APPROVAL OF SUPPLEMENTARY REVENUE ESTIMATES AND CAPITAL ESTIMATES

Consideration was given to the recommendation from the Finance Sub Committee held on 2 June 2025 in relation to the approval of supplementary revenue estimates and supplementary capital estimates.

RESOLVED: That Council

- 1 approve the Supplementary Revenue Estimate Requests for Allocation of Additional Grant Funding over £1,000,000, as set out in Annex 1, Section 3, Table 1 to the report, as follows:

Children and Families – Core Schools Budget Grant	£2,502,000
Corporate Policy – Housing Benefit Subsidy	£2,231,000

- 2 approve the Supplementary Capital Estimates over £1,000,000 in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Rules, as set out in Annex 1, Section 4, Table5, as follows:

High Needs Capital Grant	£3,955,823
Local Transport Grant	£7,754,000
Warm Homes Local Grant	£7,792,725

31 RECOMMENDATION FROM ADULTS AND HEALTH COMMITTEE: CONNECT TO WORK FUNDING - APPROVAL OF SUPPLEMENTARY REVENUE ESTIMATE

Consideration was given to the recommendation from the Adults and Health Committee on 23 June 2025 in relation to the supplementary revenue estimate in relation to the Connect to Work delivery proposals.

RESOLVED:

That Council approve a Supplementary Revenue Estimate of the value of £2,090,769, as referenced in paragraph 35 of the report, over the 2025-2030 financial years.

32 RECOMMENDATION FROM HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE: BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN - 2025/26 DELIVERY PROGRAMME - APPROVAL OF SUPPLEMENTARY REVENUE AND CAPITAL ESTIMATES

Consideration was given to the recommendation from the Highways and Transport Committee on 19 June 2025 in relation to the supplementary revenue and capital estimates in respect of the Department of Transport Local Bus Grant award for 2025/26.

RESOLVED:

That Council approve the associated, fully funded Supplementary Revenue and Capital Estimates for the value of revenue funding of £2,879,963 and capital funding £2,122,646.

**33 RECOMMENDATION FROM AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE:
RECRUITMENT OF CO-OPTED INDEPENDENT MEMBERS**

Consideration was given to the recommendation from the Audit and Governance Committee on 29 May 2025 in relation to extension of the co-opted independent member's term of office to October 2027 so that this would be co terminus with a second co-opted independent members term of office, which would end in October 2027.

RESOLVED:

That Council approve that Mr Ron Jones' term of office as co-opted independent member on the Audit and Governance Committee be extended to October 2027.

34 NOTICES OF MOTION

The Mayor invited Mr Nick Cheetham and Ms Sarah Bradley to speak in relation to the Notice of Motion on Housing Targets.

Mr Cheetham spoke in support of the Notice of Motion on Housing Targets and stated that since December 2024 national housing targets had increased by 2.5 times at the same time the National Planning Framework being revised to increase the housing supply. He noted that the Council had a valid Local Plan and was working on a refresh, but the present Plan no longer met the five-year housing supply, and this was leading to speculative applications from developers often on unprotected or green belt land. He felt this was leading to developer-led rather than a plan-led process.

Ms Bradley referred to the significant number of new builds in Sandbach which had put a strain on local services and caused traffic congestion. She noted that no transport study had been undertaken since 2016. She stated that the current housing targets left the council vulnerable to speculative developments. It was not about stopping development but ensuring a fair distribution of new builds in appropriate places with supporting infrastructure. She urged Members to support the Notice of Motion to request the Government to lower the housing target and to allow time to develop neighbourhood and local plans.

Consideration was given to two Notice of Motion which had been submitted in accordance with the Council's Procedural Rules.

The Mayor stated that he had decided that both Notices of Motion would be dealt with at the meeting.

1 Housing Targets

Proposed by Councillor S Gardiner and Seconded by Councillor S Edgar

“This Council resolves to:

- 3.1 Ask the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council to write jointly to the Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government to firstly seek a reduction in the Housing Target and also to request the creation of a reasonable period of grace within which any shortfall in the Council's land supply may be set aside allowing the full weight of existing Local or Neighbourhood Plans to be applied.”

During the debate two amendments were proposed and seconded and accepted by the proposer and seconder of the Notice of Motion

Amendment 1

Addition of:

- 3.2 Agree that the housing target shall take into account Cheshire East's current planning policies around environmental protection, biodiversity and sustainability, along with a requirement for an increased proportion of social housing, and a requirement that key infrastructure and services such as drainage, flood prevention, and sustainable transport along with provision of primary health care, school places and other key local services are delivered ahead of development.

Amendment 2

Addition of:

- 3.3 Ask that all Cheshire East Council Group Leaders commit to lobbying the LGA (through the respective LGA political group leaders) to take this matter on as an official campaign.

RESOLVED:

That the Motion be approved as follows:

This Council

- 3.1 Asks the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council to write jointly to the Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government to firstly seek a reduction in the Housing Target and also to request the creation of a reasonable period of grace within which any shortfall in the Council's land supply may be set aside

allowing the full weight of existing Local or Neighbourhood Plans to be applied.

- 3.2 Agrees that the housing target shall take into account Cheshire East's current planning policies around environmental protection, biodiversity and sustainability, along with a requirement for an increased proportion of social housing, and a requirement that key infrastructure and services such as drainage, flood prevention, and sustainable transport along with provision of primary health care, school places and other key local services are delivered ahead of development.
- 3.3 Asks that all Cheshire East Council Group Leaders commit to lobbying the LGA (through the respective LGA political group leaders) to take this matter on as an official campaign.

2 National Cadet Forces Day

Proposed by Cllr A Harrison and Seconded by Cllr N Cook

"That this Council supports the national campaign to introduce a national 'Cadet Forces Day' on the Tuesday of Armed Forces week and proposes that Cheshire East Councils Leader, Deputy Leader and Leader of the Conservative Group sign a joint letter of support for the campaign to the Armed Forces Minister, Luke Pollard MP."

RESOLVED:

That the Motion be approved.

35 QUESTIONS

Cllr C O'Leary referred to the new pedestrian crossing, installed nine months ago, on the 40mph section of London Road, Lyme Green and stated that the lights and crossing were still not operational and asked if a date could be given when the crossing would be operational.

In response Cllr M Goldsmith, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, stated that the new traffic signals had been installed by the Developer and were ready to be switched on but there was currently a privately owned tree obscuring visibility to one of the signal heads which presented a safety issue. The Council had contacted the developer, who was leading on these discussions with the landowner, for a response. If a response were not forthcoming soon, the Council would utilise its own powers under the Highways Act to cut back the overhanging vegetation and claim the cost back from the landowner.

Cllr G Marshall referred to the Government announcement of support for the Middlewich Eastern Bypass and asked if reassurance could be given that there would be no last minute technical or financial issues which would get in the way of its completion and what was the Chair and the Highways and Transport Committee doing to ensure that any shortfalls could be mitigated.

Cllr M Goldsmith, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, stated that the Council remained committed to completing the Middlewich Eastern Bypass, and envisaged work starting in Spring 2026. The Council was looking into options to bridge any funding gaps, and a report was being prepared and would go to Highways and Transport Committee in September 2025.

Cllr S Bennett-Wake asked for information on funding for the Families Hubs and how it would be spent.

Cllr L Crane, Chair of Children and Families Committee, that a meeting had been set up with officers and more information would be provided following that.

Cllr R Kain asked why the planning department were insisting that an additional feasibility study needed to be carried out on Linley Lane in Alsager regarding flooding under the railway bridge, when funding had already been allocated.

Cllr M Goldsmith, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, undertook to provide a written response.

Cllr A Moran asked if the Council could increase the size of the grey recycling bin to encourage residents to recycle more and to increase the Council's recycling statistics.

Cllr H Seddon, Vice Chair of Environment and Communities Committee undertook to provide a written response.

Cllr H Whittaker asked if the Council could urgently review its communications strategy during multiagency responses to critical incidents, following recent event at Poynton Train Station.

In response Cllr Nick Mannion, Chair of Corporate Policy Committee, undertook to provide a written response.

Cllr S Gardiner referred to the high turnover of senior staff at the Council and asked what efforts were being taken to attract and retain the best people to the roles and if a cross-party Staffing Committee could be set up.

Cllr Nick Mannion, Chair of Corporate Policy Committee, undertook to provide a written response.

Cllr A Gage asked if the Council could explain why traders at Crewe Makers Market had been targeted regarding parking issues.

In response Cllr Mark Goldsmith, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, stated that the Council had a legal responsibility to ensure that roads were kept safe. The ticketed vehicles in questions were abandoned for around 10 minutes and the Council had a duty to ensure that the spaces are kept free and only used for dropping off equipment and moving on and parked appropriately elsewhere. This was part of the Enforcement Team's regular monitoring.

Cllr L Buchanan asked if the prioritisations scores for Crewe Road and Nantwich Road in Nantwich could be appraised with a view to reducing them from 40mph to 30mph and ensure that they were compliant with Active Travel Routes.

In response Cllr Mark Goldsmith, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, stated that the Council's 2022 Speed Management Strategy set out the Council's ambitions to promote safer road and compliance across the borough and that new reviews of roads of concern could be carried out.

Cllr N Cook asked if the green space maintenance of the Grange Way Estate, Elworth, could be reviewed in line with the Environment and Communities Committee decision in 2024.

Cllr H Seddon, Vice Chair of Environment and Communities Committee, undertook to provide a written response.

Cllr L Wardlaw asked if the Leader of the Council would agree that a staff survey should be carried out regarding staff culture.

Cllr Nick Mannion, Chair of Corporate Policy Committee, undertook to provide a written response.

Cllr M Brooks asked what steps were Cheshire East Council's Trading Standards taking to enforce the ban on disposable vapes.

In response Cllr H Seddon, Vice Chair of Environment and Communities Committee, stated that the Council had a zero-tolerance approach to the supply of single-use vapes and were working with partners to carry out enforcement visits, and so far, had seized over 2000 noncompliant vapes.

Cllr H Moss asked if the Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee could explain why not all 20mph School Safe Zones were indicated by flashing lights, and why didn't the primary school in Mobberley have these.

Cllr Mark Goldsmith, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, undertook to provide a written response.

Cllr J Place asked if the planning department could ensure that councillors understand what large scale developer's planning constraints were.

Cllr H Seddon, Vice Chair of Environment and Communities Committee, undertook to provide a written response.

Cllr T Dean asked what plans did the Council have to pay off over £100million DCG grant before the 1 April 2028 deadline.

Cllr Nick Mannion, Chair of Corporate Policy Committee, responded that the Government had extended the repayment timeline by two years, and the Council was working to improve in-house provision, to reduce travel costs and work with the Government to ensure future policies work for residents.

Cllr C Browne asked when would the Council be installing Acoustic Cameras in Alderley Edge.

In response Cllr Michael Gorman, Chair of Economy and Growth, stated that the Council was still pursuing this, and meetings had been held with partners and that a report was currently being written which will go to the Economy and Growth Committee. He stated that the Police and Crime Commissioner would like to extend this scheme across other parts of the borough if this is successful. Cllr Gorman undertook to provide a written response with more details.

Cllr R Fletcher asked if the criteria used by Cheshire East Council for highways maintenance differentiated in any way between residential roads and roads and footways in the centres of towns? He stated that Lawton Road in the centre of Alsager must be one of the worst maintained roads and footways in England and asked if there was a flaw in the criteria that had made Alsager wait so long for improvements.

In response Cllr Mark Goldsmith, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, stated that all reviews into highways and footways improvements were done on an equitable basis with the worst and busiest roads getting the funding based on legal requirements and stated that there was a lack of funding from central government.

The meeting commenced at 11.00 am and concluded at 4.28 pm

Councillor D Edwardes (Mayor/Chair)

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CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Council

held on Wednesday, 17th September, 2025 in the Tenants' Hall, Tatton Park,
Knutsford WA16 6QN (postcode for Sat Nav WA16 6SG)

PRESENT

Councillor D Edwardes (Mayor/Chair)

Councillor J Snowball (Deputy Mayor/Vice-Chair)

Councillors L Anderson, M Beanland, S Bennett-Wake, L Braithwaite, J Bratherton, M Brooks, D Brown, C Browne, L Buchanan, C Bulman, A Burton, K Burton, R Chadwick, C Chapman, D Clark, J Clowes, P Coan, A Coiley, N Cook, S Corcoran, L Crane, T Dean, B Drake, S Edgar, K Edwards, H Faddes, A Farrall, R Fletcher, A Gage, S Gardiner, M Goldsmith, M Gorman, E Hall, A Harrison, G Hayes, A Heler, S Holland, D Jefferay, R Kain, A Kolker, N Mannion, G Marshall, R Moreton, R Morris, H Moss, C O'Leary, J Pearson, J Place, B Posnett, J Priest, B Puddicombe, P Redstone, J Rhodes, J Saunders, H Seddon, M Sewart, M Simon, L Smetham, G Smith, J Smith, J Smith, M Warren, H Whitaker, F Wilson, J Wray and B Wye

36 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors S Adams, R Bailey, J Bird, M Edwards, E Gilman, K Hague, M Houston, T Jackson, A Moran, M Muldoon, J Pratt, L Smith, R Vernon and L Wardlaw.

37 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was noted that Councillors may personally know some of the public speakers in attendance at the meeting.

In the interest of openness, Councillor G Hayes declared that he was an unremunerated director of the East Cheshire Chamber of Commerce.

38 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

The following public speakers spoke in relation to Item 4 – Cheshire and Warrington Devolution and the Mayoral Combined Authority.

Mr Paul Colman spoke in support of the report and its recommendations on behalf of South and North Cheshire Chamber of Commerce, which represented businesses across the region. Mr Colman stated that for businesses to prosper and local communities to benefit, especially those experiencing disadvantage and deprivation, devolution was essential. Mr Colman stated the benefits of devolution and how it would provide the necessary tools to invest in what mattered most locally such as

infrastructure, skills, and integrated transport. Devolution would allow businesses to grow and create jobs and opportunities for local communities. Mr Colman urged Members to support devolution.

Mr Robert Douglas spoke in opposition of devolution and stated that it would introduce an additional tier of local government, and which would disadvantage Cheshire East residents. Mr Douglas highlighted his concerns in relation to devolution including the ability for an Elected Mayor to introduce a Mayoral Precept which would place an additional financial burden upon local households. Mr Douglas stated that supporting devolution would further risk the Council's financial stability and urged Members to oppose the recommendations set out within the report, which he felt were a negligent use of time and resource.

Ms Wendy Whittaker-Large spoke in opposition of devolution and stated that the public devolution consultation had received negative feedback from residents, Ms Whittaker-Large requested that Members took this on board when considering this item and its recommendations. Ms Whitaker-Large stated that the costs of a Mayoral Authority would fall to the public to pay for through increases in council tax and that the projections for economic growth were negligible.

Mr Henry Brooks spoke in support of devolution and stated that devolution would provide an opportunity for businesses across the county to prosper and would have a significant impact on future generations in securing investment in the local area.

Mr Jasbir Dhesi OBE stated that he spoke not just as a representative from the skills and local educational sector, but as someone who had worked in Cheshire East for more than a decade and expressed that he was aware of the talent, ambition and the potential that existed in local communities. He stated that devolution would provide the chance to shape a skills system which was designed to benefit businesses. Mr Dhesi stated that local businesses including Bentley and AstraZeneca needed a system that was agile, responsive, and locally led and that devolution would allow for the co-designing of training with employers, support adults to retrain and upskill and create real pathways for young people into meaningful careers.

Ms Helen Tonks MBE stated she was a member of the Cheshire and Warrington Business Advisory Board, a UK Government Export Champion and MBE recipient for services to business and exports. Ms Tonks stated that small businesses would benefit from devolution and would create a local environment in favour of small businesses. Ms Tonks expressed that a vote against devolution could mean more uncertainty, less stability, less control, less investment. She urged Members to vote for devolution.

Mr David Briggs stated that as a previous Lord Lieutenant of Cheshire, he cared deeply about the prosperity of Cheshire and was saddened that

potential overseas investors were not encouraged to invest in the area as they were only introduced to the Mayors of Manchester and Liverpool. Mr Briggs highlighted that devolution would open up opportunities for new investment and existing businesses would benefit from skills programmes and opportunities to create more enterprise zones. Devolution would mean that Cheshire could attract investment to become equal to the two city neighbours.

Mr Steve Purdham spoke in support of devolution and stated that as a resident and member of the Cheshire and Warrington Business Advisory Board, devolution was important in the region and was the single most powerful step that could be taken for growth. Devolution would mean businesses in Cheshire would get the same opportunities whether they were urban or rural. Mr Purdham stated that the business community fully supported devolution.

39 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CHESHIRE AND WARRINGTON JOINT COMMITTEE: CHESHIRE AND WARRINGTON DEVOLUTION PROGRAMME AND THE MAYORAL COMBINED AUTHORITY

Consideration was given to the report on the creation of the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority.

As part of the formal consenting process to proceed with a Combined Authority and associated devolution powers, functions and investment, approval was required from each of the Councils - Cheshire East Borough Council, Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council and Warrington Borough Council.

The Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee, at its meeting on 29 August 2025, had endorsed the proposed recommendations for approval by each of the Councils in accordance with their own constitutional requirements.

The recommendations were proposed and seconded and following debate a recorded vote was requested with the following results: -

FOR

Councillors L Anderson, S Bennett-Wake, L Braithwaite, J Bratherton, M Brooks, D Brown, L Buchanan, C Bulman, A Burton, C Chapman, D Clark, A Coiley, N Cook, S Corcoran, L Crane, B Drake, D Edwardes, K Edwards, H Faddes, M Goldsmith, M Gorman, D Jefferay, R Kain, N Mannion, G Marhsall, J Place, B Posnett, J Priest, B Puddicombe, J Rhodes, H Seddon, G Smith, J Snowball, M Warren, F Wilson and B Wye.

AGAINST

Councillors M Beanland, C Browne, K Burton, R Chadwick, J Clowes, P Coan, T Dean, S Edgar, A Farrall, R Fletcher, A Gage, S Gardiner, E Hall, A Harrison, G Hayes, A Heler, S Holland, A Kolker, R Moreton, R Morris,

H Moss, C O'Leary, J Pearson, P Redstone, J Saunders, M Sewart, M Simon, L Smetham, Julie Smith, John Smith, H Whitaker and J Wray.

NOT VOTING

None

The motion was declared carried with 36 votes for, 32 against and 0 not voting.

RESOLVED: That Council

- 1 approve in principle the establishment of a Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority in accordance with existing legislation under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (as amended).
- 2 delegate authority to the Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service), or their authorised deputy, to consent to the making of the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority Order 2026 in accordance with s.110(1)(b) Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.
- 3 Agree to hold inaugural mayoral elections in May 2027.
- 4 Subject to approval of the above recommendations, to create a new joint committee, to be known as the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority Shadow Board, to provide strategic direction and interim arrangements in the best interests of the establishment of a Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority.
- 5 Approve the Terms of Reference for the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority Shadow Board, as outlined in Appendix B to the report, and delegate authority to the Constituent Members of the Shadow Board to carry out the roles and functions as set out in the Terms of Reference.
- 6 Note that the Constituent Members for the Shadow Board will be the Leaders and Deputy Leaders of each constituent council, as set out in the proposed Terms of Reference.
- 7 Amend the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee Terms of Reference, as outlined in Appendix C to the report, to reflect the revised function of the Joint Committee following establishment of the Combined Authority Shadow Board.
- 8 Appoint new membership to the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee in accordance with the Joint Committee Terms of Reference.

- 9 Delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader, to take all other steps necessary to establish and implement the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority.

40 **THE COUNCIL'S DECISION-MAKING ARRANGEMENTS**

Consideration was given to the report on whether the Council should move to a Leader and Cabinet form of decision making with effect from the Council's Annual General Meeting on 13 May 2026.

The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill proposed the abolition of the Committee system form of governance and that all local authorities which operated committee systems of decision making would be required to move to Leader and Cabinet systems within one year of the enactment of the legislation.

It was anticipated that the effective date of the legislation would in or around Autumn 2025. The report proposed that the Council move to a Leader and Cabinet system before the this date as such a decision would proactively respond to the non-statutory Best Value Notice, received in May 2025, which required the Council to ensure it had effective governance processes in place that enabled decisions and improvements at pace; and also to the LGA Peer Review recommendation to urgently review the decision making framework, streamline current decision making arrangements and give more time and emphasis to scrutiny.

The recommendations were proposed and seconded and following debate were put to the vote.

RESOLVED: That Council

- 1 approve a change in the Council's governance arrangements from a Committee System to a Leader and Cabinet system, pursuant to Section 9K of the Local Government Act 2000, with this change taking effect at the Council's Annual General Meeting on 13 May 2026.
- 2 agree the design principles set out in Appendix 2 to the report.
- 3 appoint a member Task and Finish Group
 - a. the membership of which to be determined by the Council's political group leaders, which will be empowered to drive-forward necessary arrangements associated with the introduction of a Leader and Cabinet model of decision-making; and
 - b. with powers to make recommendations to the Council's Corporate Policy Committee upon required constitutional and other arrangements related to this.

- 4 note the key constitutional documents and tasks, as set out in Appendix 3 to the report, which will need to be prepared in advance of the formal change of governance arrangements being implemented.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 4.41 pm

Councillor D Edwardes (Mayor/Chair)

COUNCIL MEETING – 15 OCTOBER 2025**RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FINANCE SUB COMMITTEE: FIRST FINANCIAL REVIEW OF 2025/26 – APPROVAL OF SUPPLEMENTARY REVENUE ESTIMATES AND SUPPLEMENTARY CAPITAL ESTIMATES****Recommendations:****Council is recommended to**

- 1 approve the Supplementary Revenue Estimate Request for Allocation of Additional Grant Funding over £1,000,000 as per Annex 1, Section 3, Table 1.**
- 2 approve the Supplementary Capital Estimate Request for Allocation of Additional Grant Funding over £1,000,000 as per Annex 1, Section 4, Table 5.**

Link to Finance Sub Committee Report and Annexes 1, 2 and 3:
[Finance Sub Committee 10 Sep 2025 - First Financial Review of 2025/26](#)

Extract from the minutes of the meeting of the Finance Sub Committee held on 10 September 2025.

19 FIRST FINANCIAL REVIEW OF 2025/26

The committee considered the report which set out the First Financial Review 2025-26 position based on income, expenditure and known commitments as at the end of June 2025. The First Financial Review 2025-26 (FR1) reported a forecasted revenue outturn position as an adverse variance of £3.1m (after the application of planned use of Exceptional Financial Support £25.3m).

It was noted that the value of additional mitigation plans to improve the overall forecast, which had not been reflected as delivered at FR1, were estimated at £2.8m, giving an improved overall forecast of £0.3m overspend. However, the committee noted that should the mitigations not materialise, alongside further risks identified within the report, the forecasted overspend position could increase to £18.7m adverse.

The committee agreed that the overall forecasted revenue overspend of £3.1m remained a significant financial challenge for the Council when considered in addition to the planned use of EFS of £25.3m. It was noted that the Council's reserves (£26.1m) were insufficient to cover the forecasted revenue outturn for 2025-26 without further action. The committee queried the level of confidence

in mitigations materialising before the end of the financial year to ensure a balanced budget could be set in February 2026. It was clarified that work had begun on the Second Financial Review 2025-26 and early indications suggested a stable position. Management controls were in place to ensure mitigation plans remained on track. This included monthly monitoring meetings with senior managers and finance partners and regular briefings within Directorate Management Team meetings and with the Corporate Leadership Team. The committee was assured that should the S151 become significantly concerned with progress and direction of travel, Members would be consulted at the earliest opportunity.

The committee noted that there was ongoing recruitment to fill a number of key vacancies across the Council. Use of consultants had been utilised on an interim basis, particularly within the Change Management Office, to deliver the transformation needed, at pace. Work was underway to add additional, permanent, resource to key services including Children's and Families in order to support the Council's improvement journey to 'Good'.

The committee took the opportunity to thank the S151 Officer and his finance team for their continued hard work and efforts. It was agreed that the FR1 position highlighted significant financial challenges for the Council and Members agreed that they would need to make difficult decisions in the future to set a balanced budget and manage risks.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Finance Sub Committee

1. Note the factors leading to a forecast adverse Net Revenue financial pressure of £3.1m against a revised budget of £440.5m (0.7%).
2. Note the contents of Annex 1, Section 2 and review progress on the delivery of the MTFS approved budget policy change items, the RAG ratings and latest forecasts, and to understand the actions to be taken to address any adverse variances from the approved budget.
3. Note the in-year forecast capital spending of £205.5m against an increased capital budget of £208.5m. This was adjusted at outturn following an approved MTFS budget of £173m.
4. **Recommend to Council to approve the Supplementary Revenue Estimate Request for Allocation of Additional Grant Funding over £1,000,000 as per Annex 1, Section 3, Table 1.**
5. Note that the Adults and Health, Children and Families and Environment and Communities committees will be asked to approve the

Supplementary Revenue Estimate Requests for Allocation of Additional Grant Funding over £500,000 and up to £1,000,000 as per Annex 1, Section 3, Table 2.

6. Note the Capital Virements above £500,000 up to and including £5,000,000 as per Annex 1, Section 4, Table 4 to be approved in accordance with the Council's Constitution.
7. **Recommend to Council to approve the Supplementary Capital Estimate Request for Allocation of Additional Grant Funding over £1,000,000 as per Annex 1, Section 4, Table 5.**
8. Note the available reserves position as per Annex 1, Section 5.

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Annex 1, Section 3

Table 1 – Council Decision

3.6. Supplementary Revenue Estimate Requests for Allocation of Additional Grant Funding over £1,000,000

Committee	Type of Grant	£m	Details
Environment and Communities	Extended Producer Responsibility Grant (Specific Purpose)	2.591	This is an increase on the MTFS forecast position. This grant is a policy approach where producers are given significant responsibility (financially and physically) for the management of their products and packaging at the end of their useful life. This shifts the burden of waste management away from local authorities and places it on those that create the waste. The fees collected from the producers are distributed to local authorities to help them manage packaging waste collection and recycling programs.
Economy and Growth	Enterprise Cheshire & Warrington (ECW): Skills Bootcamp (Specific Purpose)	1.371	This is a new grant from the Department for Education. It is for the delivery of and management of Skills Bootcamps in geographical and neighbouring areas in agreement with relevant local authorities. This element of skills bootcamp is being delivered through Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington.

Table 2 – Committee Decision

3.7. Supplementary Revenue Estimate Requests for Allocation of Additional Grant Funding over £500,000 up to £1,000,000

Committee	Type of Grant	£m	Details
Children and Families - Schools	Delivering Better Value in SEND (Specific Purpose)	0.767	This is a new grant from the Department for Education. Its purpose is to support the ability to carry out relevant data analysis and assurance required during Phase 1 of the programme, as part of overall participation in the Delivering Better Value (DBV) in SEND programme.
Children and Families – Schools	Early Years Expansion Grant (Specific Purpose)	0.634	This is a new grant from the Department for Education. This grant provides funding to support the early years sector as it prepares to deliver the final phase of expansion of the working parent entitlement from September 2025.

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Table 4: Requests for Supplementary Capital Estimates (SCEs) and Capital Virements

Committee / Capital Scheme	Amount Requested £m	Reason and Funding Source
Service Committee are asked to approve the Supplementary Capital Estimates above £500,000 up to and including £1,000,000		
Highways & Transport		
A500 Corridor OBC Update	0.903	Final tranche of DfT development grant funding to fund the production of an update OBC Update for the A500 scheme. The A500 Scheme is one of 42 schemes under review by DfT which should report back this Autumn. No spend on this grant will be incurred ahead of the review's anticipated conclusion
Total Supplementary Capital Estimates Requested	0.903	
Service committee are asked to note Capital Budget Virements above £500,000 up to and including £5,000,000 for approval by Relevant Member(s) of CLT and Chief Finance Officer in consultation with Chair of the relevant Committee and the Chair of Finance Sub-Committee		
Corporate		
ICT Hybrid Model	0.750	Virement from Infrastructure Investment Programme to ICT Hybrid Model to support Gemini Phase 2
Highways & Transport		
A500 Corridor OBC Update	0.764	Virement from "A500 Dualling" project in respect of acquiring land. This land requirement now falls under "A500 Corridor OBC update" .
Total Capital Virements requested	1.514	
Total SCEs and Virements	2.417	

Table 5: Requests for Supplementary Capital Estimates (SCEs) for Recommendation

Committee	Amount Requested £m	Reason and Funding Source
Finance Sub Committee are asked to recommend to Council the approval of the Supplementary Capital SCEs over £1,000,000		
Highways & Transport		
Public Transport Infrastructure	0.700	To add BSIP Phase 4 grant of £2,122,646 to the Capital Programme, distributed over four projects.
Bus Priority	0.623	
Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI)	0.750	
Macclesfield Bus Station	0.050	
Total Supplementary Capital Estimates Requested	2.123	
Total Supplementary Capital Estimates and Virements	2.123	

Section 5: Reserves

Management of Council Reserves

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OPEN

Council

Date: 15 October 2025

Political Representation on the Council's Committees

**Report of: Kevin O'Keefe, Interim Director of Law and Governance
(Monitoring Officer)**

Report Reference No: C/12/25-25

Ward(s) Affected: All

For Decision

Purpose of Report

- 1 To report to Council changes in political group membership and to secure a resolution from Council in respect of the political proportionalities of the Council, and committee memberships.

Executive Summary

- 2 The law requires that each relevant Council decision-making body must be politically balanced as far as reasonably practicable, and that there is an appropriate total balance of Committee seats across the political structure of the Council of the whole.
- 3 This report addresses the changes in political group memberships since the last report to Council in May 2025. The previous vacant Wilmslow Lacey Green seat is now represented by Councillor Khumi Burton who is a member of the Conservative Group. Councillor Becky Posnett is now a non-grouped independent member.
- 4 In line with the Council convention, the proportionalities calculations in respect of the vacant Macclesfield Central seat will be reviewed at the Council meeting following the expected by-election.
- 5 The Appendix to the report sets out the revised political proportionalities on the Council's committees.

- 6 The report recommendation seeks a resolution of Council, as required by legislation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the political group and other representation, as set out in the Appendix to this report, and the methods, calculations and conventions used in determining this, as outlined in the report, be adopted and the allocation of places to Committees be approved.

Background

- 7 The Appendix sets out the political representation on committees, this being based on the political structure of the Council as a whole.
- 8 The proportionalities in the Appendix are based, as far as is reasonably practicable, upon the following methods and conventions:
- applying the relevant percentage to each body
 - rounding up from 0.5 and above, and rounding down below 0.5
 - where rounding up would result in more than one political Group receiving an additional seat, and the total allocation of seats exceeding what is required, the Group having the lowest residual entitlement will not receive an additional seat
 - where the required number of members for a decision-making body cannot be achieved using the above methods and calculations, the political group having the largest residual entitlement for that body will be entitled to be awarded the additional place (e.g. if one group is entitled to 4.25 places, and another group is entitled to 1.48 places, the first group will be awarded 4 places on the body in question, and the second group will be awarded 2 places)
 - where two or more political Groups have an identical residual percentage, the agreement of one Group to sacrifice a seat will be observed. Alternatively, the matter will be resolved by the toss of a coin.

Consultation and Engagement

- 9 In preparation of the Appendix to this report, officers liaised with the Council's political groups.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 10 To comply with primary legislation, the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and supporting secondary legislation, Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990.

Other Options Considered

- 11 Legislation requires that the Council's political representation on committees, and its political structure, be reviewed upon a change in political group membership. Whilst one option might be for the Council to take no action this is not an option which Council is advised to take.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal/Governance

- 12 The main rules on political proportionality are set out in S. 15(5) Local Government Housing Act 1989, and they are to be applied sequentially. The Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, made pursuant to the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, make additional provisions in respect of the political group and non-grouped representation on a local authority's committees, in relation to the overall political composition of the Council. The legislation applies to overview and scrutiny committees and the decision-making committees and sub committees of the Council.
- 13 The legislation requires that, where proportionality applies, and seats are allocated to different political groups, the authority must abide by the following principles, so far as is reasonably practicable:
- Not all of the seats can be allocated to the same political group (i.e. there are no single-group committees).
 - The majority of the seats on the body are to be allocated to a political group with a majority membership of the authority.
 - The total number of seats on all ordinary committees and sub committees allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the proportion on the full Council.
 - The proposals contained in this report meet the requirements of the legislation.
 - The 1990 Regulations require political group leaders to notify the Proper Officer of the groups' nominations to the bodies in question.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 14 There are no direct financial implications.

Human Resources

- 15 There are no direct human resource implications.

Risk Management

- 16 Failure to comply with the Act and Regulations when appointing its committee memberships would leave the Council open to legal challenge.

Impact on other Committees

- 17 It is a legislative requirement that each of the Council's decision-making bodies are politically balanced, as far as reasonably practical, and that there is an appropriate total balance of committee seats across the political structure.

Policy

18

Commitment 3: An effective and enabling council

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 19 There are no direct implications for equality, diversity and inclusion.

Other Implications

- 20 There are no other implications.

Consultation

Name of Consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Statutory Officer (or deputy):</i>			
Chris Benham	Deputy s151 Officer	06/10/25	07/10/25
Kevin O'Keefe	Acting Monitoring Officer	30/09/25	30/09/25

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Brian Reed brian.reed@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix A – Political Proportionalities
Background Papers:	The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer.

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APPENDIX A

**CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL - POLITICAL PROPORTIONALITIES ON ALL BODIES
(other than those to be appointed on an ad-hoc basis)**

Based upon the following:

Con: 34; Lab: 28; Ind: 13; NGI (non-Grouped independent Members) 7*

Committee	Con.	Lab.	Ind.	NGI	Total Allocated
Scrutiny cttee	6	4	2	1	13
Corporate Policy cttee	5	5	3	0	13
Economy and Growth cttee	6	4	2	1	13
Highways and Transport cttee	6	4	2	1	13
Env. and Communities Cttee	5	5	3	0	13
Children and Families cttee	5	5	3	0	13
Adults and Health cttee	5	4	3	1	13
Finance Sub Committee	3	3	2	0	8
Audit and Governance Committee	4	3	1	1	9
Strategic Planning Board	5	4	2	1	12
Northern Planning Committee	5	4	1	2	12
Southern Planning Committee	5	4	1	2	12
Licensing Committee	6	5	1	3	15
Appointment Committee	3	3	1	1	8
Committee	Con.	Lab.	Ind.	N.G.I	Total
Total Places allocated	69	57	27	14	167
Percentage entitlement	41.463414 (41.46)	34.146341 (34.15)	15.853658 (15.85)	8.5365853 (8.54)	100
Proportional Entitlement	69.2382 (69)	57.0305 (57)	26.4695 (27)	14.2618 (14)	167
Difference	0	0	0	0	0

*In line with the Council convention, this will be reviewed at the December meeting of Council after the by-election in Macclesfield (Central) Ward.

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COUNCIL MEETING – 15 OCTOBER 2025**RECOMMENDATION FROM AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE:
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
2024-25****Recommendation:**

That full Council receive the Annual Report of the Audit and Governance Committee 2024-25.

Link to the to the Audit and Governance Committee Report:

[Audit and Governance Committee 29 Sep 2025 - Annual Report of the Audit and Governance Committee](#)

Extract from the minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 29 September 2025

**36 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
2024-25**

The committee considered the Annual Report which summarised the work of the committee during the 2024/25 municipal year. The report outlined how the committee had discharged its responsibilities in accordance with its Terms of Reference set out within the Council's Constitution, providing independent assurance on the Council's governance, risk management, and control frameworks. Key areas of focus included oversight of internal and external audit processes, financial reporting, standards arrangements, and the Annual Governance Statement.

Members acknowledged the breadth of work undertaken and the positive impact of the Committee's assurance functions. It was agreed that the page number to the Terms of Reference for the committee would be included alongside a link to the Council Constitution.

It was suggested that further detail regarding Member Training and Development should be included within the report. It was noted that work was underway to review the Member Training and Development Plan, as approved by A&G in July 2025 following the decision of Full Council to move to a Cabinet/Leader form of governance which would be reviewed by the Audit and Governance Committee. The role of the Audit and Governance Committee would be reviewed as the Council transitioned to its new form of governance.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Audit and Governance Committee

1. Note the draft Annual Report of the Audit and Governance Committee 2024/25 and agree the final version which will be presented at the October 2025 meeting of Council.

Audit and Governance Committee Annual Report 2024/25

Working for a **brighter future**  together



Introduction

As the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee, I am pleased to present this detailed report on the work of the Committee during 2024/25.

The report informs full Council of the broad range of work which has been considered over the year to support the Committee in fulfilling its Terms of Reference and provides assurance on the effectiveness of the Committee in meeting its purpose.

This report helps to demonstrate the key role which is undertaken by the Audit and Governance Committee and the positive contribution it makes to the Council's overall governance.

The Committee's current Terms of Reference were developed in accordance with the CIPFA guidance, and the detailed Committee Work Programme, designed to ensure that they are fulfilled, is subject to review at each meeting of the Committee.

I would like to thank all those who have contributed to the Committee meetings over the last year, supporting the Committee's work with varied reports and presentations, which are the culmination of much more preparation and work undertaken 'behind the scenes'.

I look forward to future meetings of the Committee, and to working with the members and officers who support the Committee to ensure that we continue to provide independent assurance on the control environment and the governance framework, especially as the Council continues to tackle the significant financial pressures through its transformation journey.

Councillor Michael Beanland

Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee



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1. Role of the Audit and Governance Committee

The Audit and Governance Committee is a key component of the Council's corporate governance arrangements. The Committee provides independent assurance to the Council through:

- Promotion of high standards of ethical behaviour by developing, maintaining and monitoring Codes of Conduct for Councillors and co-opted Members (including other persons acting in a similar capacity).
- An independent and high-level focus on audit, (internal and external) assurance and reporting arrangements that underpin good governance and financial standards.
- Independent review and focus on the adequacy of the Council's governance, risk management, and control frameworks and oversees the financial reporting and annual governance processes.

The role and responsibilities of the Council's Audit and Governance Committee are set out in written terms of reference which are regularly reviewed by the Committee to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and recommended good practice. The terms of reference are set out in the Council's Constitution which is published on the website along with all the agendas, minutes and supporting papers.

Constitution:

[Cheshire East Council Constitution 2025](#) (Chapter 2, Para 4, Page 139)

Audit and Governance Committee Meetings:

[Browse meetings - Audit and Governance Committee | Cheshire East Council](#)

The Committee's responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following matters with a view to bringing any relevant issues to the attention of the Council:

- Oversight of governance, risk management and internal control frameworks
- Oversight of the integrity of the Council's financial statements
- Oversight of the external auditor's performance, objectivity and independence
- Oversight of the performance of the internal audit function

To help the Committee meet its responsibilities, each year, management provide training sessions for the Committee on subject areas within their remit. During 2024/25, this included induction training for substitute/new members as required through the year.

A session was provided to members of the Committee in May 2024 on internal audit, external audit, annual governance statement, risk management, whistleblowing and the code of conduct. Furthermore, in October 2024, members of the Committee attended a detailed workshop session on internal audit. In February 2025, the

Committee received training on the annual governance statement and the role of the Committee.

2. Meetings and Membership

During the 2024/25 municipal year, the Audit and Governance Committee met on 6 occasions and was comprised of 11 members:

- Councillor Michael Beanland (Chair)
- Councillor Ken Edwards (Vice-Chair)
- Councillor Sue Adams
- Councillor Brian Drake
- Councillor Alison Heler
- Councillor Chris Hilliard
- Councillor Garnet Marshall
- Councillor Patrick Redstone
- Councillor Judy Snowball
- Mr Ron Jones (Independent Co-opted Member)
- Ms Jennifer Clark (independent Co-opted Member)

The Audit and Governance Committee meetings were well attended with substitutes occasionally used when a member could not be present. All substitutes were provided with training prior to attending meetings, and during 2024/25, substitute members were used on 4 occasions:

- Councillor Andrew Kolker
- Councillor Dawn Clark
- Councillor Mike Sewart
- Councillor Rachel Bailey

Committee Attendance statistics:

[Committee attendance - Audit and Governance Committee, 1 April 2024 - 31 March 2025 | Cheshire East Council](#)

The Committee was also routinely attended by the following officers and external parties:

- Governance, Compliance and Monitoring Officer
- Executive Director of Resources, Section 151 Officer
- Director of Finance (Deputy Section 151 Officer)
- Finance Manager (Strategic Finance & Accounting)
- Head of Audit, Risk & Assurance
- Internal Audit Manager
- Democratic Services Officers
- External Auditors (Ernst & Young)

3. How the Committee discharged its responsibilities during 2024/25

Key Committee Activities	May 2024	July 2024	Sept 2024	Dec 2024	Feb 2025	Mar 2025
Governance, Risk and Control						
Received a report on Information Governance and Security – Review of 2023/24			•			
Received a progress update on the Annual Governance Statement actions	•			•		
Received and approved the draft Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 (Updated version received February 2025)		•			•	
Received the Monitoring Officer Annual Report 2023/24				•		
Reviewed the Audit and Governance Committee Annual Report 2023/24			•	•		
Considered the Annual Risk Management Report 2023/24		•				
Received a Risk Management Update	•					
Received the Bi-Annual Update on Information Requests						•
Received a report on Progress against CIPFA Review Actions		•				
Received a report on Whistleblowing Arrangements – 2023/24 Update and Policy Development			•			•
Internal Audit						
Reviewed Internal Audit plan progress reports and Internal Audit Charter	•				•	
Received the Internal Audit Annual Opinion Report 2023/24		•				
Received and approved the Internal Audit Plan 2025/26						•
Received a verbal update on progress against actions raised in the Section 106 audit report		•		•		

Key Committee Activities	May 2024	July 2024	Sept 2024	Dec 2024	Feb 2025	Mar 2025
External Audit						
Received the External Audit Planning Report 2023/24				•		
Received the Interim Completion Report				•		
Considered the Certification of Housing Benefit Subsidy Claim and Teachers Pensions Return 2023/24						•
Annual Statement of Accounts						
Received the 2023/24 Draft Pre-audited Statement of Accounts and Outturn Update		•				
Received the Draft Pre-audited Financial Statements – Wholly Owned Companies 2023/24 and Outturn Update 2023/24		•				
Received the Companies Audited Financial Statements, External Audit Findings and Action Plan 2022/23	•					
Received the Companies Audited Financial Statements, External Audit Findings and Action Plan 2023/24						•
Received the updated Draft Statement of Accounts 2023/24	•				•	
Related Functions						
Received a report on the Localism Act 2011 – General Dispensations			•			
Received the Annual Complaints and Compliments Report 2023/24		•				
Standards Arrangements						
Received an update on Standards related matters via the Annual Monitoring Officer Report				•		

Key Committee Activities	May 2024	July 2024	Sept 2024	Dec 2024	Feb 2025	Mar 2025
Other Matters						
Update on the Governance Arrangements of the Dedicated Schools Grant Management Plan 2024/25 to 2030/31	•		•			
Received an update on the Revised 0-25 Partnership Governance Structure and Strategy			•			
Received a B4B/Unit 4 Health check Update			•			•
Received a report on School Catering – Decision of Children and Families Committee						•

4. Governance, Risk and Control

The Audit and Governance Committee oversaw the production of the Council's Annual Governance Statement (AGS) and received updates regarding progress on the AGS significant issues.

The Committee reviewed and approved the final 2022/23 AGS in March 2024 and approved the removal of the significant governance issue related to the Safeguarding Children's Partnership from future Statements.

As part of the production of the 2023/24 AGS, the Committee reviewed and approved the draft AGS at the July 2024 meeting. The Committee received an update on progress made with the significant issue actions at the December 2024 meeting. During discussion on the AGS, the Committee agreed that the significant governance issues in relation to Health and Social Care Integration, and Planning should remain to ensure that the Committee retained oversight of these areas.

The 2023/24 AGS remained in draft at the end of 2024/25 pending the completion by the external auditors of their work on the financial statements. At the September 2025 meeting of the Committee, the external auditors confirmed that they had completed their work on the 2023/24 financial statements subject to the Council including a Going Concern Statement within the documentation. A report detailing that this requirement had been completed was brought to the September 2025 meeting, and the Final 2023/24 AGS was approved.

The Committee considered the effectiveness of the Council's risk management arrangements, the control environment, and associated anti-fraud and anti-corruption arrangements through the regular review of risk management update reports along with receiving the Annual Risk Management Report.

The Committee received updates on counter fraud arrangements and investigations via the internal audit updates and the annual internal audit report.

During 2024/25, full Committee briefings were established to facilitate open conversations in relation to agenda items prior to the formal meeting. This allows Members to raise any questions that they may have and ensure a clear understanding of the often-complex papers being presented to them. Furthermore, post Committee debriefs are held between the Chair, Vice Chair, and key officers to reflect upon what went well and what could be improved upon.

These developments have been beneficial to the Committee which has clarity of purpose and is fully focussed on its assurance role and associated responsibilities. There is regular engagement between Members and officers in the form of training and confidential briefings on sensitive matters, which has helped to develop and build trust and support.

5. Internal Audit

The Audit and Governance Committee reviewed and approved the annual internal audit plan for 2024/25 at its March 2024 meeting. The plan closely aligns with the

Council's strategic risk register and corporate plan and identified priority work to be completed in the first half of the year along with additional areas for consideration in quarters 3 and 4.

The Committee received regular update reports from the Head of Audit, Risk & Assurance. Such reports enable the Committee to monitor the progress of the internal audit plan, discuss key findings and the plans to address them.

The Committee also considered the 2023/24 Annual Opinion of the Head of Audit, Risk & Assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the control environment and reviewed the effectiveness of internal audit at its July 2024 meeting.

In addition to the regular internal audit items, the Committee also received updates during the year on the progress made in relation to the implementation of the Section 106 audit recommendations following the issue of a 'no assurance' opinion report in September 2023.

6. External Audit

Ernst and Young were appointed as the Council's external auditor commencing for the 2023/24 audit period. The Audit and Governance Committee received progress reports from the external auditor throughout the 2024/25 year.

The Committee received the external audit planning report for 2023/24 in December 2024 along with the interim completion report.

In February 2025, the Committee received the external audit interim completion report where they presented their interim findings.

7. Annual Statement of Accounts

The Audit and Governance Committee received and reviewed the draft Statement of Accounts 2023/24 along with a presentation on the accounts by the S151 Officer in June 2024. The Committee received an updated draft Statement of Accounts along with the external audit interim completion report for 2023/24 in February 2025.

The external auditor confirmed they had not been in a position to obtain sufficient evidence to conclude the financial statements of the council were free from material and pervasive misstatement before the backstop date, therefore, anticipating a disclaimed audit opinion for 2023/24 would be issued. In addition, at the February 2025 meeting, the external auditor also confirmed they had received four objections from a local elector on the 2023/24 financial statements and until these had been considered, the final audit opinion could not be given.

8. Related Functions

The Audit and Governance Committee received the 2023/24 Annual Complaints report in July 2024 which included a summary of actions from decision notices issued by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

The Committee received a report in September 2024 providing an update on the council's arrangements for information management, information security and requests for information received under relevant legislation during 2023/24.

9. Standards Arrangements

The Committee received assurance on key aspects of the Monitoring Officer's responsibilities in the annual Monitoring Officer report which was received in December 2024. The 2023/24 annual report covered areas including but not limited to the Members' Code of Conduct, register of gifts and hospitality and training and development.

10. Hearing Sub-Committee

No meetings of the Hearing Sub-Committee were held during 2024/25.

11. Audit and Governance Committee Priorities for 2025/26

There are several key areas that the Committee will need to consider and progress during 2025/26 in addition to its core business.

- During 2025/26 the committee will complete a self-assessment against the CIPFA Position Statement 2022 along with a skills assessment of Committee members to identify any training and development needs.
- The Committee are engaged with the Children and Families committee to receive assurances over its plan to develop an effective SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Policy and management of the DSG (Dedicated Schools Grant) deficit.
- The Committee will support the review and refresh of the Council's arrangements for raising concerns/whistleblowing, resulting in an updated policy and wider communication and engagement of the arrangements.
- The Committee will continue to consider the Council's Transformation Programme, its impacts and any implications this may have for the Committee in relation to governance, risk, and financial control.
- The Committee has an ongoing interest in financial controls and will consider how the effectiveness of these controls can be reported to them.
- The Committee will seek assurance on the implementation of the Procurement Act in relation to the process of contracts and tender negotiations.

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COUNCIL – 15 OCTOBER 2025**NOTICES OF MOTION****Submitted to Council in Accordance with the Council Procedural Rules****1 Historical Rural Signage****Proposed by Councillor R Chadwick and Seconded by Councillor R Bailey**

This Motion seeks to safeguard Cheshire East's historic rural signage—our fingerposts, milestones, and traditional wayfinding features. These signs are more than practical markers; they are part of our shared heritage, linking us to past generations and shaping the distinct character of our countryside.

Unfortunately, many are being lost through neglect, removal, or replacement with modern alternatives. Their disappearance erodes local identity, diminishes our landscape, and removes valuable historical records.

By auditing, preserving, and where necessary restoring these signs, we can protect an irreplaceable part of our cultural fabric. Working with parish councils, volunteers, and heritage groups, Cheshire East can show real leadership in valuing our history while maintaining safe and effective highways.

Council notes:

- That Cheshire East has a rich legacy of historic rural signage, including fingerposts, milestones, and traditional wayfinding features, which form an irreplaceable part of our cultural and historic environment.
- That these signs provide not only practical navigational aid but also represent tangible records of our past, linking present communities with their history and contributing to the distinctiveness and character of the rural landscape.
- That across the country such signage is disappearing due to neglect, decay, removal for perceived safety reasons, or replacement with modern, standardised signs. This trend is further exacerbated by reliance on satellite navigation technology, which cannot replace the cultural value or visual identity offered by traditional signage.

Council recognises:

- That the loss of rural signage results in:
 - The erosion of local character and sense of place.
 - The disappearance of valuable historical records reflecting travel, trade, and settlement patterns.
 - A weakening of community identity and a diminished physical link to our shared heritage.
- That many heritage groups, volunteers, and local communities are working to restore and maintain such features, often without formal support or resources.
- That organisations such as Historic England have issued guidance on balancing highway safety requirements with the preservation of heritage street furniture.

Council resolves:

1. To acknowledge the historic importance of Cheshire East's rural signage and commit to safeguarding this aspect of our cultural heritage.
2. To request that the Highways and Transport Committee, in consultation with heritage and conservation officers, conduct an audit of surviving rural signage assets within the Borough.
3. To explore opportunities to adopt a preservation and maintenance programme for historic signs, working alongside volunteer groups, heritage organisations, and parish councils.
4. To ensure that, wherever possible, historic signage is restored, maintained in situ, or—if removal is unavoidable—recorded and, where appropriate, relocated to local museums or heritage centres.
5. To promote greater public awareness of rural signage heritage, encouraging residents to report damaged or at-risk signs.

**Schedule of Urgent Decisions Made by the Chief Executive
following consultation with Members**

Date	Summary of decision	Decision on behalf of
15 August 2025	<p>Appointment of Interim Monitoring Officer</p> <p>The post of Monitoring Officer (MO) was created as part of the Senior Officer Restructure exercise undertaken in 2024. The market for MOs is highly competitive and it was anticipated that it would be a challenging recruitment exercise.</p> <p>Following a recruitment exercise, the permanent role was offered to one candidate who subsequently accepted another role. The Council therefore undertook a further recruitment exercise to appoint to an Interim MO position.</p> <p><u>Decision</u> That Kevin O’Keefe be appointed as the Interim Monitoring Officer from 1 September 2025 for an initial period of 6 months.</p>	Council

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