

## Cabinet Agenda

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**Date:** **Tuesday, 10th April, 2018**

**Time:** **2.00 pm**

**Venue:** **Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields, Middlewich Road,  
Sandbach CW11 1HZ**

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The agenda is divided into 2 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 in the 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 and non-pecuniary interests in any item on the agenda.

#### **3. Public Speaking Time/Open Session**

In accordance with paragraph 3.33 of the Cabinet Procedure Rules, a period of 10 minutes is allocated for members of the public to address the meeting on any matter relevant to the work of the Cabinet. Individual members of the public may speak for up to 5 minutes but the Chairman or person presiding will decide how the period of time allocated for public speaking will be apportioned where there are a number of speakers. Members of the public are not required to give notice to use this facility. However, as a matter of courtesy, a period of 24 hours' notice is encouraged.

Members of the public wishing to ask a question at the meeting should provide at least three clear working days' notice in writing and should include the question with that notice. This will enable an informed answer to be given.

**4. Questions to Cabinet Members**

A period of 20 minutes is allocated for questions to be put to Cabinet Members by members of the Council. Notice of questions need not be given in advance of the meeting. Questions must relate to the powers, duties or responsibilities of the Cabinet. Questions put to Cabinet Members must relate to their portfolio responsibilities.

The Leader will determine how Cabinet question time should be allocated where there are a number of Members wishing to ask questions. Where a question relates to a matter which appears on the agenda, the Leader may allow the question to be asked at the beginning of consideration of that item.

**5. Minutes of Previous Meeting** (Pages 5 - 22)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

**6. Notice of Motion - Licensing of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles**  
(Pages 23 - 28)

To consider a report on the motion.

**7. Transport for the North - Response to Consultation** (Pages 29 - 52)

To consider a report on progress with the governance arrangements and strategic planning for Transport for the North. The report seeks approval of Cheshire East Council's response to Transport for the North's consultation on the draft Strategic Transport Plan.

**8. Housing Strategy 2018-2023** (Pages 53 - 204)

To consider a report which seeks approval to adopt the Housing Strategy for 2018-2023 following consultation.

**9. Homelessness Strategy** (Pages 205 - 276)

To consider the Council's Homelessness Strategy for 2018-2021.

**10. Accommodation with Care: Care Fees Review** (Pages 277 - 292)

To consider a report informing Cabinet of the findings of a review of Accommodation with Care.

**11. Care at Home: Care Fees Review** (Pages 293 - 312)

To consider a report informing Cabinet of the findings of a review of Care at Home.

**12. West Park Museum; Future Accommodation of Collections** (Pages 313 - 328)

To consider a report which seeks approval for a project to safeguard the future of West Park Museum and its collections.

13. **Sale of Land at Dixon Drive, Chelford** (Pages 329 - 336)  
To consider a report on the proposed sale of land at Dixon Drive, Chelford.
14. **Procurement of the Council's Energy Supply** (Pages 337 - 342)  
To consider a report on the procurement of a fully managed service whereby the provider purchases energy for and on behalf of the Council via a compliant framework.
15. **3-year Microsoft Desktop Licence Agreement 2018** (Pages 343 - 352)  
To consider a report which recommends the renewal of the Microsoft Enterprise Desktop Licence Agreement.

**THERE ARE NO PART 2 ITEMS**

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**CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the **Cabinet**  
held on Tuesday, 13th March, 2018 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,  
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

**PRESENT**

Councillor L Wardlaw (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors A Arnold, P Bates, J Clowes, J P Findlow, J Saunders and  
D Stockton

**Members in Attendance**

Councillors Rhoda Bailey, E Brooks, B Burkhill, S Corcoran, L Durham,  
S Edgar, D Flude, S Gardiner, M Grant, S Hogben, O Hunter, B Moran,  
S Pochin, J Rhodes and G Williams

**Officers in Attendance**

Kath O'Dwyer, Jan Willis, Mark Palethorpe, Linda Couchman, Dan Dickinson,  
Sara Barker, Sean Hannaby, and Paul Mountford

**Apologies**

Councillor Rachel Bailey and Frank Jordan

In the absence of the Leader of the Council, the meeting was chaired by  
the Deputy Leader, Councillor L Wardlaw.

In opening the meeting, the Chairman took the opportunity to refer to the  
publication of the Government's consultation response on taking forward  
the vision of a Crewe Hub for HS2.

**108 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors E Brooks, S Gardiner, S Hogben and S Pochin declared  
disclosable personal interests in relation to Items 20 and 23 of the agenda  
as directors of ASDVs.

**109 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION**

Jane Smith asked if the Council would commit to funding a robust  
pollinator strategy to ensure that all urban spaces, including new housing  
developments, were designed and maintained in ways that maximised  
benefit to pollinators. The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Planning and  
Regeneration responded that the Council did not currently have a specific  
pollinator strategy and understood that it was not a statutory requirement  
to produce one. However, he undertook to look at the Council's current  
practices in terms of supporting the aims of the National Pollinator  
Strategy.

Sue Helliwell referred to a question she asked at a previous meeting regarding replacement play equipment for Wayside Linley Park, Alsager, and asked for an assurance for residents that the Park would receive the necessary investment. The Portfolio Holder for Environment responded that there was no S106 funding available but officers would be willing to work with local residents to explore funding options.

Sylvia Dyke referred to the loss of three major employers in Alsager with the sites being redeveloped for housing which would lead to more congestion and a loss of visual amenity in the area.

Rob Vernon referred to the condition of the road in Becks Lane, Macclesfield which he likened to a gravel track. The Portfolio Holder for Environment undertook to look into the matter.

Brendan O'Brien, speaking in relation to the proposed withdrawal of free school transport for children attending Knutsford Academy, asked if Cabinet believed it was reasonable for parents to be expected to walk 11.6 miles a day taking their children to school. The Portfolio Holder for Children and Families responded that it was the responsibility of all parents to get their children to school safely and she outlined a number of ways that this could be done.

Richard Walton asked about the Council's policy for recording member attendance at meetings on its website and whether the Council would advise Congleton Town Council to pursue a similar policy. The Chairman confirmed that Cheshire East Council published its member attendance figures online but that Mr Walton needed to address any questions regarding Congleton Town Council to that Council.

Daniel Rush sought clarification of the amount of privately arranged funding required for the placement of refugee families from Syria in Cheshire East. He had also expected his application to have come to this Cabinet meeting. The Chairman responded that a report would be submitted to Cabinet in April or May. She also briefly outlined the Council's advice on the funding required for placements.

David Latham referred to the recent traffic commissioner's decision to grant a full operating licence with conditions to ANSA on Cledford Lane, Middlewich, and outlined a number of traffic issues involving refuse vehicles in Middlewich including speeding, 'jumping' traffic lights and using country lanes and estate roads. The Portfolio Holder for Environment asked Mr Latham to provide evidence of the practices referred to so that the matter could be investigated. The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Communication had also noted the issues and undertook to raise the matter at his next meeting with the MD.

Carol Jones asked what support would the Council provide for people under 65 with mental health problems. The Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Integration responded that the Council was working with

its health partners on a wide-ranging consultation looking at the future of mental health care provision across the Borough and re-abllement services.

Michael Unett referred to traffic problems at the junction of Linley Lane / Linley Rd, Alsager and sought assurances that a scheme to install traffic lights would go ahead this summer. The Portfolio Holder for Environment was unable to provide a guarantee on the timing of the scheme but undertook to look into the matter.

At the conclusion of public questions, the Chairman thanked everyone concerned.

**110        QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS**

Councillor D Flude asked if the Council had sought or received advice from the Department of Housing and Local Government in relation to the matters currently under investigation at the Council and if so, when members could expect such advice to be made available to them. The Chairman undertook to provide a written response.

Councillor S Hogben asked for an update on how the New Homes Bonus funding was to be used and who might benefit from it. The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Communication responded that a further meeting of the body considering the matter had been scheduled for 26<sup>th</sup> March and that the body would be bringing forward proposals which would be reported through the overview and scrutiny process to Cabinet.

Councillor S Corcoran expressed disappointment that the report requested at the Special Council meeting into the extra costs of the ANSA site had been delayed. He understood the reason for the delay in view of the police investigation but asked why the potential illegality had not been picked up before the Special Council meeting. The Acting Chief Executive, in responding, stated that she was unsure as to why aspects of concern had not been identified at the time but indicated that a number of matters of concern had since been the subject of a targeted audit programme which had led to the matter being referred to the police.

Councillor Corcoran also referred to the disciplinary process followed by the Police and Crime Commissioner in relation to the suspension of the Chief Constable and to recent advice from the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Policy and Legal Services as to why the PCC's approach towards full disclosure of the reasons for suspension could not be adopted by the Council in relation to its own disciplinary process. Councillor Corcoran felt that the Portfolio Holder's advice did not apply to the former Monitoring Officer who was no longer employed by the Council. The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Policy and Legal Services undertook to consider the matter and provide a written response.

**111 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2018 be approved as a correct record.

**112 AVAILABLE WALKING ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAMME - PHASE 2A**

Cabinet considered a report on the outcome of the community engagement on Phase 2A of the Available Walking Routes to School Programme.

Councillor S Gardiner spoke on this matter as local ward member.

**RESOLVED**

That Cabinet

1. confirms that the route between Mobberley and Knutsford Academy and Knutsford Academy, The Studio is deemed an 'available' walking route. Therefore free home to school transport will be withdrawn for current and new pupils living in Mobberley within 3 miles of the Academy, effective from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018;
2. acknowledges the feedback from the public engagement and agrees that the proposed withdrawal of transport shall be amended as detailed in section 3.6 of the report in order to address some of the concerns raised;
3. agrees that a one-off subsidy (calculated at £192 per annum) be paid to all affected families for the remainder of their child's attendance at their respective schools (this is the agreed rate for pupils at secondary schools excluding 6<sup>th</sup> form); and
4. authorises officers to undertake all necessary actions to implement the decisions above.

**113 EDUCATION TRAVEL POLICIES**

Cabinet considered a report on the outcome of consultation on a new suite of travel policies for implementation from September 2018, together with the Council's response to the issues raised and proposals for policy variations.

**RESOLVED**

That Cabinet

1. notes the outcomes of the consultation and the responses to this;
2. approves that three of the new suite of policies, as revised, be implemented with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018. These three policies are: Compulsory School Age Travel Policy, Education Travel Behaviour Code, and Education Travel Payment Policy;
3. approves that the fourth policy; Education Travel Policy Appeals and Complaints be applied from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 in order that it applies for any Appeals and Complaints relating to travel for the academic year starting September 2018 under the new policies; and
4. notes the proposed mitigation measures.

**114 STRATEGIC SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT FUND (SSIF) - AWARD OF GRANT**

Cabinet considered a report seeking approval to receive external funding to the value of £638,452 as recently awarded to Cheshire East Council as the named lead in a successful Round 2 SSIF bidding process.

**RESOLVED**

That Cabinet

1. approves a supplementary revenue estimate, in accordance with the Council's Finance Procedure Rules, where services wish to undertake an activity not originally identified in the budget or incur additional revenue expenditure on an existing activity where this is fully funded; and
2. approves the receipt of the allocated DfE grant to the value of £638,452 into the Council accounts on behalf of both Cheshire East Council and Cheshire West & Chester Authorities & Teaching School Alliances.

**115 CHILDREN'S HOME COMMISSIONING**

Cabinet considered a report seeking approval to go out to tender following a difficult mobilisation of the residential care contract from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 and the subsequent termination of the contract.

**RESOLVED**

That Cabinet

1. agrees to go back to the market and other local authorities to re-commission up to five local residential Children's Homes;

2. authorises the Acting Executive Director of People, in consultation with the Children and Families Portfolio Holder, to award the Children's Homes contract; and
3. instructs the Acting Director of Legal Services to enter in to the contract with the successful bidder and any ancillary legal documentation required including the granting or taking of leases, underleases and licence agreements.

116        **NOTICE OF MOTION - LOCAL PLAN HOUSING LAND SUPPLY**

Cabinet considered the following motion which had been moved by Councillor S Corcoran and seconded by Councillor N Mannion at the Council meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2017 and referred to Cabinet for consideration:

*"That this Council notes that*

- 1        *in a recent planning appeal case the Inspector considered whether Cheshire East Council had a 5-year housing land supply and said, "To my mind, even though the calculated supply includes a 20% buffer, the 5-year supply should be considered to be marginal and, potentially, in doubt" and said "I conclude that it would be both cautious and prudent in the circumstances of this case to regard policies for the supply of housing to be considered not up-to-date, thus engaging the tilted balance of paragraph 14 of the Framework."*
- 2        *the Local Plan assumes a housing need of 1800p.a.*
- 3        *a recent government consultation included a figure for housing need in Cheshire East of 1142 p.a.*
- 4        *if the 5-year housing land supply calculation were based on a housing need of 1142p.a. then Cheshire East would have a secure and robust 5-year housing land supply*
- 5        *in order to take advantage of the lower figure for housing need in calculating a 5-year housing land supply, the Local Plan will need to be refreshed*

*This Council requests that a report be presented to the next Cabinet meeting setting out the work required to refresh the Local Plan to ensure that Cheshire East has a secure and robust 5-year housing land supply."*

Councillor S Corcoran spoke on this matter as the proposer of the motion.

The report before Cabinet addressed the issues raised in the motion.

**RESOLVED**

That Cabinet notes the explanation given in the report why a recent indicative figure of housing need for Cheshire East published alongside the recent Government consultation paper '*Planning for the right homes in the right places*' cannot be substituted for the current Local Plan housing figure for the purposes of calculating 5 year housing supply.

117        **NOTICE OF MOTION - UK100**

Cabinet considered the following motion which had been moved by Councillor S Corcoran and seconded by Councillor S Hogben at the Council meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2017 and referred to Cabinet for consideration:

*"This Council acknowledges;*

- *the historic commitments made at the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris toward the future of renewable energy;*
- *our responsibility to help secure an environmentally sustainable future for our residents and in relation to the global effects of anthropogenic climate change.*

*This Council subsequently notes that;*

- *despite the Paris Agreement placing no binding commitments upon Local Government institutions, we as a Council can still play our part in the global movement towards a sustainable energy future;*
- *additional benefits of the development of green industries include the potential to create well-paid, high-skilled employment locally, regionally and nationally;*
- *the UK100 Agreement pledge outlines the ambition for the UK regions to exceed the Paris Climate targets through achieving 100% 'clean energy' usage by 2050.*

*In light of this, this Council therefore resolves to;*

- *match the ambitions of the UK100 Agreement through pledging to achieve 100% clean energy across Cheshire East Council's full range of functions by 2050 (defined as 70% from fully renewable sources [Wind, Water, Solar], with the remainder from other low CO<sub>2</sub> forms of energy production, in line with ambitious post-2040 energy mix forecasts);*
- *work in partnership with our residents and business community to deliver against the commitments made nationally and internationally at the 2015 Paris Summit;*
- *turn these commitments into reality through developing a 'route map' to a sustainable future, working together with Cheshire*

*East's business, educational and residential communities as part of an integrated approach to a shared sustainable future."*

Councillors S Corcoran and S Hogben spoke on this matter as the proposer and seconder respectively of the motion.

The report before Cabinet addressed the issues raised in the motion.

**RESOLVED**

That the Executive Director of Place present an Energy Strategy for Cabinet to consider in November 2018.

118      **NOTICE OF MOTION - M6 JUNCTION 17**

Cabinet considered the following motion which had been moved by Councillor B Moran and seconded by Councillor G Baggott at the Council meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2017 and referred to Cabinet for consideration:

*"At M6, Junction 17, the delivery of the Local Plan depends on the ability of people to make reliable journeys on Highways England's strategic road network and that the adjacent local roads can cope with the additional traffic that will need to safely access and exit the Junction into the future. The arrival of the HS2 Hub at Crewe will place more demands on the road network in this area, but the growth of traffic on the M6 should not be at the expense of more congestion on local roads which will affect local journeys.*

*Future investment by Highways England into a major upgrade of Junction 17 should be a key consideration of Transport for the North as they commence their process of developing a Strategic Transport Plan for the North which will be the basis for determining Highways England's future programme. Consultation on this Plan starts in the New Year and I propose that the Portfolio Holder for the Environment, in conjunction with the Executive Director for Place, include within the Council's response, support for an early inclusion of a major scheme to improve capacity at Junction 17 in Highways England's next investment period.*

*This Motion reflects the question raised by Fiona Bruce MP, in the House of Commons on 30 November 2017. This concerned the need for improvements at Junction 17 to be prioritised in Transport for the North's Strategic Transport Plan, in order for Cheshire East Council to deliver continuing high levels of economic growth."*

Councillor B Moran spoke on this matter as the proposer of the motion.

Councillor S Corcoran spoke as a local ward member.

The report before Cabinet addressed the issues raised in the motion.

**RESOLVED**

That Cabinet notes that the issue of capacity at Junction 17 of the M6 and a potential future upgrade to the junction will be addressed in the Council's response to the current consultation on TfN's Strategic Transport Plan, to be considered at the April meeting of Cabinet.

**119        NOTICE OF MOTION - MAINTENANCE OF HIGHWAYS IN CREWE**

Cabinet considered the following motion which had been moved by Councillor J Rhodes and seconded by Councillor S Brookfield at the Council meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2017 and referred to Cabinet for consideration:

*"This Council should review its current asset led management approach to the repair and maintenance of roads and footpaths in the light of its failure to adequately maintain the highways in the principal town of Crewe.*

*Furthermore, it should institute an open and transparent system for funding and spending on highways, as is currently used for local highways groups. This would prevent any possible accusation of favouritism towards any particular town or ward. The annual assessment of highways and the list of areas to be maintained should also be made available to Councillors and the public.*

*Lastly, a comprehensive scheme of repair for highways in Crewe should be drawn up and submitted to the relevant scrutiny committee, alongside an estimate of the 3 year budget requirement."*

Councillor J Rhodes spoke on this matter as the proposer of the motion.

The report before Cabinet addressed the issues raised in the motion.

**RESOLVED**

That Cabinet

1. continues to endorse the evidence-led Asset Management approach for the management and maintenance of the Borough's highway network;
2. notes the Council's performance in achieving the highest banding for the Department of Transport's Incentivised Funding element; and

3. supports the proposals to share the annual highway programmes of work on the Council's website, together with the guidance and factsheets explaining the Council's Asset Management approach.

**120 NORTH WEST CREWE PACKAGE - PROCUREMENT STRATEGY**

Cabinet considered a report setting out the proposed procurement strategy for the package of improvements in support of the development masterplan for Leighton; and the procurement path for delivery of the North West Crewe Package.

**RESOLVED**

That Cabinet

1. notes that the latest total scheme cost estimate for the North West Crewe infrastructure package is £42 million;
2. approves the procurement strategy as set out in paragraph 3.4 for delivery of the North West Crewe Package;
3. authorises the Executive Director Place in consultation with the Director of Legal Services and the Portfolio Holder for Environment to enter into any necessary agreements (or supporting agreements) for the provision of any services required to proceed with all necessary technical work and consultations for the submission of a detailed planning application for the scheme works;
4. subject to the appropriate planning approvals for the scheme works and the associated strategic housing sites and the necessary financial approvals by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Communications and the Interim Executive Director of Corporate Services (Section 151 Officer) being in place, authorises that the scheme be procured in line with the recommendations set out in the accompanying Procurement Strategy Report at Appendix 1 to the report and authorises the Executive Director Place in consultation with the Acting Director of Legal Services and the Portfolio Holder for Environment to procure the North West Crewe Package using the SCAPE Civil Engineering and Infrastructure Framework;
5. notes that a Cabinet report will be coming forward with further recommendations on the funding strategy and which will set out the approval process for the release of funding to deliver the North West Crewe Package of works and that the funding from Cheshire East resources is subject to affordability and is therefore included in the Addendum to the approved Capital Programme;
6. subject to approval of the funding strategy, the appropriate planning approvals for the scheme works and the associated strategic housing

sites and the necessary financial approvals by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Communications and the Interim Executive Director of Corporate Services (Section 151 Officer) being in place, authorises the Executive Director Place in consultation with the Acting Director of Legal Services and the Portfolio Holder for Environment to enter into any necessary agreements (or supporting agreements) for the delivery of the North West Crewe Package under a Delivery Agreement set out in the procurement route under paragraph 3.4 using the SCAPE Civil Engineering and Infrastructure Framework; and

7. notes the continued use of the Council's nominated designer using the reach-back arrangement within the current Highway Services Contract to provide design and provision of any services within the scope of the relevant Highway Services Contract and subject to the necessary funding approvals to proceed with the completion of the detailed design and works information, documents and drawings to enable delivery of the works to deliver the North West Crewe Package of new infrastructure works.

**121      NORTH WEST CREWE PACKAGE - APPROVAL TO PROCEED  
WITH THE COMPULSORY PURCHASE OF LAND REQUIRED TO  
DELIVER THE SCHEME**

Cabinet considered a report recommending that Cabinet resolve to use compulsory purchase powers to acquire land to facilitate the construction of the North West Crewe Package scheme and associated works to the existing highways network.

**RESOLVED**

That Cabinet

1. authorises the appointment of external solicitors as the Council's additional legal support for the delivery of the scheme acting on behalf of the Council and under the direction of the Acting Director of Legal Services;
2. authorises the Head of Assets to continue negotiations and seek to conclude terms to acquire the land and rights (or extinguish the same) required for the North West Crewe Package Scheme by voluntary agreement and to instruct the Acting Director of Legal Services to draft the necessary documents and to execute such documents including any required for temporary access or use of land, subject to the necessary financial approvals being in place;
3. authorises the Head of Assets to negotiate and approve the payment of relevant and reasonable professional fees incurred by landowners and others with compensable interests in taking professional advice in connection with the acquisition of their interests required for the scheme and related compensation claims. Also in advancing the

development or implementation of the North West Crewe Package Scheme, subject to the necessary financial approvals being in place;

4. subject to a positive resolution of the Strategic Planning Board to grant planning permission for the scheme and the necessary financial approvals by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Communication and the Interim Executive Director of Corporate Services (Section 151 Officer) being in place, authorises the use the powers of compulsory purchase to undertake the acquisition of land and new rights required for the construction of the North West Crewe Package Scheme, issue "requisition for information" notices on occupiers and land owners and to authorise:
  - (a) The making of an order (or orders) under Sections 239, 240, 246, 250 and 260 of the Highways Act 1980 and all other powers as appropriate for the compulsory purchase of land and rights required for the construction of the North West Crewe Package as shown on drawing Nos B1832065-DWG-0100-003 and B1832065-DWG-0100-004 ("the CPO");
  - (b) The making of a Side Roads Order (or orders) under Sections 8, 14 and 125 of the Highways Act 1980 and all other necessary powers to improve, stop up existing highways, construct lengths of new highway and stop up and provide replacement private means of access as required to deliver the North West Crewe Package ("the SRO");
  - (c) The Executive Director of Place in consultation with the Director of Legal Services to make any amendments necessary to the contemplated orders arising as a result of further design work or negotiations with landowners and statutory undertakers or affected parties or for any connected reasons in order to enable delivery of the North West Crewe Package;
  - (d) The Executive Director of Place in consultation with the Director of Legal Services to take all appropriate actions to secure the confirmation of the contemplated orders including:
    - (i) To take all necessary action to secure the making, submission to the Secretary of State for confirmation and (if confirmed) implementation, of the Side Roads Order (SRO) and the CPO ("the Orders") including the publication and service of all relevant notices and for the Director of Legal Services to secure the presentation of the Council's case at any Public Inquiry and the subsequent service of Notices to Treat and Notices of Entry or, as the case may be, the execution of General Vesting Declarations;

- (ii) To negotiate and enter into agreements and undertakings, prior to or following the making of the Orders, with the owners of any interest in the land effected by the Orders and any objectors to the confirmation of the Orders setting out the terms for the withdrawal of objections to the Orders including where appropriate, the inclusion in and/or exclusion from the CPO of land or new rights or the amendments of the SRO and to authorise the Head of Assets to negotiate and the Director of Legal Services to draft, agree and execute all necessary legal documents to record any such agreements and/or undertakings;
  - (iii) To authorise the Director of Legal Services to appoint suitable counsel to advise and represent the Council at any Public Inquiry held in respect of the Orders and to provide legal support to the project team through the process;
- (e) The Executive Director of Place in consultation with the Director of Legal Services to agree compensation for the acquisition of land and rights acquired compulsorily and in the event that any question of compensation is referred to the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber) to authorise the Director of Legal Services to take all necessary steps in connection with the conduct and, if appropriate, settlement of such proceedings, subject to the necessary financial approvals being in place.
5. authorises the Acting Director of Legal Services in consultation with the Executive Director of Place to approve and execute all legal documentation that is considered necessary to give effect to the above.

122        **LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN REFRESH**

Cabinet considered a report on an updated draft Local Transport strategy, which was now proposed for public consultation.

**RESOLVED**

That Cabinet

1. approves the draft Local Transport Plan strategy (Appendix 2 to the report), which includes the 'Issues and Options' elements of the South East Manchester Multi Modal Strategy (Appendix 3) and a draft high level Parking Strategy (Appendix 4);
2. agrees that these documents be published for Borough-wide public consultation, in accordance with the Engagement Plan (Appendix 1);

and agrees that all final consultation materials will be approved by the Executive Director of Place;

3. notes that the outcomes of the consultation and any subsequent amendments to the Local Transport Plan or associated strategies will be reported to Cabinet for consideration;
4. notes the proposals for reporting to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as at paragraph 7.9 of the report; and
5. notes that the development of delivery programmes for transport, during the life of the Local Transport Plan, will be informed by the consultation; and that proposed delivery programmes will be reported to Cabinet as part of a final draft Local Transport Plan in Autumn 2018.

**123 BETTER CARE FUND - AGREEMENT OF SECTION 75 FOR  
2018/19 - 19/20**

Cabinet considered a report seeking authority to enter into two new S75 Partnership Agreements from 1st April 2018 with local health partners.

**RESOLVED**

That Cabinet

1. authorises the Executive Director of People in consultation with the Cabinet member for Adult Social Care and Integration to agree terms and enter into two S75 Agreements (Pooled Fund) one with NHS Eastern Cheshire CCG Clinical Commissioning Group (ECCG); and one with NHS South Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group (SCCCG) for an initial period of one year (2018-19);
2. authorises the Council to enter into a pooled budget(s) for 2018/19 that meet(s) the minimum required budget. In 2018/19 uplifts to all four funding sources mean that the revised Pool will be £31.331m. Disabled Facilities Grant is expected to be £1.89m, the minimum contributions from the Clinical Commissioning Groups are expected to be £11.104m from South CCG and £12.337m from East CCG and the Improved Better Care Fund allocation is £6.0m;
3. authorises the Executive Director of People in consultation with the Cabinet member for Adult Social Care and Integration to decide to extend the agreement for a period of one further year (2019/2020) and that the Council enter into pooled budget(s) agreement for 2019/20, subject to there being a continuing national requirement to operate the Better Care Fund and Improved Better Care Fund as a Section 75 pooled budget agreement for that period;

4. authorises the Better Care Fund Governance Group to continue oversight and responsibility for reviewing the delivery of the agreement; and
5. delegates authority to the Executive Director of People in consultation with the Cabinet member for Adult Social Care and Integration to make decisions and agreements on behalf of the Council in relation to the commissioning of schemes funded by the Better Care Fund.

**124 A DYNAMIC PURCHASING SYSTEM FOR CARE AND SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY AND OR MENTAL HEALTH**

Cabinet considered a report seeking approval to establish a Dynamic Purchasing System for the future procurement of care and support services for individuals eligible for Adult and Children's social care support.

**RESOLVED**

That Cabinet

1. endorses the co-production of a Learning Disabilities and Mental Health Needs 'Dynamic Purchasing System' with statutory partners, neighbouring local authorities, Voluntary Community Faith Sector organisations, and other providers;
2. approves the development of a Dynamic Purchasing System in order to procure and award contracts for Learning Disabilities and Mental Health services, for both Adults and Children's social care; and
3. delegates authority to award contracts to the Executive Director of People.

**125 CONGLETON LEISURE CENTRE - REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

Cabinet considered a report seeking approval to appoint a preferred bidder as the Development Partner for the redevelopment of the leisure centre in Congleton. The Appendix to the report contained exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 and would be considered under Part 2 of the agenda.

**RESOLVED**

That Subject to the consideration of the Appendix to the report in Part 2 of the agenda, Cabinet

1. notes the findings of the Congleton Leisure Centre, Development Partner Procurement: Final Tender Evaluation Report (Appendix A);

2. approves the selection of Bidder C as the Preferred Bidder;
3. authorises the Executive Director Place in consultation with the Interim Executive Director of Corporate Services and the Acting Director of Legal Services to clarify, specify and optimise the Preferred Bidder's final tender to enable the Council to enter into a legally binding contract with the Preferred Bidder;
4. upon the satisfactory completion of the clarification, specification and optimisation stage, delegates the final decision to award a contract to the Preferred Bidder to the Portfolio Holder for Health in consultation with the Executive Director Place, Interim Executive Director of Corporate Services and the Acting Director of Legal Services;
5. notes that the budget required for the development of the leisure centre is identified in the Council's capital programme approved in February 2017;
6. authorises the Executive Director Place in consultation with the Interim Executive Director of Corporate Services to negotiate a reduction in the management fee payable to the incumbent operator, Everybody Sport and Leisure, in recognition of the expected transformation of the operating performance; and
7. notes the potential implications for Facilities Management, Public Realm and Highways budgets in future years.

**126        REVIEW OF ALTERNATIVE SERVICE DELIVERY VEHICLES  
(ASDVS)**

Cabinet considered a report summarising the key recommendations following a review of the Council's alternative service delivery vehicles. The Appendices to the report contained exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 and would be considered under Part 2 of the agenda.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Communication emphasised that he was committed to ensuring that the proposed shareholder committee was made up of those with the skills and experience appropriate to delivering the role the committee needed to deliver, even if that meant extending the membership of the committee beyond the Cabinet membership. However, in light of advice contained in the report that executive functions could only be discharged by executive members, there was a need to amend slightly the recommendations in the report. The amended recommendations were read out at the meeting.

**RESOLVED**

That subject to the consideration of the Appendices to the report in Part 2 of the agenda, Cabinet

1. notes the contents of the report, the findings and recommendations of the Edge report set out in Appendices A and B, and endorses the need for an ASDV change programme;
2. approves the creation of a Cabinet Committee named the Shareholder Committee which will give advice and direction to the Cabinet member(s) with legal responsibility for making ASDV shareholder decisions; and
3. instructs the Shareholder Committee to design and oversee the implementation of an ASDV change programme.

**127 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED**

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items pursuant to Section 100(A)4 of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 and the public interest would not be served in publishing the information.

Note: with the agreement of the Monitoring Officer and the Chairman in accordance with paragraph 48.4 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules, Councillors Rhoda Bailey, B Burkhill, D Flude, M Grant and B Moran remained in the meeting and received the Part 2 papers.

**128 CONGLETON LEISURE CENTRE - REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

Cabinet considered the confidential appendix to the report in Part 1 of the agenda.

**RESOLVED**

That having considered the Appendix to the report, Cabinet reaffirms its decision on this matter.

**129 REVIEW OF ALTERNATIVE SERVICE DELIVERY VEHICLES (ASDVS)**

Cabinet considered the confidential appendices to the report in Part 1 of the agenda.

**RESOLVED**

That having considered the Appendices to the report, Cabinet reaffirms its decision on this matter.

The meeting commenced at 1.00 pm and concluded at 4.10 pm

Councillor L Wardlaw (Chairman)

## Cabinet

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**Date of Meeting:** 10 April 2018

**Report Title:** Notice of Motion - Licensing of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Ainsley Arnold: Housing, Planning and Regeneration Portfolio Holder

**Senior Officer:** Frank Jordan, Executive Director - Place

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### 1. Report Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to respond to the Notice of Motion considered at the Council meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018 in relation to the proposed Safeguarding Bill:

*'This Council regrets that the Licensing of Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Bill was 'talked out' by Sir Christopher Chope (Christchurch) (Con) in Parliament, and calls on all of Cheshire East's Members of Parliament to re submit the Bill.*

*Cheshire East Children and Family's Scrutiny report on Child Sexual Exploitation recommended Taxi and Private Hire Licensing, it is disappointing that this important legislation was talked out.'*

### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1. That Cabinet

- 2.1.1. Agrees that the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Planning and Regeneration writes to Secretary of State for Transport asking Government to consider how to close the loopholes and potential for abuse left open as a result of cross border hiring and will ask local MPs to support the above letter to the Secretary of State.

### 3. Reason for Recommendation

- 3.1. Council has referred this matter to Cabinet for consideration.

### 4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. The paper outlines only one option in response to the Notice of Motion presented to Council.

## 5. Background

- 5.1. Members may recall that the issue of Safeguarding in relation to taxi licensing has previously been considered by Cabinet. This resulted in a number of letters being sent to the relevant Ministers at the Department for Transport (and others, including the local MPs) to set out the Council's concerns.
- 5.2. The current legislation relating to taxi licensing was written in 1847 and 1976. There are therefore various matters and situations that currently arise in today's world that were not envisaged when the legislation was written. These matters include:
  1. The increase in cross border hiring (where a vehicle licensed by one Council works partly or wholly in the area of a different Council)
  2. The increase in technology and the impact this has on the way vehicles are hired.
- 5.3. Following the Deregulation Act 2015 (which made cross border hiring easier by allowing sub-contracting between operators licensed by different Councils) and the increase in app based booking systems (such as Uber and Halo etc) cross border hiring has increased. This means that vehicles and drivers licenced by Councils other than Cheshire East can lawfully work in our area without meeting our requirements or conditions. When the vehicle is licenced by a different Council our powers of enforcement/compliance are limited to offences against legislation only (ie we cannot enforce policy requirements or conditions).
- 5.4. Cheshire East Council would not know which vehicles, licensed by other Councils, are operating in our area; this is seen as a potential risk in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and trafficking, as licensed drivers may seek to exploit this situation for criminality. This risk is not limited to CSE or trafficking and could extend to other areas of illegality, such as drug dealing or drug distribution. However, it is not possible to quantify this risk or establish if there is a risk to Cheshire East. We have had no complaints or information that would suggest this is currently going on.
- 5.5. Notwithstanding, the reports that followed the CSE investigations in Rochdale and Rotherham did identify the taxi trade as an area of risk.
- 5.6. The cross border hiring of vehicles has the potential to create further anomalies. For example, it is possible for Cheshire East Council to refuse a licence to an applicant but for that person to then be granted a licence by a

differently Council whose standards may not be as robust. That person can work exclusively in Cheshire East when we have taken a decision not to licence them.

- 5.7. The Licensing of Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Bill sought to counter these issues by placing a duty on Licensing Authorities to:
  1. Record decisions in a database
  2. Search the database
  3. Report concerns about out of area drivers
  4. Dealing with reported concerns about out of area drivers
- 5.8. Whilst these are important proposals, the Bill did not provide a definition of key terms used, such as; 'has threatened, abused or insulted another person'. And provided no framework to guide how Councils might interpret what should and should not be disclosed. It would therefore be open to individual Councils to determine whether or not to share information. This may lead to inconsistencies and the potential that important information is not shared.
- 5.9. The Local Government Association is working on a national database where all Councils can record decisions to revoke, refuse or suspend licences.
- 5.10. When Cabinet has previously considered these matters, they have favoured the following suggestions to improve standards across England and Wales:
  1. A set of national minimum standards for licensed vehicles and powers of suspension given to all authorised officers where these standards are not met.
  2. As set of national minimum standards for licensed drivers, to include the requirement to undertake a professional qualification & CSE awareness training and a national policy in relation to the relevance of convictions.
  3. To reintroduce the power to suspend drivers suspected of serious offences while under investigation where it is in the interest of public safety. This was general practice until the judgement in *R (app Singh) v Cardiff City Council (2012)* where the High Court ruled that suspension could not be an interim sanction.
  4. That relevant Ministers consider how to close the loopholes and potential for abuse left open by cross border hiring.

## **6. Implications of the Recommendations**

### **6.1. Legal Implications**

6.1.1. There are no legal implications.

### **6.2. Finance Implications**

6.2.1. There are no financial implications.

### **6.3. Equality Implications**

6.3.1. There are no equality implications.

### **6.4. Human Resources Implications**

6.4.1. There are no human resource implications

### **6.5. Risk Management Implications**

6.5.1. If the Council were to discharge its functions unlawfully or without proper regard to its Constitution and Policies, any decisions made may be subject to appeal or challenge by Judicial Review.

### **6.6. Rural Communities Implications**

6.6.1. There are no direct implications for rural communities.

### **6.7. Implications for Children & Young People**

6.7.1. There are no direct implications for children and young people.

### **6.8. Public Health Implications**

6.8.1. There are no direct implications for public health.

## **7. Ward Members Affected**

7.1. This matter does not directly affect any individual wards.

## **8. Access to Information**

Background documents:

<https://www.local.gov.uk/about/news/lga-responds-taxi-licensing-bill-being-talked-out>

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-02-02/debates/5364D0A7-BBCF-4E51-8E75-F87FD1AD192/LicensingOfTaxisAndPrivateHireVehicles\(SafeguardingAndRoadSafety\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-02-02/debates/5364D0A7-BBCF-4E51-8E75-F87FD1AD192/LicensingOfTaxisAndPrivateHireVehicles(SafeguardingAndRoadSafety)Bill)

**9. Contact Information**

9.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

Name: Sean Hannaby

Job Title: Director of Planning and Environment

Email: Sean.hannaby@cheshireeast.gov.uk

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## Cabinet

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**Date of Meeting:** 10 April 2018

**Report Title:** Transport for the North – Response to Consultation

**Portfolio Holder:** Leader of the Council

**Senior Officer:** Frank Jordan, Executive Director of Place

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### 1. Report Summary

- 1.1. This report sets out progress on the governance arrangements and strategic planning under the auspices of Transport for the North (TfN). TfN will become the first English statutory sub-national body for transport in April 2018.
- 1.2. This report also seeks Cabinet agreement to Cheshire East Council's response to TfN's consultation on the draft Strategic Transport Plan. Agreement to the proposed constitution for Transport for the North.
- 1.3. Transport for the North (TfN) is the proposed sub-national transport body (STB) serving the north of England. On 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2017, Cabinet agreed that Cheshire East Council participate in the development of TfN. The necessary parliamentary procedures are complete, enabling TfN to assume its statutory role.
- 1.4. Since August 2017, TfN has made significant progress in preparing for the role of a sub-national transport body, including:
  - 1.4.1. Production of a Constitution and associated membership agreements;
  - 1.4.2. Preparation of a draft pan-Northern Strategic Transport Plan (STP) covering the strategic road and rail networks across the north. This strategy is currently out to public consultation;
  - 1.4.3. Development of an updated Long Term Rail Strategy and arrangements to transfer into TfN the functions of Rail North, which manages the rail franchises for both Northern and Trans-Pennine Express.
- 1.5. Transport for the North and Rail North have both demonstrated the benefits of all parts of the North collaborating to achieve transformational improvements in transport. The proposed STP consultation response highlights those areas where the Council seeks particular support from TfN to realise local policy priorities. It is considered vital that Cheshire East Council

work through TfN to influence continued improvement in strategic transport infrastructure and services.

## 2. Recommendations

2.1 Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1.1 To approve the submission of a consultation response to Transport for the North's draft Strategic Transport Plan by 17<sup>th</sup> April 2018 and to delegate arrangements for submitting a final version to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council.
- 2.1.2 To note the proposed governance arrangements for Transport for North as set out in Section 5.2 of this report.
- 2.1.3 To delegate authority to the Leader of the Council to approve the final governance arrangements at Transport for the North's Board and to agree all future changes to these arrangements on behalf of the Council.

## 3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1. Getting transport right is central to achieving the objectives of the Northern Powerhouse and the success of the UK's industrial strategy. The economy of Cheshire East is vital to these pan-Northern outcomes. Poor connectivity is a key component of the economic challenges experienced by the North, where there is disproportionately low investment compared with London and other city-regions across Europe. Studies<sup>(1)</sup> have shown how investing in transport can unlock the economic potential of the North.
- 3.2. Without TfN, the North has no way of agreeing strategic priorities, as responsibility for transport is spread over many organisations. This has made it hard to properly consider transport interventions to transform economic growth at the pan-Northern scale. Consequently, the North has been disadvantaged in Government Spending Rounds for rail and road investment plans.

Footnote (1) – The Independent Economic Review was commissioned by TfN in 2016.

- 3.3. On 16<sup>th</sup> January 2018, TfN launched a public consultation on its draft Strategic Transport Plan (STP) for the North. The objectives of the STP are to:
  - 3.3.1. Increase efficiency, reliability and resilience in the transport system
  - 3.3.2. Transform economic performance
  - 3.3.3. Improve access to opportunities across the North Promote and
  - 3.3.4. Support the built and natural environment
- 3.4. The STP states that having a reliable and resilient transport network for journeys to, from and within the North is an integral part of TfN's vision. The Plan aims to support economic growth in key economic sectors, namely; Advanced Manufacturing, Education (particularly Higher Education), Financial & Professional Services, Logistics, Digital, Energy, and Health Innovation. The STP identifies 3 key themes to contribute to transformation economic growth across the North, as follows;
  - 3.4.1. Connecting people: Creating faster, more reliable transport connections to improve job opportunities, give access to leisure activities & support tourism.
  - 3.4.2. Connecting businesses: Supporting commerce by improving national and international connections in, out of and across the region.
  - 3.4.3. Moving goods: Improving links across the North and to our ports and airports to enable freight and goods to move more efficiently.
- 3.5. A summary of the key messages in the draft STP is included at Appendix1. The full document can be found at <https://transportforthenorth.com/stp>
- 3.6. Cheshire East Council has the opportunity to submit a response to this consultation, with a view to shaping the final document in a way that reflects the wider strategic ambitions of the Council. A proposed consultation response accompanies this report which takes account of the current and future context throughout the Borough, emphasising the following key themes;
  - 3.6.1. Cheshire East response welcomes the development of TfN's Strategic Transport Plan as a means of responding to the need for economic transformation across the North. The response to consultation will emphasise that the STP should focus on delivering "additionality" by working to deliver those pan-

Northern initiatives that are beyond the scope of any individual local authority.

- 3.6.2. The Council is seeking greater recognition of the transformational importance of HS2 Crewe Hub Station, as the first gateway to the high speed rail network to be delivered in the north of England. In particular, the response emphasises the need for the STP to reflect the requirement for a full design solution at Crewe, enabling 7 HS2 trains per hour and including the completion of the Crewe North junction.
- 3.6.3. Emphasising the importance of sustained investment in the strategic roads network for the North, including that part which is Cheshire East. In particular, noting the national importance of the M6 corridor which bisects the Borough. We are seeking recognition from TfN and Highways England that the interfaces between the national network and our local roads require sustained improvement, for instance at M6 junction 17, if they are to support our economic growth ambitions whilst protecting and improving the environment.
- 3.6.4. Stating the importance of the Wales and West Strategic Corridor Study to the transport aspirations for Cheshire East and the wider sub-region. This study needs to effectively define a set of transforming infrastructure improvements to develop the economy of Cheshire East, Cheshire West, Warrington and North Wales.
- 3.6.5. Confirming that there should be greater recognition of the importance of the Constellation Partnership in realising the full economic benefits of future transport investments, including HS2, to drive economic growth and regeneration. Importantly, Constellation is a demonstration of the need for Cheshire East to work across a wider footprint than TfN, to collaborate with neighbouring authorities who are members of the Midlands Engine. Hence there needs to be recognition that the arrangements for different sub-regional bodies need to be as consistent as possible to facilitate growth.
- 3.6.6. Noting the need for the Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) initiative to reach beyond the 6 main cities of the north plus Manchester Airport. The nature of NPR needs to reflect the travel-to-work catchment areas of the main cities, such as the need for residents of Crewe and south Cheshire to travel by rail into central Manchester or Liverpool. Our aspiration is that NPR will evolve to include onward connections from Manchester Airport to Crewe.
- 3.6.7. Acknowledgment that the Strategic Environmental Assessment (which accompanies the STP) identifies the significant impacts of strategic infrastructure proposals including HS2/NPR “touch

points” in the north of the Borough. The Council’s view is that these impacts can only be considered acceptable subject to the highest levels of environmental mitigation.

#### **4. Other Options Considered**

- 4.1. The option of not joining Transport for the North has been considered and discounted. Not joining TfN would be likely to reduce the Council’s influence over strategic investment decisions affecting the Norths transport networks, reducing the opportunity for Cheshire East to receive its fair share of future funding for transport.

#### **5. Background**

- 5.1 Cheshire East Council has played a full role in both TfN and Rail North, working closely alongside the Cheshire & Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership, Cheshire West and Warrington Councils. In August 2017, the Authority consented to the making of Statutory Regulations. The Secretary of State has now confirmed those Regulations to create a statutory sub-national transport body have completed parliamentary procedures.
- 5.2 A meeting of TfN, in shadow form, was held on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2018. The meeting was attended by the Leader of Cheshire East Council and the following matters were agreed in principle:
  - 5.2.1 **Governance Arrangements** - The 19 Constituent Authorities will be TfN’s primary governance body but will for convenience be referred to as “the Members Board”. The Shadow Board endorsed the draft Constitution and the transfer of the business and assets of Rail North Limited to TfN. Also, that the LEPs, statutory agencies and DfT who currently sit on the Partnership Board will be invited to appoint representatives to be co-opted onto the Members Board for most decision-making purposes. No decision was made as to voting rights for co-opted members. The voting members (i.e. the 19 Constituent Authority members) may confer voting rights upon those 6 co-optees if they so choose.
  - 5.2.2 **Chairing the Member Board:** The Members Board be chaired by the Independent Chair of the Partnership Board – John Cridland CBE. There will be two Vice Chairs to be appointed from the Members, taken from the two major political parties of the Constituent Authorities. As with the 6 Rail North Authorities, the chair of the Partnership Board does not have automatic voting rights.
  - 5.2.3 **Rail North Committee:** decisions relating to rail strategy and investment would be taken by the Members Board and that the Rail North committee would make decisions relating to detailed rail franchising arrangements. Membership of the Rail North Committee would be, as now, made up of representatives of Regional Groups i.e. Cheshire & Potteries authorities.
  - 5.2.4 **Scrutiny:** a ‘scrutiny-first’ approach would be taken, with the Scrutiny Committee meeting in future in advance of the Members Board.

Scrutiny Committee members could be executive members / portfolio holders, provided they are not designated Members or Substitute Members of TfN. Scrutiny Committee will have a Chair and two Vice Chairs to be appointed from the two major political parties.

- 5.2.5 **Audit and Governance Committee:** Independent members would be recruited, based on relevant skills.
  - 5.2.6 **Operating protocols:** The drafting of a protocol was endorsed and it was suggested that the draft Protocol should be extended to cover existing Officer Reference Groups.
  - 5.2.7 **DfT & Transport for the North Partnership Agreement:** the draft Partnership Agreement is expected to be circulated in advance of the Agenda for the inaugural meeting of TfN on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2018.
- 5.3 On 19<sup>th</sup> February 2018, TfN hosted a public consultation event in Crewe, which was attended by a number of stakeholders and members of the public. At this event the following principal issues were raised:
- 5.3.1 Ensuring that the role of local buses is fully reflected in the STP and that the Plan takes account of the economic importance of buses and the need for greater reliability of services.
  - 5.3.2 That the Long Term Rail Strategy takes account of the affordability of rail fares, which can act as an impediment to travel opportunities. Concern was expressed at the inconsistency of rail services and rail fares, which discouraged reliance of train travel.
  - 5.3.3 The need to influence the delivery of HS2 to fully meet local expectations, such as the expected need for enhancing the A500 to enable better access to the Crewe Hub station.
  - 5.3.4 The importance of the M6 corridor for Cheshire East, including the need for junction improvements to reduce the adverse impacts on congestion and road safety for communities adjacent to the M6.
  - 5.3.5 Concern was expressed about the potential impacts on funding security for local major projects including as Middlewich Eastern Bypass and Congleton Link Road. Attendees commented that they did not wish TfN's role to put funding for these projects at risk.
  - 5.3.6 Specific questions were raised about the future arrangements for rail services at Macclesfield, and more broadly on the Stoke-Manchester line via Macclesfield and Congleton. There was a particular concern about the future of rail connections to London from Macclesfield.
  - 5.3.7 TfN were questioned about the link between their STP and the role of the National Infrastructure Commission, particularly regarding the transfer of freight from road to rail.

- 5.3.8 Concern was expressed about the ability of the strategy to take account of the capacity of infrastructure supply chains to deliver the ambitions of the plan. Similarly, there was concern that training and skills sectors were not geared-up to provide the capacity for transformation.
  - 5.3.9 The role of the Local Transport Bodies was queried when TfN is fully established.
  - 5.3.10 There was a discussion about the proposed Major Roads Network and who would be responsible to deliver improvements on this network.
  - 5.3.11 Comments emphasised the need to take account of safety considerations and build greater resilience for safety and security into new infrastructure.
- 5.4 Many of the issues are consistent with the strategic considerations for Cheshire East Council.

## **6. Implications of the Recommendations**

### **6.1 Legal Implications**

- 6.1.1 The draft TfN Constitution includes a draft protocol on the exercise of concurrent functions, in recognition that in the carrying out of its functions in the Regulations, TfN may exercise functions which it holds concurrently with Constituent Authorities.
- 6.1.2 The protocol on the Exercise of Concurrent Functions recognises that TfN will only exercise those functions which it holds concurrently with other local authorities to further proposals implementing the Strategic Transport Plan (STP). The STP will be the subject of widespread consultation prior to its adoption by TfN and may only be adopted if passed by a Super Majority<sup>(2)</sup> on a vote. The regulations also require that a specific agreement will need to be entered into before TfN exercises any of the highways powers it holds concurrently with other local authorities.

Footnote (2) – A super majority is defined by the TfN Constitution to be more than 66% of membership votes.

## **6.2 Finance Implications**

6.2.1 There is currently a contribution payable by Cheshire East to Rail North Limited, for 2017/18 this amounts to £772.58 per annum (determined by the share of rail passengers on Northern and TransPennine services originating in the Borough). This is unaffected by changes to either Rail North or TfN and is paid by the Strategic Infrastructure - Transport Policy budget.

6.2.2 There is no requirement for financial contributions to be paid to become a member of TfN. Any contributions made would be on a voluntary basis – it is not anticipated that these will be required in the foreseeable future. Voluntary contributions may take the form of in-kind support from members, such as where particular staffing skills and knowledge may be offered to assist TfN in delivering its ambitions.

## **6.3 Equality Implications**

6.3.1 TfN is expected to have beneficial impacts on opportunities arising from enhanced connectivity across the North, potentially reducing economic and social inequality. At this stage, no specific equalities issues have been identified by TfN. It is expected that TfN's intended programmes of work will be accompanied by a full Equalities Assessment in due course.

## **6.4 Human Resources Implications**

6.4.1 There are no human resource implications identified.

## **6.5 Risk Management Implications**

6.5.1 TfN maintains a detailed Risk Register across its programme, where all identified risks are monitored and actions taken to mitigate these risks. This approach is unaffected by the move to a statutory sub-national body.

## **6.6 Rural Communities Implications**

6.6.1 There are no specific, direct implications for rural communities arising at this stage. In principle, the Strategic Transport Plan will deliver improved connectivity and accessibility from rural areas to centres of employment across the north of England. The impacts for rural areas will be clearer when specific programmes of work are defined and supported by a detailed impact assessment.

## **6.7 Implications for Children & Young People**

6.7.1 There are no specific, direct implications for children and young people at this stage. In principle, the Strategic Transport Plan will deliver improved connectivity and accessibility for young people to centres of employment, further/higher education and training across the north of England. The impacts for children and young people will be clearer when specific programmes of work are defined and supported by a detailed impact assessment.

## **6.8 Public Health Implications**

6.8.1 There are no specific, direct implications for public health arising at this stage. In principle, the Strategic Transport Plan will deliver a more sustainable transport system with reduced congestion, improved air quality and a greater reliance of public transport (rail) as a means of access to economic centres across the north of England. The impacts for public health will be clearer when specific programmes of work are defined and supported by a detailed impact assessment.

## **7. Ward Members Affected**

7.1. All Wards in Cheshire East.

## **8. Consultation & Engagement**

8.1. On 16<sup>th</sup> January 2018, TfN launched a public consultation on its draft Strategic Transport Plan (STP) for the North. Cheshire East Council has the opportunity to submit a response to this consultation before 17<sup>th</sup> April 2018. A proposed consultation response accompanies this report.

## **9. Access to Information**

9.1. Documents are held on file at:

**<\\ourcheshire.cccusers.com\East\LTPEast\TfN\MembersAgreement>**

## **10. Contact Information**

10.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

Name: Richard Hibbert  
Job Title: Head of Transport (Interim)  
Email: [Richard.hibbert@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:Richard.hibbert@cheshireeast.gov.uk)

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# Strategic Transport Plan Draft for public consultation Key Messages

Connecting and growing the economy of the North of England

## Let us know what you think

We want to know what you think of our draft Strategic Transport Plan. Between mid January and mid April 2018 we are carrying out a public consultation on our plans. Go to [transportforthenorth.com](http://transportforthenorth.com) to let us know what you think and for details of our engagement events.

You can also send written feedback to:

TfN Draft Transport Plan Consultation  
IPSOS Mori North

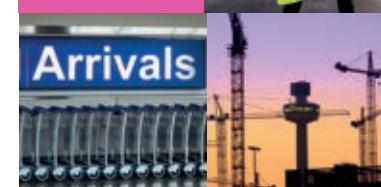
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Arrivals



**Our vision is of a thriving North of England, where modern transport connections drive economic growth and support an excellent quality of life.**

## About Transport for the North

**We're Transport for the North (TfN), a partnership of civic and business leaders from across the North of England.**

Over the next 30 years, we want to transform our road, rail, sea and air connections to help drive long term economic growth. Our Strategic Transport Plan explains the need for investment in transport across the North and identifies the priority areas for improved connectivity. This guide will give you an overview of our plans and the benefits a transformed Northern transport network will bring.

### Gaining statutory status

From April 2018, we will be England's first Sub-national Transport Body, overseen by the 19 different transport authorities across the North. With statutory status, we have the mandate to make recommendations on behalf

of the North to the Department for Transport, Network Rail, Highways England and HS2 Ltd. Rail North is also merging with us, becoming our franchising arm.

### Working with our Partners

Transport for the North has a clear remit to identify and plan the transport infrastructure required to support transformational economic growth in the North. It also supports local and national government, as well as the private sector and transport operators. This is to align local investment in public transport and active modes of travel with strategic, investment across the North.



## The need for change

**The North is an attractive, diverse region and home to around 16 million people. We have vibrant communities, buzzing cities, five stunning National Parks, an abundance of talent and a wealth of high-performing businesses.**

However, from an economic perspective the region is underachieving. The economic value per person in the North (GVA) is 25% below England's average, and our income per person is £7500 less.

### Closing the gap

The success of the UK in the global marketplace depends upon transforming the economy of the North.

The Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review identified some of the key factors contributing towards this gap, including:

- ⇒ Lack of highly skilled opportunities
- ⇒ Underuse of innovation and technology
- ⇒ Lower levels of enterprise
- ⇒ A lack of collaboration between Northern economic centres
- ⇒ Poor links and under investment in transport

# The benefits of a transformed North

The Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review identified four areas where the North is highly skilled and globally competitive. These are called 'prime capabilities'.



Promoting, growing and connecting the North's prime capabilities could result in higher productivity. The prime capabilities are supported by three 'enabling capabilities'. These are services or skills that provide the expertise and support for the North's economy to flourish, and for its people to enjoy a better quality of life.



## Our role

Having a reliable, resilient transport network for journeys to, from and within the North is an integral part of our vision. Our role in supporting economic growth is:



### Connecting people:

Creating faster, more reliable transport connections to improve job opportunities, give access to leisure activities & support tourism.

### Connecting businesses:

Supporting commerce by improving national and international connections in, out of and across the region.

### Moving goods:

Improving links across the North and to our ports and airports to enable freight and goods to move more efficiently.

# Supporting sustainable economic growth

If the economy of the North is transformed, by 2050 we could see around:



**£100bn**  
increase in GVA



**850,000**  
additional jobs

To make this happen, we need significant, long term investment in the North's transport network.

### Investment in transport can:



Increase employment and real wages



Improve standards of living across the region



Increase business competition and productivity



Stimulate business collaboration



Support health and wellbeing



Reduce journey times



Increase land value



Reduce transport costs

An Integrated Sustainability Appraisal has been prepared alongside the Strategic Transport Plan to constructively challenge the outputs of our plans.

# Connecting the North

## The objectives of the Strategic Transport Plan are:

- Increase efficiency, reliability and resilience in the transport system
- Transform economic performance
- Improve access to opportunities across the North
- Promote and support the built and natural environment

To plan transport infrastructure to support the Northern Powerhouse, we need to identify where growth will occur and the impact it will have on our roads, rail, ports and airports.

## Our Northern Transport Demand

- Model** estimates how changes in GVA, employment, population and transport could affect travel patterns. That, along with a wide range of other evidence, allows us to prioritise our investment programme into three time frames:
- Short term: up to 2025
  - Medium term: 2026-2035
  - Long term: 2036-2050

In the next section you'll see some of our key programmes. The current estimate of the total value of the emerging investment programme from 2020-2050 is £60-£70 billion.

## Northern Powerhouse Rail

Ambitious plans to provide rapid, reliable and resilient rail links between our major towns and cities.

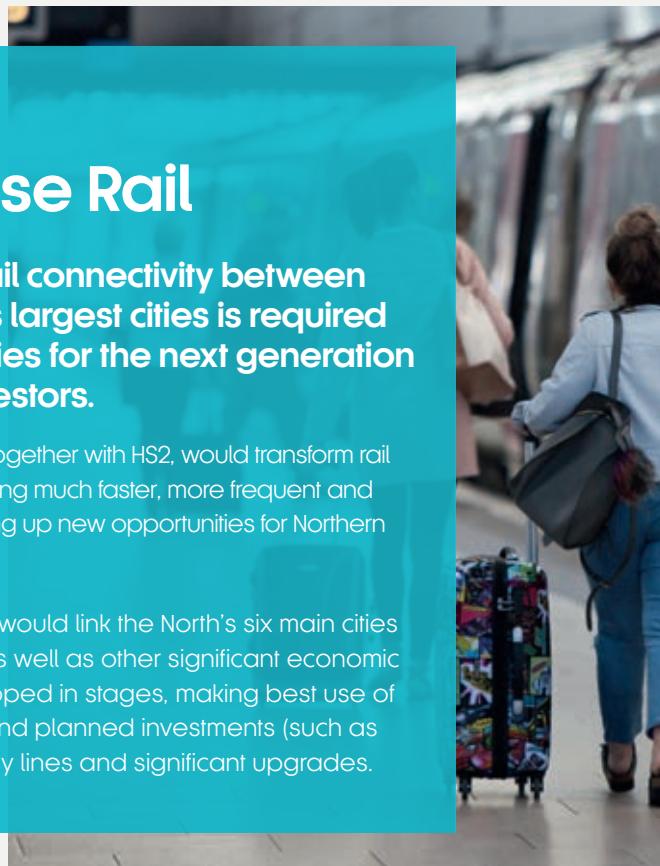


## Major Road Network

We have identified the roads across the North that are vital for economic growth and are evaluating how best to strengthen this network.

## Long Term Rail Strategy

Investment in lines, stations, services and franchises will deliver greater connectivity, capacity and cost effectiveness.



## Northern Powerhouse Rail

**A step change in rail connectivity between some of the North's largest cities is required to grow opportunities for the next generation of workers and investors.**

Northern Powerhouse Rail, together with HS2, would transform rail travel across the North, offering much faster, more frequent and reliable rail links and opening up new opportunities for Northern citizens and businesses.

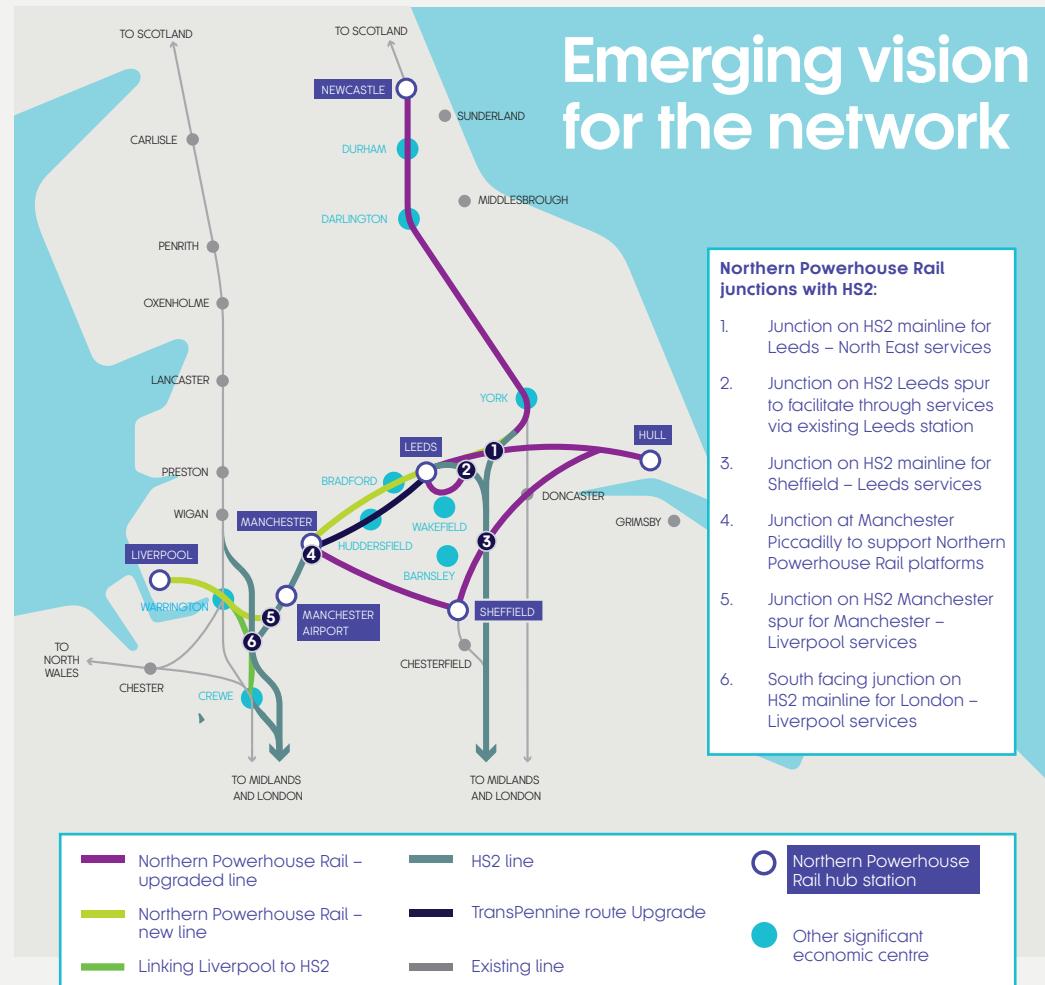
Northern Powerhouse Rail would link the North's six main cities and Manchester Airport, as well as other significant economic centres. It could be developed in stages, making best use of existing rail infrastructure and planned investments (such as HS2) alongside new railway lines and significant upgrades.

**Northern Powerhouse Rail will deliver massive improvements:**

### People

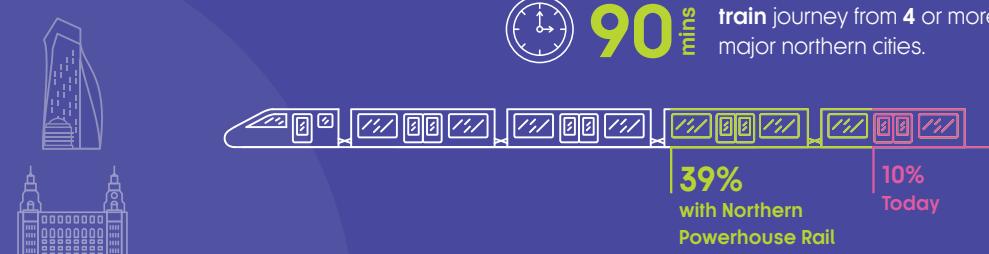
within a...

**60 mins** train journey from 4 or more major northern cities.

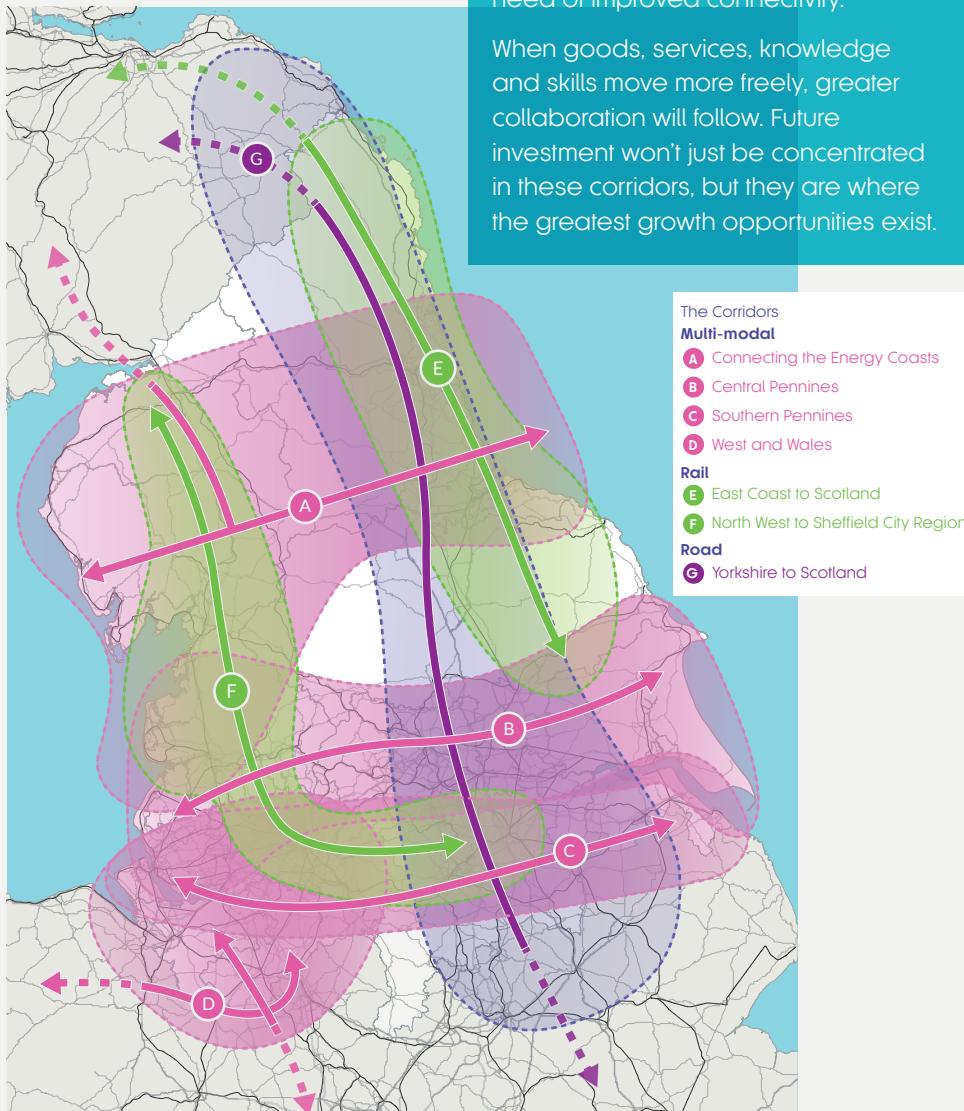


**Businesses**  
within a...

**90 mins** train journey from 4 or more major northern cities.



# Seven corridors of opportunity



We have identified seven strategic development corridors across our region where we will focus on improving transport infrastructure.

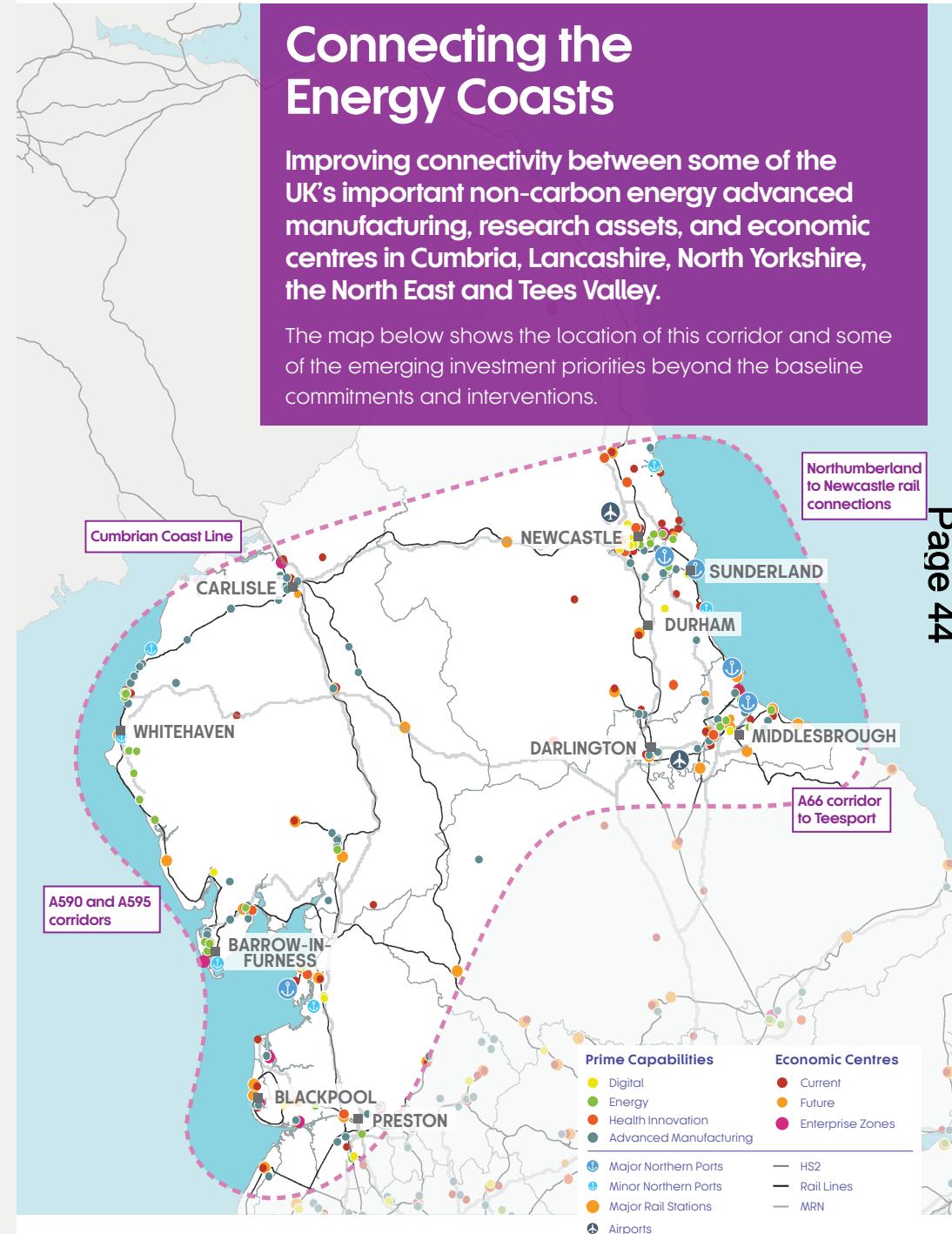
These corridors link important 'prime capability' assets and important economic centres that are currently in need of improved connectivity.

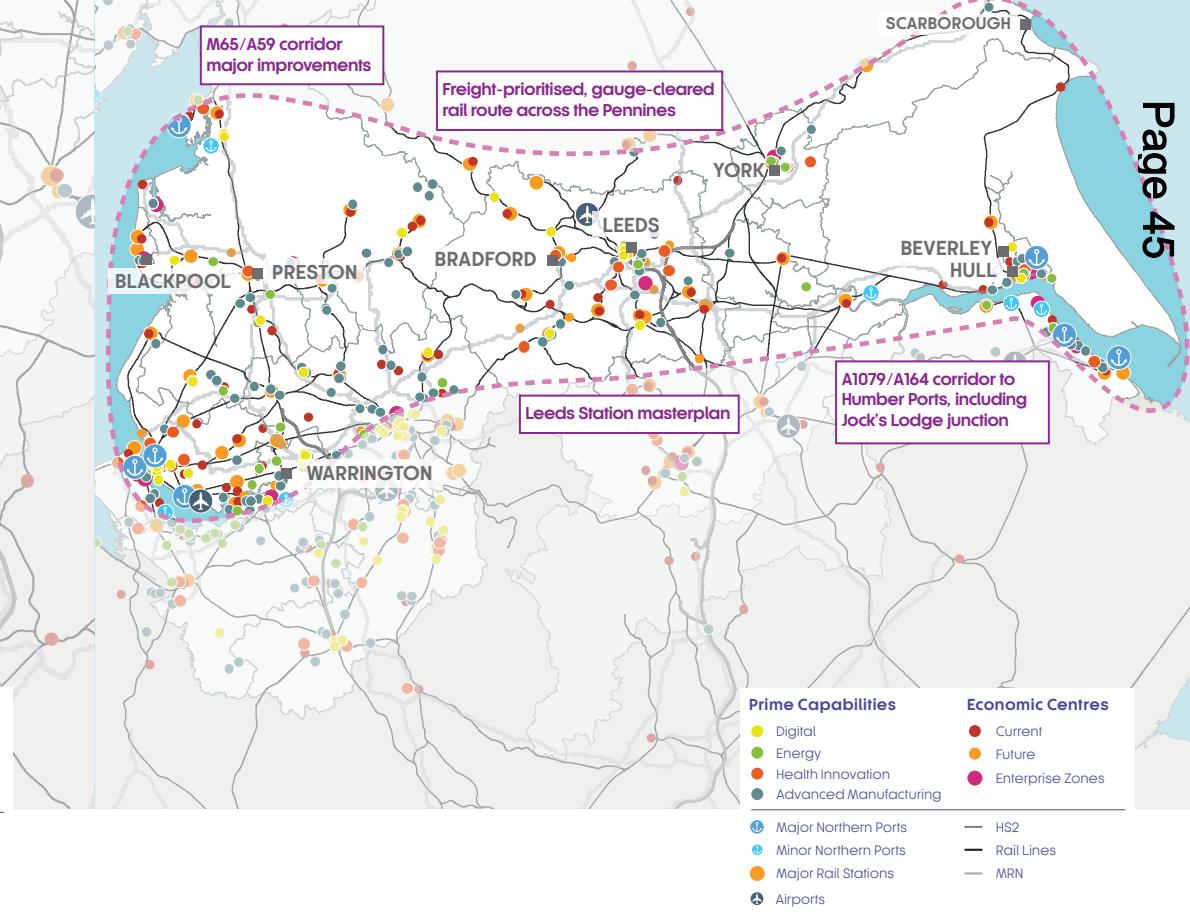
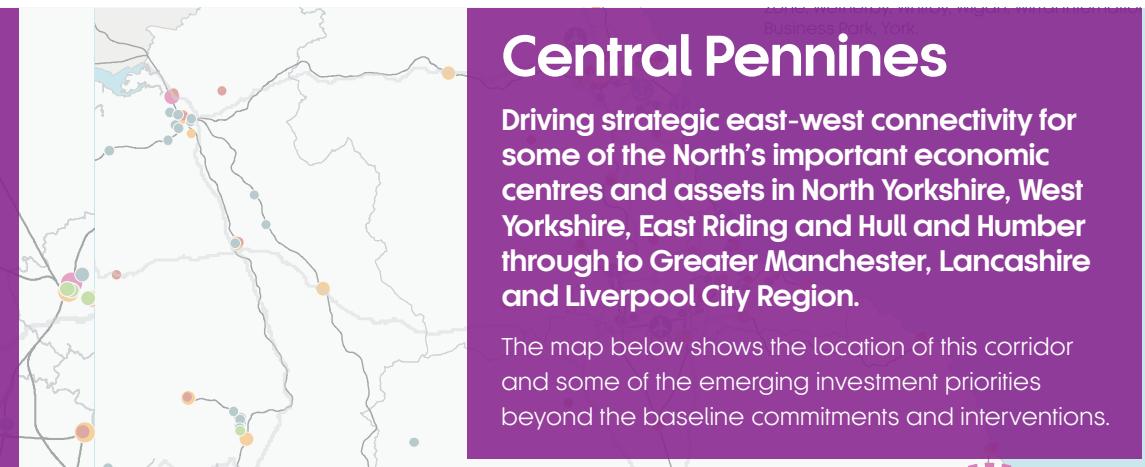
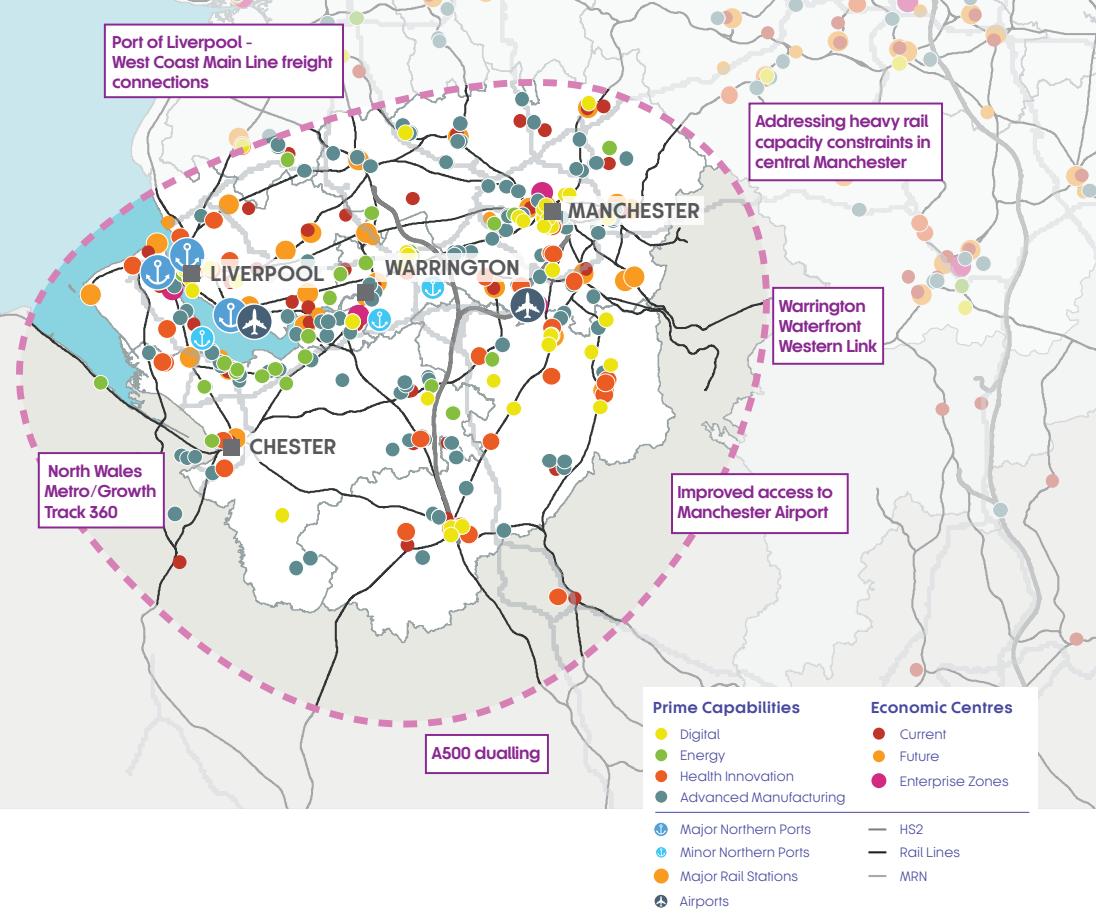
When goods, services, knowledge and skills move more freely, greater collaboration will follow. Future investment won't just be concentrated in these corridors, but they are where the greatest growth opportunities exist.

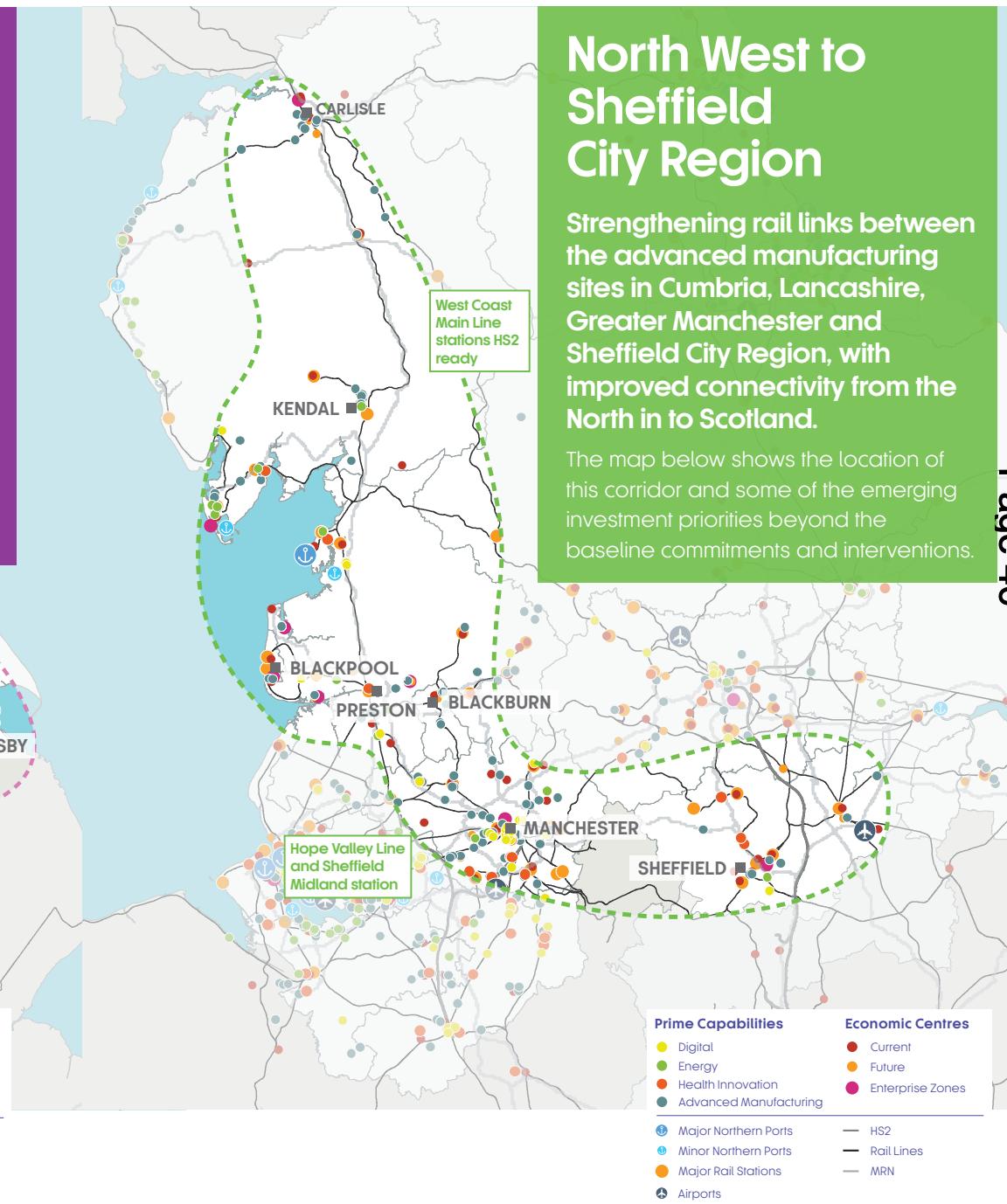
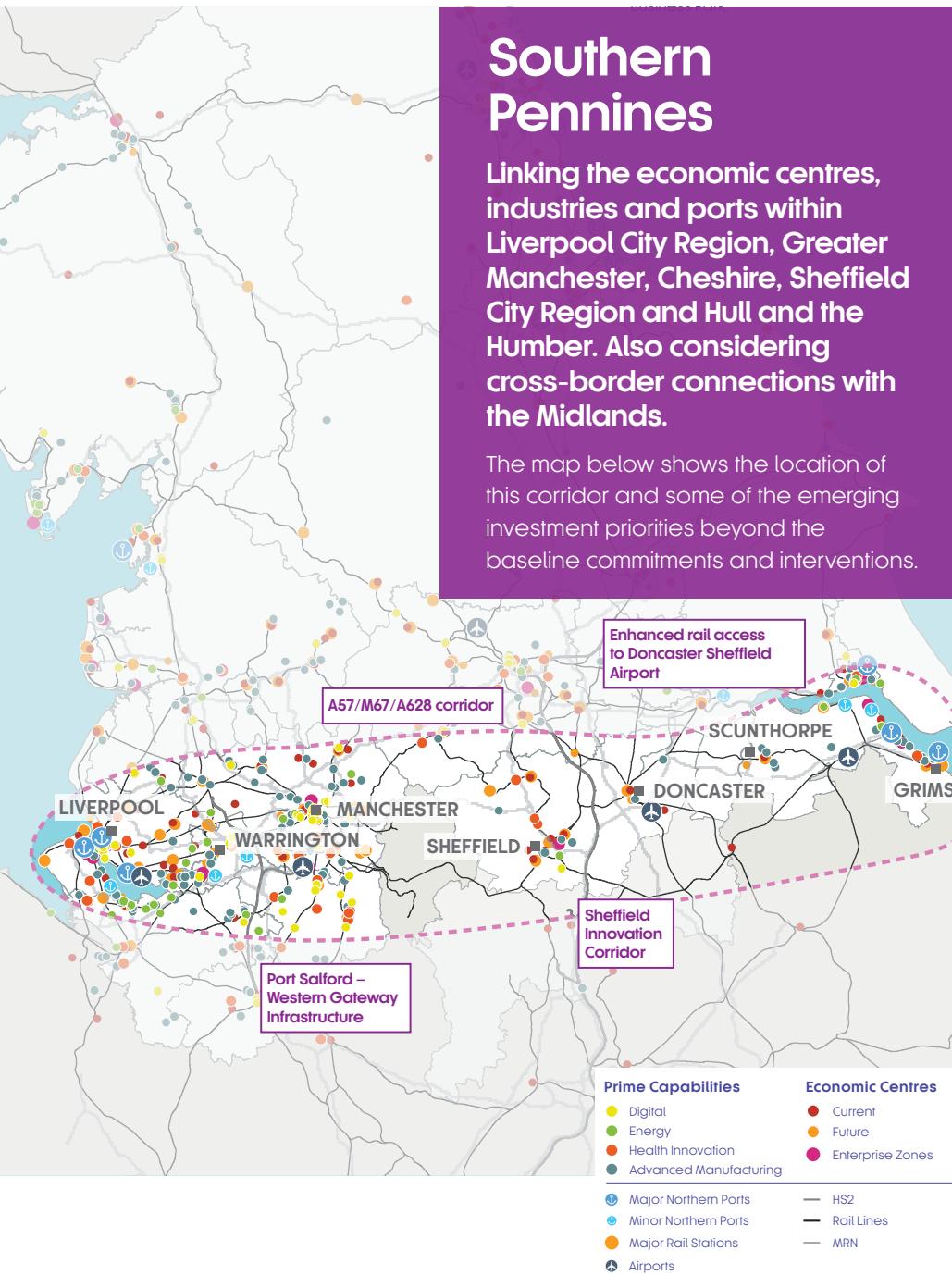
# Connecting the Energy Coasts

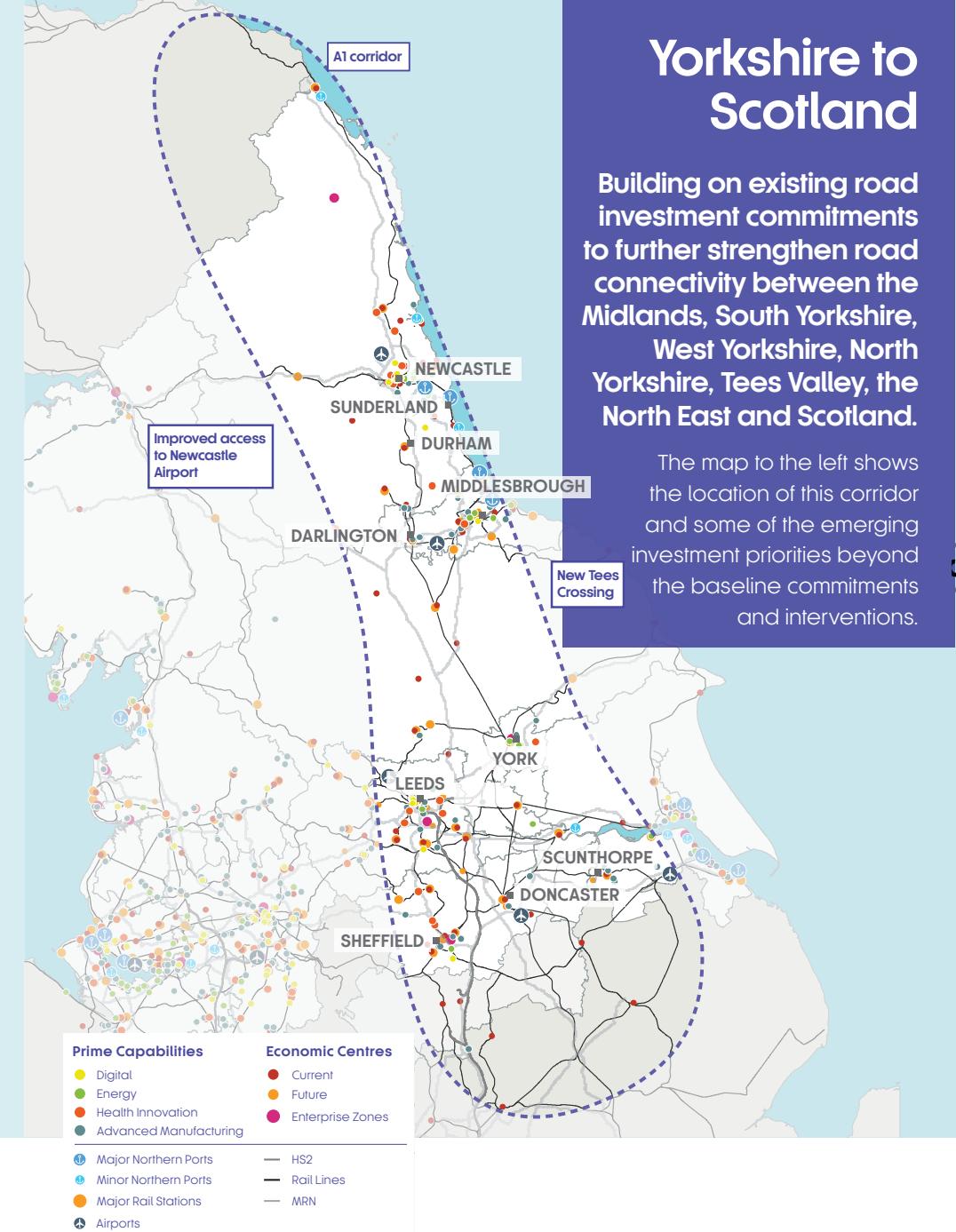
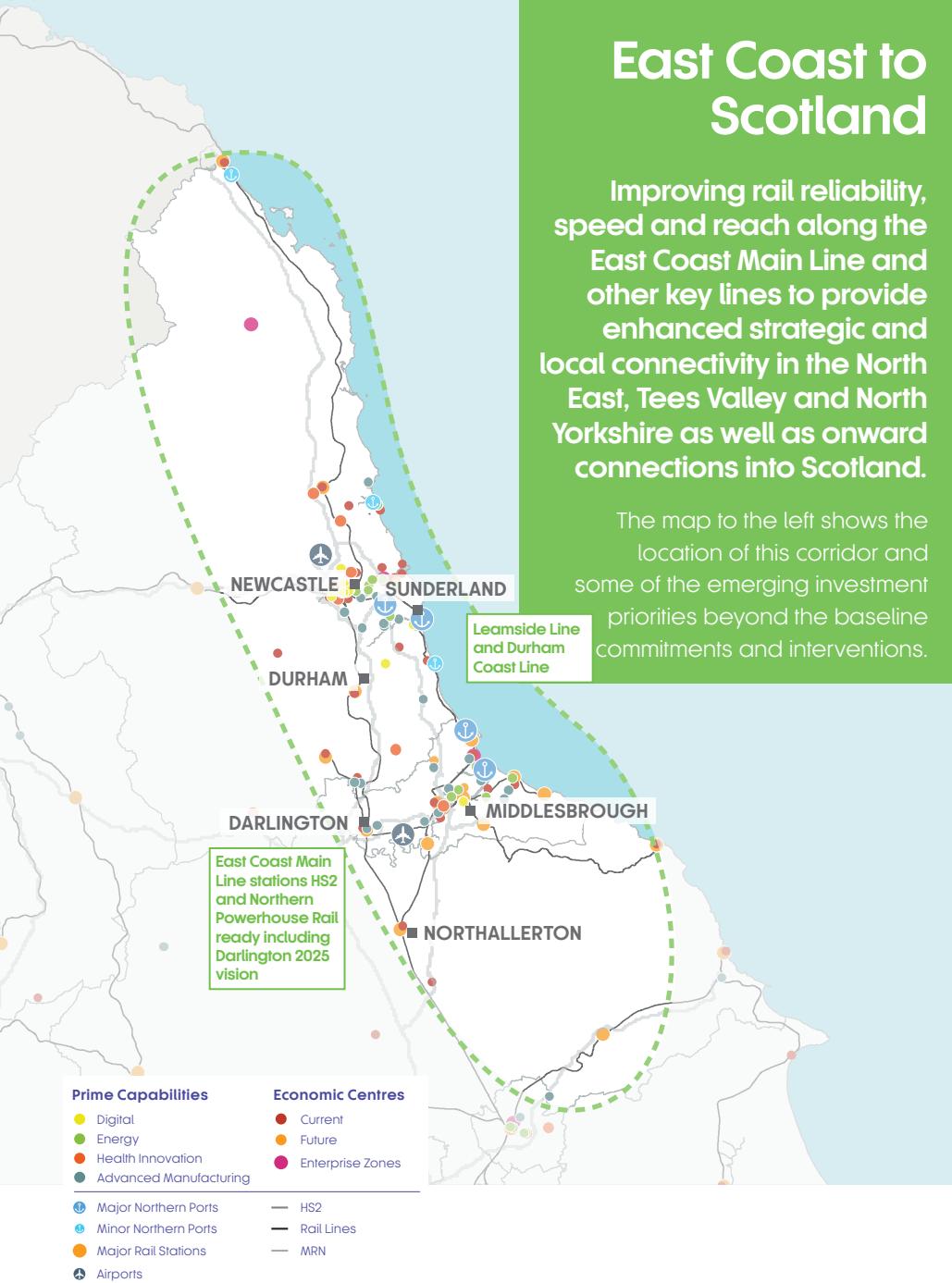
**Improving connectivity between some of the UK's important non-carbon energy advanced manufacturing, research assets, and economic centres in Cumbria, Lancashire, North Yorkshire, the North East and Tees Valley.**

The map below shows the location of this corridor and some of the emerging investment priorities beyond the baseline commitments and interventions.









# A smarter approach to travel



**By integrating services and implementing smarter systems, we will simplify travel across the North.**

**Working in partnership with operators, transport authorities and the Department for Transport, we will make seamless public transport throughout the region a reality.**

**Over the next four years, we'll deliver:**

- ⇒ Smart ticketing across rail and bus travel
- ⇒ Reduced queuing times
- ⇒ Enhanced real time service information
- ⇒ Journey planning tools
- ⇒ A simplified pricing structure



# Delivering our investment programme

**Now we've shared our vision of a modern, prosperous, super-connected North, the next step is further business case development across our programmes. This will define our short term priorities to drive economic growth.**

All proposals will go through a stringent compliance process and, of course, we and our partners will consult with the public whenever they are likely to be affected by our project work.



## How will the work be funded?

As an organisation we can't borrow money or raise revenue, so we are developing a sustainable long term investment programme.

A substantial part of our funding is expected to come from central government, and we are exploring other potential funding options too.

With funding in place, we will be in a position to work closely with technology, sustainability in design, and delivery. This enables us to create new appraisal and modelling tools, which will both complement and support local investment.

We require strong evidence and analysis to make the case for further investment in the North's strategic transport network. We will measure the widest possible range of impacts to fully capture all of the impacts of transport investment and work with Government and our Delivery Partners to support decisions that cater for long term growth.

## Appendix 2: Transport for the North – FAQs

### **1. What are constituent authorities consenting to?**

The constituent authorities of TfN are consenting to the making of the regulations by the Secretary of State (102F(3) of Local Transport Act 2008). The regulations will then be laid before Parliament in the form of a statutory instrument.

### **2. When will we see a ‘final’ version of the regulations?**

A final version of the regulations will not be available until the statutory instrument has been passed through Parliament. In terms of updates on the current set of draft regulations, these will be shared with constituent authorities as and when they are available. TfN is in regular communication with DfT as we recognise the importance of having available the most up to date version of the regulations. Constituent authorities have already been sent the latest draft of the regulations.

### **3. Why does TfN need consent to the making of the regulations by 9<sup>th</sup> September?**

There is a limited window of opportunity for the statutory instrument, establishing TfN as a statutory body, to be considered and approved by Parliament. Given the desire to ensure a smooth and orderly Brexit, there is a very tight embargo on non-Brexit legislation between February 2018 and March 2019 (with only legislation such as tax changes being allowed) and therefore should TfN miss the legislative window of opportunity this year, they may have to wait until well after Brexit is concluded to become a statutory body.

It is therefore critical to the successful implementation of the TfN SI that the deadline for parliamentary consideration is adhered to - any delay to consent could impact negatively on this process. As such, consent from each authority will need to be received by the Department for Transport by the 9<sup>th</sup> September to enable the SI to be laid before Conference recess.

### **4. What functions are being proposed for TfN?**

In an undated letter to John Cridland, TfN’s independent Chair, from the Secretary of State for Transport, Rt. Hon Chris Grayling MP, the main functions of TfN were proposed to be:

1. The preparation of a Northern Transport Strategy;
2. The provision of advice on the North’s priorities, as a Statutory Partner in the Department’s investment processes; and
3. The coordination of regional transport activities, (such as smart ticketing), and the co-management of the TransPennine Express and Northern rail franchises through the acquisition of Rail North Ltd.

In line with this letter, which was circulated to Partnership Board and Executive Board members ahead of the Partnership Board meeting in March, and TfN’s proposal to become a Sub-national Transport Body last year, the draft regulations cover the below functions:

- a) **To prepare a Transport Strategy for the TfN area** (i.e. the combined area of the Constituent Authorities) – this will set the priorities for transport investment in the North and will be approved by TfN after full consultation with the Partnership Board. This is the Strategic Transport Plan, for which engagement on the evidence base is currently being undertaken.
- b) **To advise the Secretary of State about the exercise of transport functions** through the Rail North Partnership Board and the Highways North Board. Recommendations will be made to the Secretary of State on future rail and road strategic investment decisions, taking into account the priorities set by TfN through the Strategic

Transport Plan. Through this role, TfN will have a strong and formal voice in influencing future funding decisions of the Secretary of State relating to the North.

- c) **To co-ordinate the carrying out of transport functions exercisable by different Constituent Authorities** – TfN will have a co-ordinating role in relation to major pan-Northern investment projects funded by the Secretary of State. This will be exercised to smooth out difficulties in cross-boundary projects.
- d) **Ticketing Schemes (sections 134C (1) and 135(1) of the Transport Act 2000)** – TfN is engaged in developing SMART Ticketing across the region which should enable smart ticketing across the region and the use of smart technologies to enable the purchase of tickets with mobile devices.
- e) **To co-manage the TransPennine Express and Northern rail franchises** – this continues the current arrangements whereby Rail North Limited manages these rail franchises on behalf of the Secretary of State.
- f) **Highways powers** – these have not yet been defined in the current draft regulations. TfN has made representations to the DfT that the powers should be ones delegated to TfN by the Secretary of State. Particular care is being taken by the drafts person to reflect these principles. It is not the intention for TfN to dilute any of its constituent authority member's ability or opportunity to address local transport issues through, for instance, bidding for funding from funding programmes. In contrast, the intention is that any input TfN provides to future Road Investment Strategies or other competitive major road funding programmes would be to enhance constituent authority member's business cases through identifying links to pan-northern, strategic priorities.

## 5. Why does TfN need concurrent powers?

The two main concurrent powers TfN will need to exercise are related to Smart and Integrated Ticketing and highways. For Smart ticketing, it is important that TfN can utilise concurrent powers to ensure people can travel seamlessly across the region. While some individual areas are currently working on their own initiatives, in the long-term these will be able to be integrated into Transport for the North's platform.

With regards to highways, TfN is not seeking to become a Highway Authority and any decisions on investment within a particular area regarding highways would have to be done with the consent of relevant highway authorities. Transport for the North is developing a transport strategy based on economic growth through which individual authorities priorities are incorporated. Therefore, TfN should not impact on any individual applications for funding by local authorities to address pinch points, or local improvement schemes, and in many cases may help support the case for constituent authority funding applications.

The exercise of concurrent powers will be governed by a protocol agreed between TfN and its partner authorities.

## 6. When will the constitution be adopted?

There is a legal requirement that the constitution of TfN be adopted at its inaugural meeting. The date for TfN becoming a statutory body will be set out in the regulations. Early drafts of the constitution have already been shared with both partnership board, executive board and the constituent authorities.

## 7. How was the voting matrix developed?

The voting matrix was developed and approved by all of the constituent authorities when the proposal to become a Sub-national Transport Body was submitted in October 2016. The voting matrix was developed to ensure that the larger authorities could not out-vote all of

the smaller ones, and vice-versa. This reflects how TfN is to act as a collaborative organisation, and a strong voice to Government that represents all areas of the North.

**8. What happens if an authority wants to leave TfN?**

Section 102Q of the Local Transport Act [DATE] states that the Secretary of State, may by regulations, change the area of an STB by either adding the area of a relevant authority to an existing area of an STB or by removing the area of a constituent authority from an existing area of an STB.

**9. Can TfN provide assurances of funding long-term?**

Transport for the North is funded until 2020. The level of funding will remain the responsibility of the government of the day, but TfN will constantly seek reassurances of funding commitments going forward, when possible. There is strong cross-party support for TfN, both locally and nationally, and this bodes well for any future funding, although this cannot be guaranteed.

In terms of any future contributions from individual authorities, the draft constitution states that such contributions shall require a unanimous decision of the Constituent Authorities and may only be taken after written consent to the proposal has been received from each of the Constituent Authorities.

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## Cabinet

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**Date of Meeting:** 10 April 2018

**Report Title:** Housing Strategy 2018-2023

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Ainsley Arnold, Housing & Planning

**Senior Officer:** Frank Jordan, Executive Director - Place

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### 1. Report Summary

- 1.1. The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Planning Regeneration made a decision on 16 November 2017 to consult on a draft Housing Strategy for the Borough. This report provides a summary of the consultation responses that have been received and how they have been reflected in the final version of the Housing Strategy. The report also seeks Cabinet approval to adopt the Housing Strategy.
- 1.2. To inform this decision, this report includes a summary of the consultation feedback and the Equalities Impact Assessment which provides an assessment of the impact of the final strategy.

### 2. Recommendation/s

- 2.1. Cabinet are recommended to approve the Housing Strategy (Appendix 1).

### 3. Reasons for Recommendation/s

- 3.1. The Housing Strategy is a significant contributor to achieving the aims and objectives of the Corporate Plan and the resident focused outcomes. There can rarely have been a more important time to set out our distinctive vision for the future of homes in our Borough and to outline the steps we are determined to take to achieve this vision.
- 3.2. The Housing Strategy:
  - Articulates the vision, aims and objectives of the Housing Strategy 2018-2023
  - Supports the delivery of the right home in the right place across the Borough, in accordance with the ambitions of the Local Plan
  - Supports the delivery of Cheshire East Council's Mid-term Financial Strategy 2018-2020
- 3.3. The Strategy provides a robust and comprehensive picture of housing needs and priorities. It provides a clear vision for our key partners who develop, own and manage existing or new housing to meet a diverse

housing need. We will explore further opportunities to work with our partners in stimulating the housing market to provide new or existing housing in our communities.

## **4. Other Options Considered**

- 4.1. There are no alternative options considered. The existing Housing Strategy which ran from 2011 to 2016 now requires updating to align with the Council's aspirations in delivering the right home in the right place.

## **5. Background**

- 5.1. Cheshire East is committed to meeting the needs of its local communities and providing the infrastructure, services and facilities required to create sustainable and stronger communities. Part of this is ensuring that we have the right housing offer to meet our ambitions for the Council's jobs-led economic growth, but also that they are of the right mix to meet the diverse housing needs across the Borough.
- 5.2. Since the publication of our previous Housing Strategy in 2011, there have been significant changes to the local and national political, policy and funding landscape. This new proposed Housing Strategy reflects these changes, and is underpinned by our Local Plan, supportive policies and strategies which will enable us to achieve our priorities for housing within the Borough.
- 5.3. The proposed Housing Strategy for the period 2018-2023 has been developed within the context of national, regional and sub-regional strategies and policies, which support the overall aims and objectives to align with the Council's aspirations as outlined in the key Communities Outcomes, the ambitions represented within the Local Plan and to enable us to keep up with the pace of change in the housing sector.
- 5.4. To ensure the Strategy links with associated Council services, extensive dialogue and exchange of ideas have continually taken place with Public Health; Spatial Planning and Cared for Children and Care Leavers, which has facilitated important strategic links with key decision making processes for such services.
- 5.5. Furthermore, the housing strategy has emerged and been shaped by a number of informal engagement exercises over the past 18 months with our key stakeholders, culminating in a formal engagement event jointly hosted with our colleagues within Spatial Planning, with housing developers, private landlords and registered housing providers in the summer of 2017,

in which we provided a clear steer of our approach to housing need in Cheshire East and how we can all work together to provide solutions.

- 5.6. The proposed Housing Strategy has been considered by the Environment and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 November 2017. The Strategy was welcomed by the Committee, as was the opportunity to provide some comments during the consultation stage. Committee members highlighted a number of considerations;

- Ensure access to affordable housing, by reflecting on differing house prices within the Borough and affordability
- Direct involvement of the Council in respect of building new affordable homes
- Assurance was sought in terms of private rented sector and improved relationships with private sector landlords, including Houses of Multiple Occupation
- Highlighted their support for increased housing options for the our ageing population

- 5.7. These issues have been broadly covered across the Strategy and will be taken forward through the development of the Delivery Plan and associated policies and projects.

## **6. Implications of the Recommendations**

### **6.1. Legal Implications**

- 6.1.1. The Deregulation Act 2015 Section 29 removed the legal requirement for a local authority to have a housing strategy. However preparation of such a strategy is deemed as good practice.

### **6.2. Finance Implications**

- 6.2.1. The eventual implication of the Housing Strategy does not envisage that there will be a major financial investment required by Cheshire East, however if funding was required for individual projects, a full business case would be compiled which would consider all financing options (both internal and external) and any potential risks to the Council. Such business cases will follow the established route for ratification including gateway approvals at the appropriate points in accordance with the Council's project management protocols.

### **6.3. Equality Implications**

6.3.1. An Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix 2) has been carried out for the development of the draft Housing Strategy. It has been determined that there are no groups who will be negatively impacted by the Strategy. It was assessed that a full Impact Assessment was not required.

### **6.4. Human Resources Implications**

6.4.1. There are no direct Human Resources implications.

### **6.5. Risk Management Implications**

6.5.1. As the Housing Strategy is a high level document that sets out the Council's direction of travel for policies and services related to all tenures, it reflects a series of existing policies and approaches, which have already been the subject of separate Equality Impact Assessments' (EIA). These are not therefore also covered in the EIA that accompanies the Housing Strategy. The same is true of the negative impacts that may arise from national policies or from possible policy directions that are to be set by further assessment and consultation. In such circumstances the Council will undertake EIAs as part of future policy development.

### **6.6. Rural Communities Implications**

6.6.1. Rural communities will positively benefit from the introduction of the Strategy, as it aims to address how we can provide access to affordable housing with a mix of tenures in all neighbourhoods of Cheshire East.

### **6.7. Implications for Children & Young People**

6.7.1. Through the development of this Strategy, Strategic Housing have engaged with colleagues within Cared for Children and Care Leavers to ensure appropriate measures are in place for the provision and access to support and housing options.

6.7.2. The Cheshire East Local Offer for Care Leavers contains the vision and supportive information for the provision of care leavers within the Borough. The policy gives guidance for Social Workers and Personal Advisors to what each care leaver is entitled to and the allocated worker should ensure that the entitlements are recorded in the young person's Pathway Plan.

## **6.8. Public Health Implications**

- 6.8.1. Comprehensive dialogue has taken place with Public Health to ensure the Housing Strategy priorities meets the wider aims and objectives of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, which are duly reflected within the Strategy's Delivery Plan.

## **7. Ward Members Affected**

- 7.1. All wards and local ward members.

## **8. Consultation & Engagement**

- 8.1. The Council obtained Portfolio Holder approval on 16 November 2017 to formally consult on a proposed new Housing Strategy for the period 2018 to 2023, the consultation was conducted between 27 November 2017 to 08 January 2018.
- 8.2. In addition to the formal consultation, the Strategy was considered by the Environment and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 November 2017, in which members were provided with an inclusive overview of the Strategy, together with the stages of consultation and democratic approval for the final strategy.
- 8.3. Through the wider public consultation exercise and invitation for comments from the Digital Influence Panel, we obtained 173 respondents to the draft consultation strategy, which is detailed within the consultation report as Appendix 3.
- 8.4. As our consultation report summary and our responses details (Appendix 4), while there are varying comments and suggestions, there are some central principal themes from the consultation, which have duly informed the development of the final Strategy.
- 8.5. Central to making this Housing Strategy a success is to ensure we effectively plan, measure and monitor how we will deliver the priorities detailed within this document, which will be achieved through an agreed Delivery Plan, a tool to help us deliver our strategy. The Delivery Plan will be subject to annual reviews during the lifetime of the Strategy, ensuring the priorities remain relevant and their delivery is continually monitored.

**9. Access to Information**

- 9.1. Appendix 1: Cheshire East Council Housing Strategy 2018-2023
- 9.2. Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment: Cheshire East Council Housing Strategy 2018-2023
- 9.3. Appendix 3: Consultation Report
- 9.4. Appendix 4: Consultation Feedback Summary

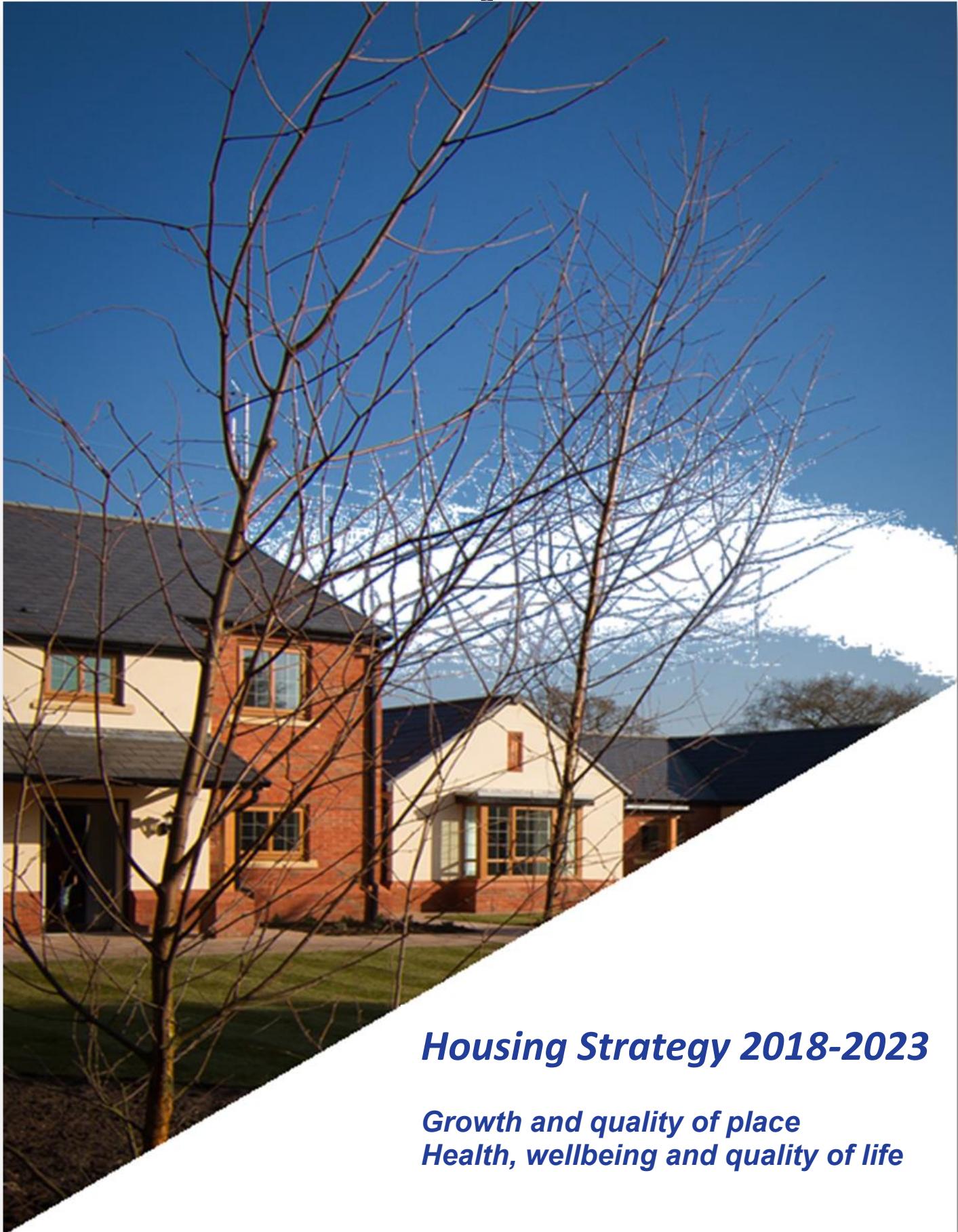
**10. Contact Information**

- 10.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

Name: Gerard Buckley

Job Title: Housing Policy Officer

Email: [gerard.buckley@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:gerard.buckley@cheshireeast.gov.uk)



## ***Housing Strategy 2018-2023***

***Growth and quality of place  
Health, wellbeing and quality of life***

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Front cover:

Thorntree Lower Withington  
(Peaks and Plains Housing Trust)

## ***Consultation***

The Housing Strategy had been initially developed through working with our key partners at consultation events, in which we invited representatives to attend and help shape and inform the priorities. To widen the consultation further, we sought the views from our key partners, stakeholders and the public through a 6 week formal consultation period between November 2017 and January 218.

As part of the consultation, we developed an on-line survey to allow the public and key stakeholders to directly feed into the development of the strategy to;

- Ensure people agreed with the Strategy themes and priorities
- Allow people to make comments and suggestions in terms of the contents of the Strategy, including the themes and priorities
- Review the Strategy's Delivery Plan

This formal consultation was published through our website; press release; social media; and direct contact with stakeholders. Hard copies of both the Strategy and consultation questionnaire where also available at the Council's Customer Contract Centres and libraries.

We received over 170 comments and suggestion for the Strategy, both through the online survey and direct contact by emails and letters. The results of the consultation survey are available on Cheshire East Council website.

## Foreword

Welcome to Cheshire East Housing Strategy 2018 to 2023. The Strategy has two central themes:

### **Growth and quality of place**

Cheshire East has a strong ambition for jobs-led economic growth across all areas and housing is essential to support this continuous growth. If housing is considered in isolation to our planned investment and regeneration, then sustainable growth or successful outcomes are unlikely to be achieved. We know that ensuring new homes delivered are of the right type, in the right place and giving residents choice and support are vital for Cheshire East. Where the market is not currently meeting housing need we will explore interventions to bring this forward.



### **Health, wellbeing and quality of life**

A key goal of our Housing Strategy is to ensure Cheshire East residents have a place to live that supports their health, wellbeing and contributes to the quality of life. Good quality, safe and affordable housing is essential to meeting this goal. Therefore, this Strategy details how we link our policy decision making with outcomes that support the health and wellbeing of all Cheshire East residents.

These themes allow us to focus on what matters to our communities, support the Council's **Medium Term Financial Growth Strategy**,<sup>1</sup> and the Council's vision of **Putting Residents at the heart of everything we do**, these will be delivered through our key Strategic Outcomes<sup>2</sup>:

Since the publication of our previous Housing Strategy in 2011, there have been significant changes to the local and national political, policy and funding landscape. This new Strategy reflects these changes,



<sup>1</sup> Cheshire East Council Medium Term Financial Growth Strategy 2017-2020

<sup>2</sup> Cheshire East Council: Corporate Plan 2017-2020

and is underpinned by our Local Plan and supportive strategies and policies which will enable us to achieve our priorities for housing in the borough.

We have been extremely busy since the publication of the previous Strategy, and in the past 3 years we have successfully worked with our partners to deliver almost 1400 affordable homes and brought 243 empty homes back into use. We have increased residents' opportunities for homes through our Housing Options Team by providing homes for 5,400 people and families, preventing over 2,000 individuals and families becoming homeless.

We have increased our relationships with private rented landlords and provided direct support for our most vulnerable residents, for example we have delivered almost 6,000 adaptations at a cost over £4 million, to enable some of our vulnerable residents to live independently.

But there is still more work to be done - which is developed throughout this new Strategy; a strategy to support Cheshire East for the future.

*Councillor Ainsley Arnold  
Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning*

## Introduction

Cheshire East is a great place to live, work, study and visit, and is well placed for the continued opportunities that our thriving job-based economic growth are providing across all areas of the borough. The Housing Strategy supports the Council's aims and objectives for housing in the borough, working to improve the quality, choice and supply of housing for current and future residents. With a population of 376,700<sup>3</sup> and estimated to grow to 427,100 by 2030<sup>4</sup> (13.4% increase), housing of the right type and in the right place is an important part of supporting sustainable growth.

Such growth is being shaped and informed by our *Local Plan* and major regeneration projects, working towards a sustainable economy, and supporting and encouraging growth and prosperity in all parts of the borough. The Council's success in attracting investment for the creation of new jobs and business growth has created increased demand for housing, whether to rent or buy.

In the process of achieving the successful outcomes, it is acknowledged that the Strategy will play a key role in contributing to the continued economic development of our borough, sustaining our unique character and identity and protecting our important environmental assets and heritage. As we work towards supporting Cheshire East Council's key Strategic Outcomes through Putting Residents at the heart of everything we do, it remains clear that housing is a key priority for all of us to make sure we deliver successful outcomes for our residents.

### ***Our housing vision***

***All residents in Cheshire East are able to access affordable, appropriate and decent accommodation***

<sup>3</sup> 2016 Mid-year population estimates, Office for National Statistics, NOMIS, Crown Copyright

<sup>4</sup> Population forecasts produced by Opinion Research Services for the 2015 Cheshire East Housing Development Study

Housing plays a significant role in people's quality of life; their health and wellbeing; access to work, training, education, and leisure activities are all influenced by where we live. The quality of housing, its cost and its location are of primary importance to ensure everyone can participate in their community.

Cheshire East shares the same fundamental aspirations set out in the Government's White Paper 'Fixing our broken housing market', which articulates how they intend to increase housing supply, accelerate delivery and explore the use of modern methods of construction. Where the market is not delivering the type of housing provision needed across Cheshire East, there is a case for intervention, as long as the risks are measured and do not distort or restrict the market.

## ***Why do we need a Housing Strategy and who is it for?***

### ***Ourselves***

To make sure housing makes a key contribution to the delivery of the Local Plan ambition, protecting and enhancing the 'Quality of Place'

### ***Our partners***

In supporting the delivery, we will make the most of opportunities that are available to work with our partners in seeking new and imaginative ways to inform and influence successful outcomes

### ***Our residents***

We will continue to facilitate opportunities for a mixed tenure of affordable housing and support people with identified need

## *Our priorities*



## ***Challenges and opportunities***

We have achieved a great deal since our previous Housing Strategy, helping to shape and inform the quality, quantity and choice of housing in Cheshire East. As we now work to support continued growth, we acknowledge that there are challenges and opportunities, emerging from national policy and legislation and some from our unique and diverse local housing market, including:

### ***Affordable housing***

- Facilitating delivery that meets need
- Increasing the number of good quality, mixed tenure, smaller type family homes to meet the needs of existing families and those moving into Cheshire East to take up employment opportunities

### ***Economic regeneration***

- Maintaining a housing delivery enabling role in our town centres, villages and our neighbourhoods

### ***Rural areas***

- Increasing provision of affordable housing where a need has been identified through working with parish councils and local communities

### ***Welfare reform***

- Mitigating against the potential impact of the welfare reform and working with partners to take forward job opportunities

### ***Improve housing offer for ageing population***

- Smaller homes for older people to meet changes in household types; help for those with special needs; dementia friendly; making existing homes suitable for independent living and providing a mix of housing on larger developments, including single storey accommodation as a choice

### ***Intervention***

- Where the market is unable to meet housing needs, including the stimulation of growth and improving the quality in the private rented sector

### ***Wider infrastructure***

- Through our direct support for the Cheshire East Local Plan, ensure homes are provided which influence major infrastructure decisions that affect the area's economic wellbeing

It is clear that Cheshire East has a need for more homes at different stages of our residents' lives. In shaping our response, housing research including the Cheshire East Housing Development Study 2015<sup>5</sup> identifies the Objectively Assessed Need for housing in Cheshire East, which is reflected in the Council's Local Plan. The Local Plan also identifies sites to meet the overall housing requirement.

While there is a need for new homes to support our successful economy,

there is also a need to address the challenges in the existing stock. The condition of existing stock improves each year but there is also still much to be done particularly in the growth and improvement of the private rented sector; the increasing

contribution and challenges Houses in Multiple Occupation is bringing to the market; promoting affordable warmth and working with our partners as our neighbourhoods go through periods of regeneration and housing renewal.



Previously, a substantial number of local authorities took the decision to transfer their housing stock to external organisations to manage and to also develop further affordable housing. However, we are now seeing a number of authorities taking the decision to start to develop in their own right, utilising different mechanisms to achieve this including the establishment of Housing Development Companies, Joint Ventures and the utilisation of land assets. Local Authorities are also taking the decision to intervene in the housing market to bring forward additional affordable housing, bringing in vital revenue streams.

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<sup>5</sup> Opinion Research Services 2015

Cheshire East has the opportunity to utilise its own land assets to meet housing needs, which are not being fully met by the market. Disposal of land assets will also provide much needed revenue to the Council.

This Housing Strategy comes at a time of great change and reform. It is evident that recent changes in legislation and national policy have created challenges and opportunities for all areas of Cheshire East, resulting in a need for the Council to think more innovatively about how we deliver quality services with fewer resources. Welfare reform and austerity measures have resulted in reductions of available income to spend on housing for residents and registered housing providers

Therefore, this Strategy will explore our challenges in more detail and provide potential solutions, and in turn highlight opportunities available for all residents of Cheshire East.

## *How the strategy links*

**Sustainable Community  
Strategy**  
2010-2025

**Cheshire and Warrington  
Local Enterprise Partnership**  
Strategic Economic Plan

**Cheshire and Warrington  
Local Enterprise Partnership**  
Constellation Partnership

**Corporate Plan**  
2017-2020

**Mid Term Financial  
Strategy**  
2017-2020

**Housing Strategy  
2018-2023**

**Health and Wellbeing  
Strategy**

**Local Plan**  
2010-2030

**Place**  
Economic Strategy

**Place**  
Regeneration Strategies  
Crewe Macclesfield

**Place**  
Strategy

## Housing in Cheshire East

### Key Facts

#### Supply...

- 1,398 affordable housing units completed in last 3 years, which is 40% above our delivery target of 1,000 units
- Of which, 979 are social / affordable rent
- Through provision of Cheshire Homechoice, we have facilitated on average 1,196 social rent housing lets per year

#### Affordability...

- Average property price £214,000
  - Median household income at settlement level ranges from £26,300 in some parts of the south of the Borough to £65,100 in areas of the north
- Land Registry May 2017 / PayCheck 2017

#### Health...

- Last year, we reduced costs in the local health economy by over £2million by helping 173 vulnerable residents with heating problems
- For every £1 we invest in heating there is a cost benefit of £18.51 to the health and care system

Housing Repairs and Adaptations for Vulnerable People Policy 2017

#### Local economy... Cheshire East provides

- Around 195,000 jobs within the borough
- The economic output (Gross Value Added) of 8% of the North West GVA
- 7.4% of the region's businesses

BRES 2016 survey, ONS  
Regional GVA data, ONS, Dec 2016 / Business Demography – 2015 - ONS

#### Demand...

- Cheshire Homechoice maintained an average of 6,427 individuals and households registrations per year over the past 3 years
- 355 new affordable homes needed each year during the lifetime of this Strategy

#### Tenure...

- Of the 157,624 dwellings in Cheshire East;
- 75% owner occupation
- 12.5% Private Rented Sector
- 11.5% Social housing
- 0.5% Shared Ownership

Tables QS405EW (2011 Census) and KS018 (2001 Census),  
Office for National Statistics (ONS). ONS Crown Copyright 2018.

#### Occupiers...

- Between 2010 and 2030 we will see a 65% increase in people of retirement age, with the number of older people (85+) increasing by around 134%
- 7.9% of Cheshire East residents have a long term health condition or disability that causes their day to day activities to be limited a lot, comparable nationally at 8.3%

Cheshire East Housing Development Study 2015  
Census 2011

#### Housing costs...

- Required household income to purchase lower quartile housing (x3.5 times income) – £38,571
- Required income to rent lower quartile housing (third of monthly earnings) – £1,440

Land Registry July 2017

## ***Growth and quality of place***

Cheshire East is a popular place to live, work and visit, and through our effective drive to be *the Best in the North West*, we have been enormously successful in attracting investment for the creation of new jobs and business growth, which has led to increased demand for housing, whether to rent or buy. As a gateway to the Northern Powerhouse, Cheshire East is enjoying the benefits of targeted major regeneration programmes and Masterplans from the investment in a high-speed rail connection (HS2) and its significance for Crewe and the wider sub-regional area, through to direct development for Macclesfield.

Our new Housing Strategy comes at a time of funding challenges faced by the council, the wider public sector, registered housing providers and the third sector. In addition, individuals and households are experiencing higher costs of living, including spending on accommodation and heating costs, all of which means we must seek to achieve our strategic objectives by making the best use of the resources available and promoting fresh, innovative, and new ideas.

To meet this demand, Cheshire East Council, along with our key stakeholders, acknowledge that our housing enabling role must link key decisions for homes within areas of economic growth and supported by the area's infrastructure throughout the borough. To make sure that the **Right Home** are in the **Right Place**, we must ensure that all new housing is located with good access to employment, healthcare, schools, retail and other facilities, or seek the necessary



improvements through ensuring development provides funds supporting infrastructure, enabling low car use, promoting sustainable transport and quality of life.

Housing is far more than bricks and mortar - it's about having an inclusive role to play in the investment of new homes; health and wellbeing of residents and making a major contribution to the economic growth of an area. It is essential that the range of new homes are built and provided in the right places to provide housing options equally for all residents, to support new jobs, with good public transport links, and access to appropriate local facilities, so that communities can grow and thrive.

We explore such aspects within the theme of **Growth and quality of place**, set out our priorities and what we intend to do at the end of the section through a Delivery Plan.

## ***Housing need***

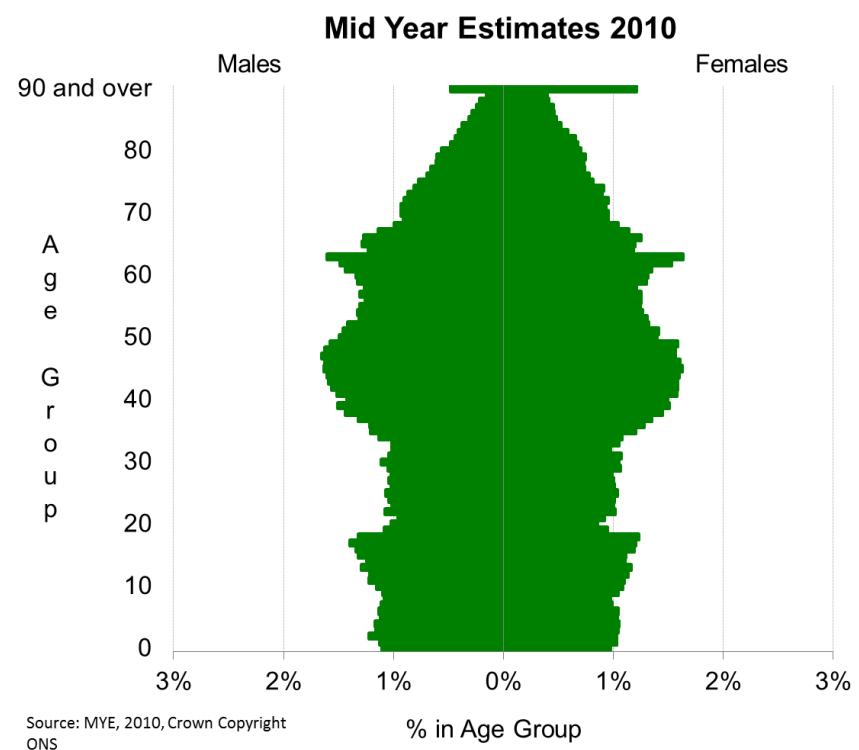
The Local Plan notes that sufficient land will be provided to accommodate the objectively assessed need of 36,000 homes between 2010 - 2030. In addition, as the Local Plan outlines, through economic growth it is projected that 31,400 jobs will be created over the 20 year Plan period. Moreover, whilst we highlight increased housing need through the projection of increased population and job-led economic growth, we also acknowledge the substantial number of families and single people in current housing need within Cheshire East, as they seek advice and support in terms of accessing affordable housing.

Increasing life expectancy means it is crucial we continue to respond to the changing needs of our older population and specific population groups through new developments, refurbishment works to existing homes and improved access to a range of housing options.

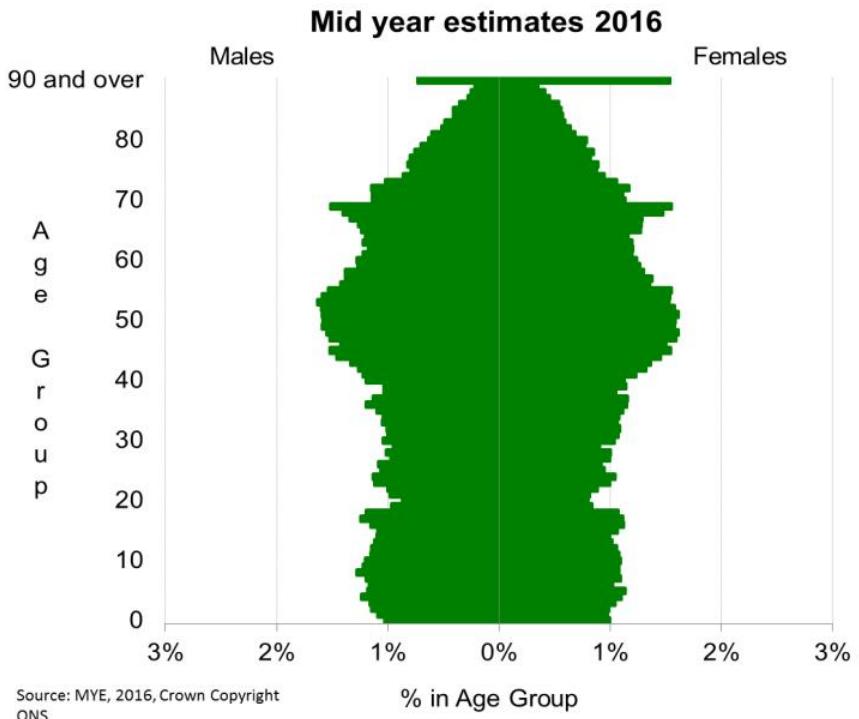
The Local Plan forecasts that Cheshire East will have a 65% increase in the population aged 65 and above, and a 134% increase in the population aged 85 and above over the Plan period. Moreover, with the older population predicted to rise, there may also be a growing number of households that include a member with a disability along with people living with long-term health conditions.

## Demographic change

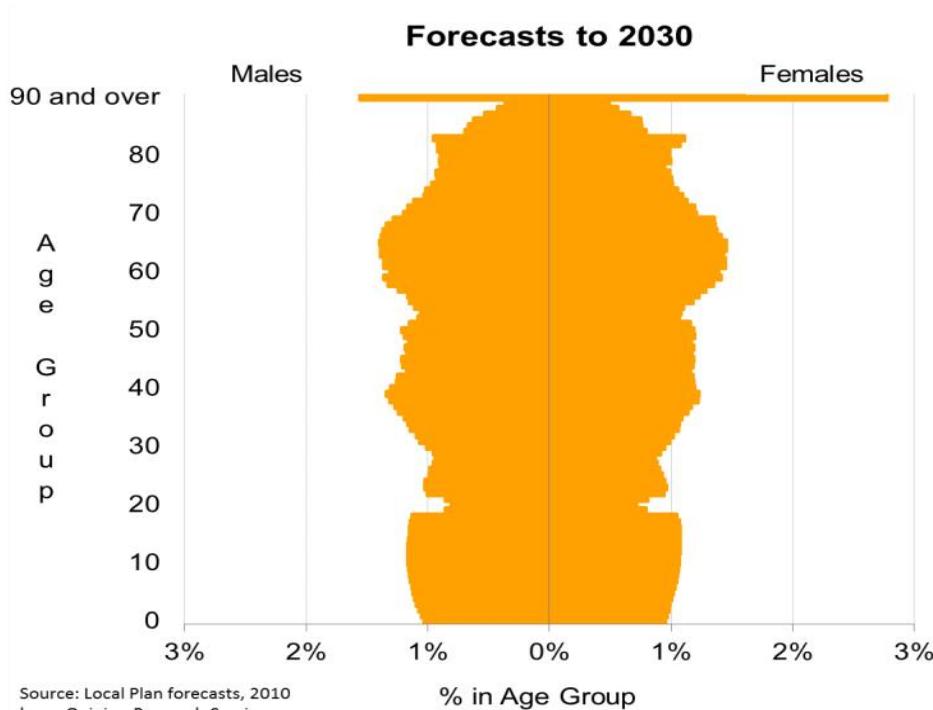
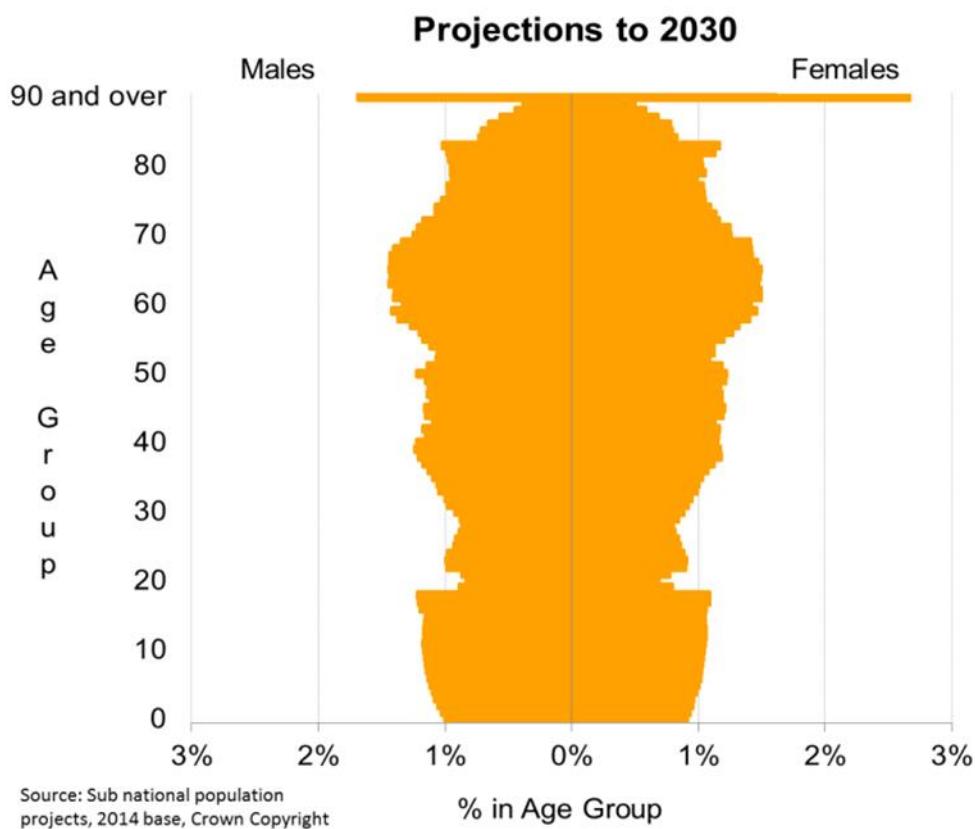
Between 2010 and 2016, the population of Cheshire East is estimated to have increased by 7,600 residents or 2.1%, which is an average annual increase of around 0.3%.



Between this period, the general trend was for the age groups aged 50+ to increase and for those under 50 to decrease. The largest relative change was in the 90+ age group, an increase of 36.3% from 3,200 to 4,300 residents. One of the largest relative changes was in the 90+ age group.



The two orange charts indicate what the future demographic profile of Cheshire East may look like in 2030. The projections in the first chart take recent demographic trends and project them forward. The forecasts in the second chart use similar trends, but also account for the anticipated housing and economic development and the level of jobs growth set out in the Cheshire East Local Plan.



Between 2016 and 2030, the projections show a possible increase of 20,200 residents or a 0.4% average annual increase. The forecasts show a possible increase of 50,400 or an average annual percentage increase that is nearly double that of the projections at 0.9%.

## Affordability

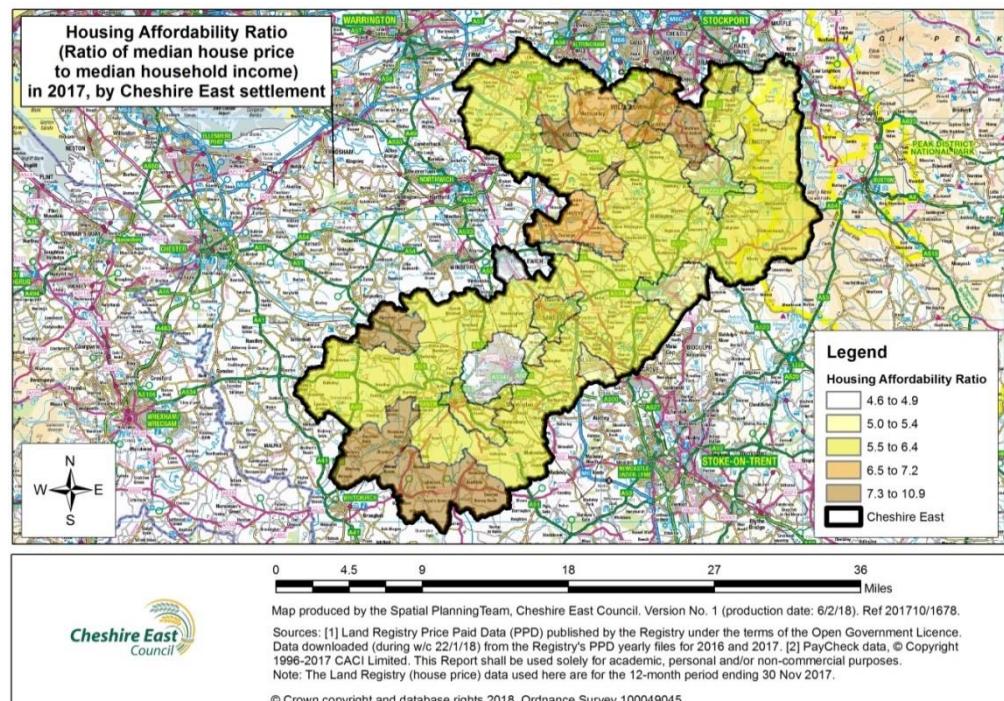
In Cheshire East, the average house price of £214,000 (mean) is currently 9.8% below the England & Wales average (£238,000) but exceeds the regional average (£157,000) by 36.2%.

Household income is a consideration in terms of affordability. At settlement level, 2017 data on household income, together with Land Registry data on house prices, can be used to estimate the ratio of median house prices to median household income, which is another measure of housing affordability.

The resulting affordability ratios places the borough-wide ratio at 5.8

and suggest that, focusing only on towns, housing is least affordable (with ratios above 6) in Knutsford (which has the highest ratio of any town, at 7.3), Poynton (6.2) and Wilmslow (6.6).

By contrast, housing is most affordable (with ratios below 5.5) in the towns of Alsager, Congleton, Crewe, Macclesfield and Middlewich (which has the lowest ratio of any settlement, at 4.6).



Among smaller settlements the ratio varies widely, from under 5.5 in Bollington, Disley, Haslington and Holmes Chapel to more than 9 in Bunbury, Prestbury (which has the highest ratio of all settlements, at 10.9) and Wrenbury. In the more sparsely populated areas (outside the borough's 24 main settlements), housing is slightly more unaffordable than the borough average, with a ratio of 6.1.

Similarly, high mean incomes are more prevalent in the north of the borough; Knutsford, Poynton and Wilmslow are all above the Cheshire East average (as is Middlewich further south). Mean incomes are also above the borough average in Cheshire East's rural areas.

Notably, over the last two decades the Cheshire East average housing price has declined significantly in

comparison to the England & Wales average. In July 1995, the average Cheshire East property price was 9.7% above the England & Wales figure.

Among the borough's towns<sup>6</sup>, Crewe has the lowest median house price (£125,000), followed by Middlewich

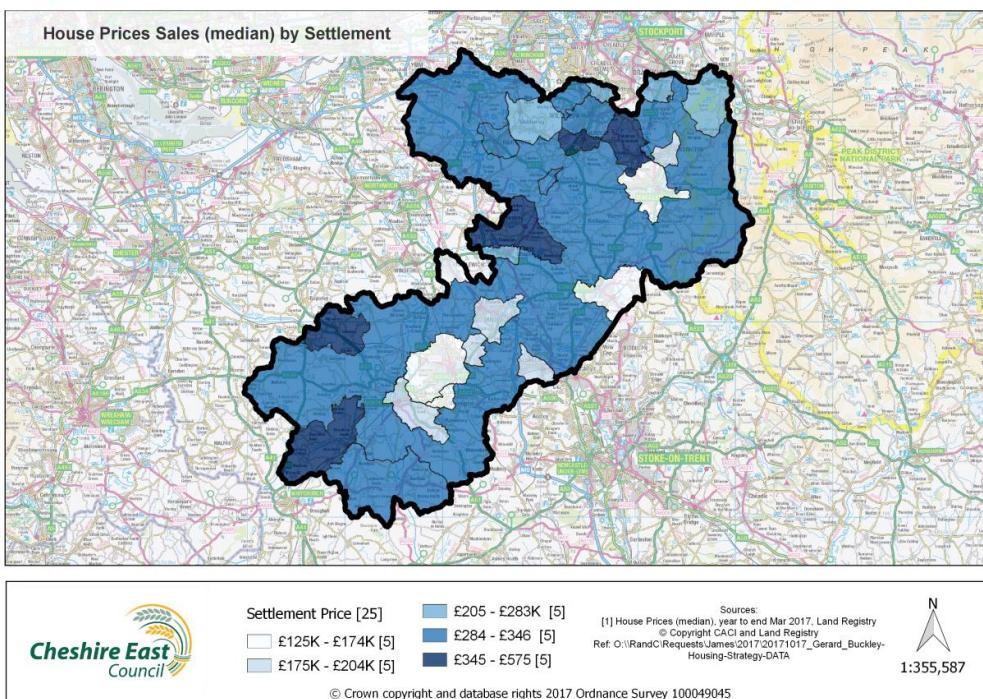
(£153,000), Macclesfield (£166,000), Congleton (£173,000) and Alsager (£175,000); median prices in Nantwich and Sandbach are close to the Cheshire East average but still below it. In contrast, median prices are far above the Cheshire East median in Wilmslow (£342,000), Knutsford (£330,000) and Poynton (£275,000) and to a lesser extent in Handforth (£225,000).

For smaller settlements, median prices range from under £185,000 in Haslington and Shavington to over £400,000 in Bunbury, Prestbury and Wrenbury. Outside the 24 main settlements, where the population tends to be more sparsely distributed, the median price is well above the borough median, at £295,000.

As can be seen, we have seen slight reductions in house prices within the area, residents' experience

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<sup>6</sup> Land Registry for the year ending March 2017



considerable disparity in the average purchase prices, between the north of the borough (with its strong link with south Manchester) to Crewe in the south of the borough.

In addition, evidence highlights disparities between affordability within smaller market towns and traditional rural areas, for example Prestbury in the north area experiencing median house prices at 9.4 times income; Goostrey in the central area experiencing 7.1 and Wrenbury in the south experiencing 10.8.<sup>7</sup>

Nationally, around 1 in 5 adults aged 31 to 44, who don't already have children, are delaying starting a family because of concerns about housing.<sup>8</sup>

Young people, especially those in vulnerable groups such as people leaving care and people with complex needs are finding it particularly difficult to find a suitable home. Moreover, as the Cheshire East Local Plan outlines, it is projected that the total number of jobs will grow by 7,700 (an average of about 1,500 per year) over the lifespan of this Strategy.

Demand for housing is high and it remains important that we are prepared for such challenges. In doing so, we continually gather information in accordance with affordability for the residents in the borough and work with stakeholders to make sure we have accurate information to reflect housing need and aspirations.

## ***Land supply***

The ability for us to achieve our vision, aims, objectives and aspirations for Cheshire East are affected by the lack of affordable homes to both purchase and rent.

The Local Plan Strategy has allocated sites to support the continued supply of available land to meet both current and future housing need, working with residents and strategic partners to help us identify sites for housing. This work will be further supplemented by the

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<sup>7</sup> Measured in terms of settlement. Average (median) household income is from PayCheck 2014, © Copyright CACI Limited. This Report shall be used for academic, personal and /or non-commercial purposes. Housing price data produced by Land Registry © Crown copyright 2014. Obtained from the Land Registry website on 22/12/14.

<sup>8</sup> Council for Mortgage Lenders October 2016

second part of the Local Plan; the Site Allocations and Development Policies document which will seek to meet the residual development requirements up to 2030.

The Council recognises the important role of the Green Belt in the borough. The Local Plan Strategy has maintained the general extent of the Green Belt, but to achieve sustainable development over a period of several decades, some limited alterations to the detailed Green Belt boundaries around settlements in both the north and south of the borough have been necessary.

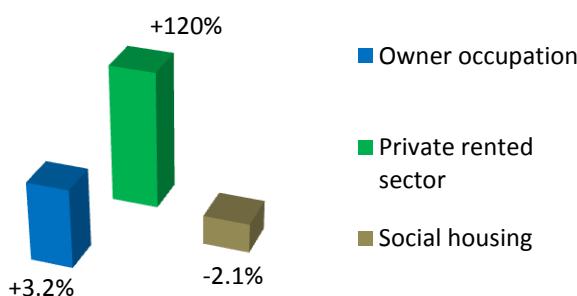
The Local Plan Strategy is also supported by policies which seek to provide for the efficient use of land including encouragement for the redevelopment / reuse of previously developed land and buildings.

### ***Private Rented Sector***

The private rented sector (PRS) makes an important contribution to the housing offer and offers tremendous flexibility to directly support our continued job-led growth for existing and incoming labour force.

Traditionally, the sector has not been the tenure of choice, mainly due to concerns of security of tenure and property conditions. The private rented sector has seen rapid growth and is now the second largest tenure

behind home ownership; with the number of people in owner-occupations totalling 118,766; private rented total is 19,938 and social housing total is 18,141, which equates to a 119.8% increase for the PRS over a ten-year period.<sup>9</sup>



***Cheshire East:  
Housing tenure change 2001-2011***

Cheshire East fully supports a well managed and flexible PRS, in which it will offer opportunities in all areas of the borough for further housing solutions. Moreover, the major regeneration of our town centres in Crewe and the area in and around Macclesfield offer unique possibilities for higher-end PRS flats and family size accommodation, to attract younger people and further support the ambitions of jobs-led growth within the borough. The Council has

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<sup>9</sup> Tables QS405EW (2011 Census) and KS018 (2001 Census), Office for National Statistics (ONS). ONS Crown Copyright 2018.

carried out a study into the PRS in Cheshire East and has found there is a need for new development in all towns in Cheshire East but particularly in Crewe and Macclesfield.

Additionally, through legislation, the sector now enables our Homelessness Service to support homeless or at risk of homelessness individuals or families with an immediate solution. As such we will work to increase the supply of good quality and well managed private rented accommodation available to manage demand and offer a flexible, quick housing option.

Since 2010, consecutive central Governments' have highlighted the increased capacity of the PRS as a tenure of choice, to which we are now seeking to explore our role in successfully enabling direct invention into further growth of the sector.

## ***Market Housing***

A neighbourhood with a mix of housing type, tenures, and sizes will be more able to meet the changing needs and aspirations of its residents, through their changing life stages, household shapes and sizes or changes in income. Providing greater housing choice increases the opportunities for households to remain within their communities and promotes social equality and inclusion by easing geographical constraints on the search for appropriate homes.

The Local Plan sets out the requirements for new residential developments by stating that they should maintain provision of and contribute to a mix of housing types, tenure and size to help support the creation of mixed, balanced and inclusive communities. This includes meeting the needs of an ageing population, smaller properties and opportunities for self build.

## Affordable Housing

For those whose housing needs cannot be met through market provision - Affordable housing is; social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing,<sup>10</sup> provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined by local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

Cheshire East Council and its partners have continued to be successful in attracting funding from Homes England to develop new affordable housing, in which registered housing providers have benefited from over £10 million of funding during the period 2016 to 2021 to fund the delivery of a further 334 affordable homes.

However, more affordable homes are needed to meet an increasing demand and need to be in the right location. Housing needs work undertaken for the Local Plan estimated that the objectively assessed need for affordable housing was a minimum of 7,100 dwellings, which equates to an average of 355 per annum over the lifetime of the Local Plan.<sup>11</sup> Planning Policy details that in residential developments affordable housing will be provided as follows:

- In developments of 15 or more dwellings (or 0.4 hectares) in the Principal Towns and Key Service Centres at least 30% of all units are to be affordable
- In developments of 11 or more dwellings (or have a maximum combined gross floorspace of more than 1,000 sqm) in Local Service Centres and all other locations at least 30% of all units are to be affordable

We continually review the approaches we are using to increase the provision of affordable housing. However, we must acknowledge that the affordable housing sector has experienced rapid change because of tighter budgets, development viability and recent changes in Government policy for more investment.

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<sup>10</sup> Intermediate housing is described by The National Planning Policy Framework as homes for sale and rent below market level, such as shared ownership and equity loans, other low-cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing

<sup>11</sup> Cheshire East Housing Development Study 2015, ORS, June 2015

## Rural housing

Approximately 27% of Cheshire East's population live in Local Service Centres (LSCs)<sup>12</sup>, other settlements and rural areas. The provision of affordable housing is vital to the creation and maintenance of sustainable communities in these areas. There is a need to provide affordable housing for people who work in rural areas in order to avoid rural decline.

Outside the 24 main settlements, where the population tends to be more sparsely distributed, the median price is well above the borough median at £295,000. In addition the availability of affordable properties for rent in rural areas is much lower than in urban areas. The Council's policy for Rural Exceptions for Housing Local Needs is contained within Policy SC6 of the Council's Local Plan Strategy which states Rural Exceptions affordable housing will be permitted as an exception to other policies concerning the countryside to meet locally identified need, subject to certain criteria being met.

Many rural areas now have neighbourhood plans which contain information about need for affordable housing. If there is an identified need for affordable housing in rural areas, it will be a priority for the Council to bring forward affordable housing on exceptions sites where appropriate.

## Brownfields First

In accordance with national policy, the Council is committed to the development of brownfield sites, which has been achieved over recent years through our Brownfields First approach. In seeking to increase the scope, we will continue to work towards implementation of our LDO in Macclesfield, monitoring if the aim to increasing their capacity has been successful.

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<sup>12</sup> Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2016 mid-year population estimates for small areas (October 2017 release). ONS Crown Copyright 2018. ONS licensed under the Open Government Licence v. 3.0

## ***Empty Homes***

Empty homes are recognised as a wasted resource, depriving people of a much-needed home and contributing to the need for more housing. Properties will become empty at some point as part of the normal operation of the housing market, usually during the rental or buying process. It is only when properties stay empty longer than six months without any obvious signs of renovation or rental that they become 'true' empty homes. When left empty, they have the potential to cause blight to local communities, prevent investment and regeneration, devalue surrounding properties and attract anti-social behaviour.

We have been successful in reducing empty homes by 53% during the lifetime of the previous housing strategy through direct intervention, information and advice, enforcement, and policy changes around Council Tax.

Our approach through this strategy is to work with the owners of empty homes, to support and encourage voluntary action to bring these homes back into use. Where co-operation fails, we will determine the extent to which the empty home impacts on its neighbours and the wider community, which in turn will inform our decision whether to intervene using our enforcement powers.

## ***Our priorities.***

***Priority: Facilitate the delivery of affordable housing and stimulate the housing market***

As clearly identified within the Local Plan, our aim is to improve the supply of homes in Cheshire East; affordable, market and homes to rent. In supporting the Government's housing policy approach, we will work to improve the housing offer through a package of measures to stimulating the investment in our housing market to support our continued economic growth.

Demand for homes in Cheshire East is being shaped by our growth, with the creation of newly formed households who are unable to access the market housing and seek options to access affordable housing. Moreover, we are experiencing demand for smaller size homes of mixed tenure to meet the need of older residents looking to downsize and single person households.

As demand from those who are struggling to find a home increases in conjunction with increases in household numbers, the Council and its partners will have to be creative and flexible in securing the levels of affordable housing that the borough needs for the future. This will involve consideration of innovative forms of affordable housing within the context of emerging Government policy, including affordable home ownership.

**Priority: *Support regeneration to support quality of place***

Quality of place contributes to both the economic sustainability and the well-being of an area and its residents. As we seek to further support the Corporate aims and objectives that promote our future prosperity - we must ensure that housing focuses on quality of design and appropriate development as outlined within the Council's Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document, which can help increase return on economic and social value to our communities. At the same time, we need to ensure that there is the right mix of housing available to meet the needs of residents.

To this end, we will maintain our commitment to ensure the supply of housing continues to be central to regeneration and renewal of our neighbourhoods, working directly with our partners in areas of housing need through facilitating and encouraging sustainable development of affordable homes.

**Priority: *Improve the housing offer for an ageing population***

It is essential that a housing offer is available to our residents at all stages of their lives, to enable them to live in a good quality affordable home. With the proven forecast of an ageing population within Cheshire East, it is crucial that we have a clear vision and support the shaping of a housing market for older people that is responsive to their changing need.

While we will continue to support older people who choose to continue to live in their home by the further integration of housing, care and health, there must be an opportunity for older people to seek to 'rightsize' (downsize) and access a choice of market housing, affordable housing of mixed tenure and type and where

practical, a well-designed home that is ‘care-ready’ for their future need. Therefore, we will continue to promote the need for age friendly housing design in identified areas of need.

**Priority: *Develop a housing offer to support jobs-led growth***

Cheshire East is part of the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), whose vision is to make Cheshire and Warrington the best performing economy outside of the South East. The recently reviewed Strategic Economic Plan sets out the role of housing in future economic development and replicates our ambition to increase supply and to make sure that affordability issues across the authority are addressed. Working in collaboration can bring forward opportunities for Cheshire East including the sharing of best practice and a collective approach to delivery.

As detailed in the LEP, the Constellation Partnership (formerly referred to as the Northern Gateway Partnership) is a boundary breaking partnership between two Local Enterprise Partnerships and seven Local Authorities, with a unified fast-track approach to ambitious, plan-led economic development, bringing further opportunities for housing growth.

The Partners share a common vision: a single economic footprint creating a coherent investment market, boosted by the international investment magnet of High Speed Rail (HS2) connectivity, producing attractive growth opportunities for investors across the Growth Zone area including Stoke and North Staffordshire.

To deliver this scale of growth, partners must ensure that the growth proposed considers connectivity, markets, sectoral options and skills, but will also improve quality of life and create access to improved, sustainable services and facilities. This includes sustainable local housing growth that drives footfall to sustain and develop existing town centres that may otherwise continue to struggle, and by offering high quality design and innovative build opportunities to attract new professionals and families and retain graduates in urban centres.

## *Delivery Plan: Growth and quality of life*

### **Priority: Facilitate the delivery of affordable housing and stimulate the housing market**

<b>Ref:</b>	<b>How we will do this?</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>When by</b>
HS01	1. Facilitate the delivery of 355 affordable homes per year through partnership working	A mix of small and family sized homes to meet housing needs, including overcrowded families and people who are looking to downsize	1. Quarterly review meeting with Registered Housing Providers 2. Explore funding opportunities through Homes England and other agencies 3. Explore the most effective use of Section 106 Funding 4. Quarterly update reports	March 2019
	2. Support the Private Rented Sector housing offer	Increase the provision and attractiveness of the Private Rented Sector offer	1. Exploring opportunities to simulate growth 2. Developing appropriate policies	March 2020
	3. Explore development of Joint Venture	Development of mix of housing provision and opportunities for increased revenue	1. Formalise business case 2. Progress business case through the formal approval routes 3. Procurement (subject to approval)	March 2019
	4. Use of surplus Council assets	Residential opportunities in unused Council buildings and land	1. Quarterly reviews to be undertaken with Assets 2. Establish business cases for appropriate sites and best route for development 3. Progress through formal approval routes	Strategy lifespan
	5. Implement our Brownfield First approach across Cheshire East	Increase residential opportunities on brownfields sites, increasing provision within town centres	1. Work with Regeneration to establish residential opportunities within town centres (Crewe and Macclesfield) 2. Completion of Macclesfield Development Orders and monitor progress 3. Review the In Town Living Project for further opportunities 4. Review the Brownfield Register for residential development opportunities	Strategy lifespan

<b>Priority: Facilitate the delivery of affordable housing and stimulate the housing market</b>				
<b>Ref:</b>	<b>How we will do this?</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>When by</b>
HS01 (con)	6. Facilitate the delivery of affordable housing in rural areas with identified need	Increasing the amount of affordable housing	Proactively working with Parish Councils who have identified a need for affordable housing to bring forward such opportunities	Strategy lifespan
	7. Development of Supplementary / or appropriate Planning Policies	Facilitate the delivery of affordable housing	1. Formulate the evidence base for mixed provision including; affordable; older persons; self-build, specialist and private rented 2. Development of appropriate policies 3. Implementation of policy approach	March 2020
	8. Self build and custom build	Increase self build and custom build Opportunities in the delivery of planning policy	1. Maintain register 2. Seek appropriate sites for self / custom build	March 2019
	9. Attract investors in the Multihousing Sector	Stimulate the opportunities to increase the provision of private rented and increase housing options for residents	1. Explore council led opportunities to increase private rented provision 2. Work with Registered Providers and investors to progress and develop in Cheshire East	Strategy lifespan
	10. Funding opportunities	Increase the housing options for residents	Explore funding opportunities to increase housing provision. for example Housing Infrastructure Funding, Accelerated Construction, Modern Methods of Construction	Strategy lifespan
	11. Support the development of the Handforth Garden Village	Support the delivery of a mixed tenure scheme	Direct involvement in the Masterplan	Mach 2020
<b>Who will help us to achieve this?</b>		Elected Members Engine of the North Homes England	Housing developers Housing Providers Neighbourhood Planning	Private landlords Regeneration Residents

**Priority: Support regeneration to support quality of place**

Ref:	How we will do this?	Outcomes	Milestone	When by
HS02	1. Work with partners on programmes of regeneration and renewal within the borough	Ensure the importance of the housing offer remains principal in jobs-led economic growth	1. Working with Regeneration to identify residential opportunities 2. Develop appropriate policies and strategies to bring forward these opportunities	Strategy lifespan
	2. Work with housing provider and developers to increase market and intermediate product sales	Improved choice of affordable housing options to meet diversity of need	Understanding the housing market needs within an area	Annual review
	3. Explore collaborative opportunities to bring forward housing opportunities	Support aims and objectives of Constellation Partnership	Work with the Local Enterprise Partnership and the Constellation Partnership to bring forward opportunities for housing growth	Annual review
	4. Support providers in funding applications for Estate Regeneration	To make sure our neighbourhoods benefit from direct investment	Actively engage with Providers to review and input into plans	Annual review
	5. Maintain strategic links with providers as they seek to diversify their business culture	Support our partner providers	Providers review meetings	Strategy lifespan
<b>Who will help us to achieve this?</b>		Elected Members Engine of the North Homes England	Housing developers Neighbourhood Planning Private landlords	Regeneration Housing Providers Residents

<b>Priority: Improve the housing offer for an ageing population</b>				
<b>Ref:</b>	<b>How we will do this?</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>When by</b>
<b>HS03</b>	1. Promote a housing offer which provides a mix of type, affordability, tenure and size for older people	Support health and wellbeing of an ageing population	1. Update evidence base in relation to housing needs for an ageing population 2. Explore downsizing development opportunities	March 2020
	2. Support Local Plan (Part 2) in the provision of housing choice for older people	Housing offer is of appropriate specification and age positive	Work with Spatial Planning to develop appropriate policies	March 2019
	3. Provision of housing offer to rightsize for ageing population	Housing offer is promoted as attractive and sustainable	Customer engagement	Strategy lifespan
	4. Review the Vulnerable and Older People Housing Strategy	Informing commissioning decisions to enable us to improve the housing offer	1. Review evidence base 2. Consultation 3. Development revised strategy	March 2019
<b>Who will help us to achieve this?</b>		Elected Members Engine of the North Homes England	Housing developers Neighbourhood Planning Private landlords	Regeneration Housing Providers Residents

<b>Priority: Develop a housing offer to support jobs-led growth</b>				
<b>Ref:</b>	<b>How we will do this?</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>When by</b>
<b>HS04</b>	1. Sustain the housing requirements in the Local Plan	High quality housing offer	Quarterly report on the number, tenure, type, size, and funding of housing in areas of identified growth	Strategy lifespan
	2. Mix of housing offer in area of growth	A range of affordable housing types	Development of appropriate policies in conjunction with Spatial Planning	Strategy lifespan
	3. New homes are in areas of growth	New homes of the right quality, in the right location at the right price	Development of appropriate policies in conjunction with Spatial Planning	Strategy lifespan
	4. Promote the contribution of the Private Rented Sector	Attractive housing offer	Development of appropriate policies in conjunction with Spatial Planning	Annual review
<b>Who will help us to achieve this?</b>		Elected Members Engine of the North Homes England	Housing developers Neighbourhood Planning Private landlords	Regeneration Housing Providers Residents

## ***Health, wellbeing and quality of life***

Living in suitable good quality housing is critical to our health and wellbeing, and provides a base from which to access education, training and employment, participate and contribute to the community and achieve a decent quality of life. Safe and suitable housing also enables people to manage their own health and care needs, live independently, complete treatment and recover from substance misuse and ill-health, and move on successfully from homelessness and other traumatic life events.



Poor housing puts pressure on the health and social care system through emergency admissions and use of acute hospital services, delayed transfers of care from hospital to home, provision of care packages, and ongoing treatment for ill health.

Our ambition is to improve health through the home. Co-ordinated approaches to securing access to housing, commissioning preventative services and improving the quality of homes will generate positive outcomes for residents and reduce the burden on the NHS and other services. We are committed to stimulating and shaping a diverse, active market where people with care and support needs, their families and their carers are included and involved in community, economic and social life.

Housing is recognised in the Care Act 2014 as a fundamental component of wellbeing. The general duty to promote wellbeing includes specific reference to housing; information and advice should include housing options, local authorities should promote housing that facilitates choice and control, and multi-agency working should include work with housing partners. We will secure opportunities for residents to make informed choices about their housing, to access and maintain good quality homes and sustain independent living by connecting them to services across housing, welfare

rights, health, social care, education, training and employment, focusing on those who need the most support to achieve independent lives.

The dynamics of the relationship between housing and health can be complex and require a collaborative and co-ordinated approach between the housing, health, social care, voluntary, community and faith sectors.

Health and social care is integrating; we need to ensure that housing is a key factor in that integration. Our priority must be to design and commission services with our partners in Adult Services, Childrens Services, Public Health, and Partnerships and Communities that promote choice, control and self help to address health and housing needs; early intervention to stop residents' health and housing needs from escalating and respond effectively to complex needs and people in crisis. Our strategy and associated commissioning must be firmly linked to health outcomes for residents, and must build on the key evidence within the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA).

We explore such aspects within the theme of **Health, wellbeing and quality of life**, set out our priorities and what we intend to do at the end of the section through a Delivery Plan.

## ***Independent Living***

For many older people, their preference is to stay living in their own home. Some however feel unable to manage in their home and consider alternative options for housing, whether that is making their current home more suitable, downsizing, moving to a different tenure, or looking for housing with support. Community based independent living can take several forms, from living in mainstream general needs housing with floating visiting support for people with low level needs, shared living in houses or single storey accommodation with on-site support for those with higher needs and purpose built supported housing schemes.

In extreme circumstances, older people make a move into residential / nursing care, normally through need but sometimes through choice. Supporting people to live well and independently costs less than residential care and can avoid emergency hospital admission.

Of course, independent living is critical for people of all ages as their needs change in response to life events. There is a growing body of evidence demonstrating that an accessible, adapted home can make a significant contribution to improving older and disabled people's quality of life. Because low income often coincides with disability, many disabled people rely on help to adapt their home.

Handyperson services play a key role in keeping people safe and early intervention, with around 1,500 people each year helped to prevent falls and the subsequent hospital admissions, as well facilitating getting people home from hospital.

Major adaptations are also a critical part of reducing the burden on social care and health, and support provided by the home improvement agency guides people through the practical elements of designing adaptations, applying for grants and appointing contractors.

Over the past 3 years the home improvement agency has facilitated £4.3million of Disabled Facilities Grants for 839 disabled people. Ensuring residents can access adaptations services is important; collaborative working with occupational therapists in Adult Services is vital, but we also need to make sure that people who have a substantial physical disability and struggle to access parts of their home but don't need formal care, can access the disabled facilities grants, and that vulnerable people who can afford the adaptations but need a helping hand with organising the repairs can access support from the home improvement agency.

Registered Providers are proactive in working with tenants who are assessed as needing adaptations, exploring options for rehousing first before homes are adapted. At the time of writing, there are 309 households registered with Cheshire Homechoice who are waiting for an adapted property, of which 114 are waiting for a wheelchair accessible property. More needs to be done to match tenants to suitable properties to reduce the number of requests for adaptations at the start of new tenancies.

## Care Leavers

Care leavers are entitled to receive support from Personal Advisers (PAs). The new Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduces duties on local authorities to offer this support to all care leavers up to the age of 25. This duty means local authorities are required to have regard to corporate parenting principles to guide the provision of services to children in care and care leavers.

In 2016 Cheshire East developed 'Ignition,' a local housing panel for care leavers. This was developed jointly and co-ordinated by Housing and Children's services to support care leavers transition to adulthood and support their readiness for taking on a future tenancy;

- This provides care leavers with access to specialist advice on housing options before they leave care
- CEC chooses to give reasonable preference to care leavers in housing allocations
- It also aims to prevent homelessness amongst care leavers and the service takes action to assist care leavers becoming homeless
- Takes a corporate decision to exempt care leavers from paying Council Tax up to the age of 25

The aim of housing and care leaver support is to support care leavers so that they can live independently, and this level of support will be reflected in joint working protocols with our housing partners and Children's and Adult services.

## Complex needs

Despite increasing interventions to prevent homelessness, we are still experiencing an increasing number of individuals approaching as homeless tonight or within 56 days (as from 03 April 2018).

Evidence suggests that the complexity and level of chaos is increasing for those households who do end up requiring the services of the Homeless Team. Of note is the number of single people experiencing mental ill health that are becoming homeless because

of a lack of intermediate options to support them following any short inpatient stay in local hospitals. While some individuals will fall within the Council's statutory homelessness duties as being vulnerable due to mental health is a priority need, however in some circumstances this may not be the case for many single person households, many of whom have complex needs.

We have worked with colleagues from health agencies on several projects to improve the services for people experiencing substance misuse issues and / or mental illness. The joint approach identified a need for recovery based accommodation programmes across the borough and subsequently 32 bed spaces have been made available for people who are still using substances but need a stable, safe space to begin their recovery

In 2016, we explored the need for more joined up services and accommodation for people needing to step down from mental health services into the



community. This led to the introduction of a new working protocol between Housing and Health and additionally saw the introduction of two link workers and some emergency accommodation provision. Housing is keen

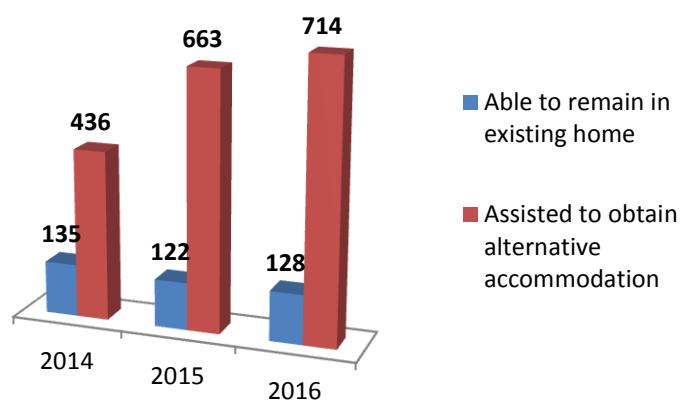
to maintain and develop these strong relationships with Health colleagues to provide successful pathways for people with complex and chaotic lifestyles.

For most residents of Cheshire East, accessing and maintaining accommodation comes without too much difficulty or they may rely on friend, family and wider networks to support them when things don't go to plan. For some others, they need the helping hand of accommodation based support or floating support to assist them in getting their housing situation on track.

## Homelessness

Access to suitable housing advice and effective housing interventions are vital in promoting health and wellbeing of all residents, our homelessness prevention service is embedded at the forefront of our Housing Options service to provide advice, support or advocacy before homelessness arises. This approach has been acknowledged as effective as we have progressed through the ten challenges associated with the National Practitioner Support Service (NPSS) Gold Standard model, which gives local authorities a model for continuous improvement. Cheshire East continues to prioritise homeless prevention and has seen the number of cases prevented from becoming homeless increase year on year with 571 households prevented in 2014; 785 in 2015 and 842 in 2016.

### Homelessness prevention



The most common reasons for households accepted as homeless in Cheshire East are: they have been asked to leave by family or friends, they have experienced domestic abuse, or have come to the end of an assured shorthold tenancy. It is imperative that we continue to focus our work around proactive intervention in these areas to try to avoid the homelessness occurring. Our prevention activities are most effective by finding suitable alternative accommodation for households due to the priority awarded through the Cheshire Homechoice Allocations Policy.

As detailed, over the past 3 years we have directly helped 2,198 households through our homelessness prevention. Progress on reducing homelessness is monitored each quarter via the P1E homelessness form. Housing related support helps vulnerable homeless people with temporary accommodation, from which they are helped to move on to a home of their own once they are ready. A measure of success will be those who have sustained their own accommodation for 6 months. This is recorded every quarter in performance reports.

The Allocations Policy underpins the ability to move people who are in housing need to appropriate social housing. With approximately 6,500 registered for housing needs each year and only an average of 1,300 properties available annually it is vital the policy strikes the balance between supporting sustainable, settled neighbourhoods whilst giving priority to those people who are in urgent housing need.

The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) came into force in April 2018 and makes provision about new measures for reducing homelessness. It has amended the Housing Act 1996 to change the definition of being threatened with homelessness, obliging councils to assess people at risk of homelessness from 56 days before a person is likely to become homeless, increased from 28 days, giving people longer to seek help from us. It applies to local housing and social services authorities, who are required to have regard to the Act in exercising their functions in relation to homelessness. This also includes a duty upon public authorities to refer people to the Council who they feel are at risk of homelessness from October 2018.

The Council's new *Homelessness Strategy 2018-2021* has embedded the HRA into our practices. The Homelessness Strategy Steering Group is responsible for driving forward the delivery of the action plan and ensuring that progress is made in meeting the objectives of the Homelessness Strategy. Task and Finish groups support the work of the Steering Group, focusing on specific projects, such as a 'hard to house' panel which seeks to provide interventions to prevent the homelessness of vulnerable people who have exhausted current options. Task and Finish Groups report back to the Steering Group on progress, and on any areas of concern.

One of the main priorities of the Homelessness Strategy is to prevent rough sleeping, through initiatives such as the Upstream project which identifies those at risk of rough sleeping, No Second Night Out which works with those who are new to rough sleeping, and the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) which helps anyone sleeping rough when night time temperatures fall below freezing. We anticipate that this will significantly increase the number of individuals who approach or are referred to the Housing Options Team for assistance and increase the resources required to meet the new duties.

## Housing quality

Poor housing can contribute towards the prevalence of many preventable diseases and is connected to injuries due to falls particularly in older people. Household overcrowding can result in an increased risk in the spread of infection. Poor housing conditions have also been identified as having an adverse effect on mental health.

The private rented sector has seen rapid growth and is now the second largest tenure behind home ownership; owner-occupations 118,766; private rented 19,938; social housing 18,141,<sup>13</sup> which is an increase of 119.8% between 2001 and 2011. It offers a flexible form of tenure and meets a wide range of housing needs. It contributes to greater labour market mobility and is increasingly the tenure of choice for young people. The Council plays an essential role in quality assurance in this sector, and through information, guidance and enforcement of housing legislation.



We are intervening in around 300 single-household private rented properties each year, but there is a concern, like other areas of the country, that tenants are under-reporting disrepair due to concerns about their security of tenure; more needs to be done to encourage tenants to report issues and provide support to safeguard their tenancy.

Older people are more likely to live with chronic health conditions which are exacerbated by poor housing and most will spend a greater amount of time at home. Most older people are home owners with Cheshire East at 81%, (highest proportion for any county or unitary authority in the North West); when an ageing population and dwindling incomes combine there are

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<sup>13</sup> Tables QS405EW (2011 Census) and KS018 (2001 Census), Office for National Statistics (ONS). ONS Crown Copyright 2018.

consequences for adult social care and the NHS as lower income older home owners struggle to meet the costs of home repairs and maintenance.

The Council has successfully operated a policy of home repair grants and loans for vulnerable people for a number of years. Between 2012 and 2017 the Council has invested nearly £7million into improving the homes and lives of over 1,450 vulnerable households in Cheshire East. The Policy has also drawn in over £2.1million of match funding from Government grants, Registered Providers and charitable trusts.

Central Government investment in housing repairs ceased in 2010, so continued local investment is testament to the Council's appreciation of the impact that the quality of housing has on people's lives. A new grants and loans policy has been adopted in 2017 with a focus on residents achieving outcomes around having a place to live with independence that they can afford to keep warm and which safeguards their wellbeing.

### ***Houses in multiple occupation***

Houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) are a vital component of our housing offer, providing accommodation for tenants who are unable to afford to rent a self-contained property, or who enjoy the flexibility that renting a room in a property offers to them.

Most tenants in HMOs are unrelated and live separate lives; this can make management of tenancies more challenging compared to a single let property, and risks to health and safety are higher in shared accommodation, as tenants have less regard to the welfare of other occupants. In larger HMOs, the risk of death from fire is sixteen times higher than a single let property.

HMOs have been a growth sector of our rental market, with the greatest concentrations to be found in Crewe and Macclesfield; that said; HMOs still only represent around 0.3% of the housing stock (an estimated 600 properties). Many are managed to good standards by reputable landlords, but there is evidence of poor management practices in some HMOs, although only a minority, the impact on tenants and communities can be disproportionate and causes reputational damage to the HMO sector.

The mandatory licensing scheme for HMOs will be extended from 1 October 2018 following a change in legislation; any HMO accommodating 5 or more people will require a licence, significantly increasing the scale of the licensing scheme in Cheshire East from 50 properties to an estimated 300-400 properties. As well as implementing the legislative changes, HMOs accommodating less than 5 people will remain a focus of our attention, and we will keep the need for a discretionary licensing scheme and the removal of permitted development rights through the planning process under review.

## ***Hoarders***

As more services are delivered into people's homes, hoarding is becoming more apparent. Whilst many people may think of themselves as hoarders, for most the trait doesn't do any harm. For some, it reaches extremes that can affect their health and even put their lives at risk. The scale of the hoarding problem is unknown, with many people able to go about their daily lives seemingly unaffected, but it impacts on their social lives and people become isolated as they keep people away from their home.

Hoarding disorder is a recognised mental health condition, and resembles obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) in many ways, but on the other hand is also distinct from OCD, as many people who hoard may not experience negative or unwanted thoughts about hoarding, and distress only occurs when the person is forced to discard. Hoarding is complex and requires a collaborated and integrated approach across services to be able to effectively support people to break the cycle of hoarding.

A multi agency practitioners' forum has been integrated into the Local Adults Safeguarding Board structure, and a toolkit has been developed to aid professionals working with people who hoard. There remains a gap in services for hoarders, with a clear need for practical one to one support to provide support and coaching to reduce the amount of belongings and to engage with other services.

### ***Gypsy and Travellers***

The Government's overarching aim is to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of Travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community. Local planning authorities should ensure that Traveller sites are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally to ensure access to health and education services and employment, integration and social inclusion within local communities.

We have worked sub-regionally with partner local authorities to obtain an assessment of need reflected in our Local Plan Strategy (Policy SC7 Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople), based on the findings of a survey undertaken in 2014. In addition, the Local Plan (SC7) sets out the considerations that should be considered in considering future proposals for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson sites.

We are in the process of updating our assessment of need, again with sub-regional partners in preparing a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, following a change in national guidance in 2015. We are also preparing the Part 2 of our Local Plan, the Site Allocations and Development Policies document, which will provide further detail and consider the allocation of sites to meet future need.

## Affordable warmth

A warm, dry home is fundamental to good health. Whilst residents rarely identify themselves as being in fuel poverty, they will experience a range of problems that arise from being unable to adequately afford to heat their home, including difficulty paying their energy bills, risk of disconnection, cold, damp home and respiratory illnesses.

There isn't one single cause of fuel poverty, leading to the need for a range of approaches and agencies to promote affordable warmth. Older people, children under 5 and people with health problems and reduced mobility are at greater risk of ill health from cold housing; in 2015/16, there were 231 excess winter deaths in Cheshire East.

Respiratory diseases have a marked seasonal effect, with 48% more people dying from respiratory disease in the winter of 2015/16 than in the non-winter months. The seasonal effect on deaths from circulatory diseases was not large with a 12% increase during the winter months; in 2015/16 there was a larger proportion of deaths from dementia and Alzheimer's disease (16%).

With a growing ageing population and the prevalence of dementia, it is important that we address affordable warmth within this group, ensuring that they are on the best available energy tariff, they can control their heating and can heat their home, and they can afford their energy bills.

Residents using fuels other than gas pay more to heat their home. 24.3% of properties in Cheshire East are not connected to the gas grid, with around 9,000 homes using electric to heat their home, and around 8,300 using oil. The largest off-gas area is rural Nantwich, where the incidence of fuel poverty is slightly above the Cheshire East average of 10%.



Research by National Energy Action and the Campaign to Protect Rural England has found that people in rural areas are paying as much as 55% more to heat their homes than people in urban areas.

However, the highest incidences of fuel poverty in Cheshire East can be found in urban areas – in parts of Crewe, there are an estimated 28.8% households in fuel poverty, compared to the Cheshire East average of 10%<sup>14</sup>.

## ***Our priorities.***

### ***Priority: Promote independent living***

While the term ‘independence’ is often used in the context of older people and ageing and how this specific group of the population can maintain independence in their later years when poor health and disabilities are more prevalent – promoting independence is important across all stages of life, young children, throughout adulthood and into old age.

Our priority is to reach people early and keep them in their own homes through prevention and early intervention to reduce people reaching crisis point. We will provide equipment and adaptations to support continued independence and enable care to be provided at home, and work with Registered Providers to improve the use of existing accessible housing stock. By working with our key stakeholders we will promote and deliver initiatives that provide choice and opportunities to sustain independent living for all our residents.

### ***Priority: Commission housing support for people with complex needs***

A new programme of Housing Related Support projects was commissioned by Housing in April 2017, to provide supported accommodation and floating support for over 300 individuals at any one time across Cheshire East.

The first twelve months of the new projects has evidenced that there is significant demand for the services, with over 415 referrals to supported accommodation and 165 to floating support. It is too soon within the contracts to analyse the impact of these support services on improving people’s housing

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<sup>14</sup> Sub-regional Fuel Poverty England 2017 (2015 data), Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, June 2017

pathway, but the new providers are working collaboratively with Housing services to provide high quality outcomes.

### ***Priority: Prevent Homelessness***

A focussed response to preventative processes and pathways will be delivered through our Homeless Strategy 2018-2021 and has four key aims for the Council and partners to act upon through the lifetime of the Strategy. The four broad aims are:

- Help people who are homeless to secure appropriate affordable accommodation
- Enable more people to remain in their home and prevent them from becoming homeless
- Provide interventions so no-one should sleep rough in Cheshire East
- Ensure adequate support is in place to help people maintain and sustain accommodation

### ***Priority: Challenge poor quality housing***

Our strategy is to support, regulate and intervene. We will target our investment and services to ensure that the most vulnerable people are able to live in well maintained housing that safeguards their health and wellbeing.

We will support by providing information, education and financial help. We will continue to provide a support service for homeowners to repair and maintain their homes. We will improve landlords' knowledge of their legal responsibilities through better information and tailored advice, and will increase tenants' awareness about their housing rights. A key area of focus in the private rented sector is the effects of damp and mould on physical and emotional health: we will increase landlords' and tenants' knowledge of the importance of heating and ventilation.

We will regulate by operating a mandatory licensing scheme for HMOs. We will extend and adapt this scheme in line with changes to legislation, and communicate these changes to ensure we capture licensable HMOs and regulate the management and quality standards. We also regulate by keeping housing

conditions under review and improving reporting mechanisms to remove any barriers for tenants to report their concerns.

Where support and regulation are ineffective, we will use our enforcement powers to intervene. We will improve the way we use our powers, while ensuring our interventions are fair, equitable and proportionate, which sends out a clear message that poor quality housing and poor management will not be tolerated.

We will enforce the management standards in all HMOs. We will monitor the private rented market across Cheshire East and where it is clear that an area is suffering from problems that can be improved through a landlord licensing scheme, or by removed permitted development rights we will take steps to introduce this.

***Priority: Promote affordable warmth***

Fuel poverty is caused by a number of factors and there isn't a 'one size fits all' solution to help everyone. We will continue to work collaboratively with our partners to make sure residents receive the advice, information and support they need to afford to adequately heat their home.

We will improve our strategic links with the health sector and JSNA in terms of intelligence to further support our approach, and dovetail our actions to promote affordable warmth with the health and wellbeing strategy priority to reduce excess winter deaths. .

Changes to energy efficiency regulations in the private rented sector are a significant challenge. From 01 April 2018, it will be unlawful to let a new tenancy, or renew a tenancy, in the private rented sector if the property does not achieve at least Band E on the Energy Performance Certificate. From 2020, this will apply to all existing tenancies. This has the potential to significantly reduce the availability of private rented stock, and increase our regulatory role in enforcing the regulations. We will work with private landlords to increase take up of energy efficiency schemes. .

## Delivery Plan: Health, wellbeing and quality of life

Priority: Promote independent living				
Ref:	How we will do this?	Outcomes	Milestone	When by
HS05	1. Deliver an efficient and effective Disabled Facilities Grant programme	People can live independently in their own home	1. 350 households helped each year 2. Explore benchmarking and learning and innovation opportunities 3. Carry out a systems review and implement improvements	1. Annual review 2. March 2019 3. March 2020
	2. Deliver initiatives that are focused on early intervention and reducing non-elective hospital admissions	People prepare for older age at an earlier stage	1. Engagement and promotional activities with residents 2. Develop tailored service offers with health and social care partners	Strategy lifespan
	3. Develop the home improvement agency service for self-funders	People have choice and control over their lives	Explore options to deliver an improved and expanded service	March 2019
	4. Maximise the best use of accessible housing stock	People can live independently in their own home	Establish protocols with housing providers	March 2019
	5. Preparing clients as tenancy ready and / or maintain a tenancy	People are less likely to be admitted to hospital	Reduction in early tenancy termination	Strategy lifespan
	6. Promoting independence for care leavers – through the Ignition Panel	Housing protocol with Children and Family Services / Strategic housing and care leavers through Ignition Panel	Monitoring / Review the effectiveness of the Ignition Panel	Strategy lifespan
	7. Partnership working between the Housing and Childrens Services:	To support the Cheshire East Children and Young People Local Offer	Effective working relationship which maintains the key purposes of the Local Offer	Strategy lifespan
	8. Promoting independence for residents with learning and / or autism and physical disabilities	People can live independently in their own home	Establish a clear evidence base in relation to specialist provision	March 2019
	9. Commission specialist support for people with complex hoarding problems	People can manage their health and care at home	Developing an effective support programme	Strategy lifespan
Who will help us to achieve this?		Elected Members Handyperson services	Housing providers Private Landlords	Registered Housing Providers Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector

<b>Priority: Commission housing support for people with complex needs</b>				
<b>Ref:</b>	<b>How we will do this?</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>When by</b>
<b>HS06</b>	1. Continue to effectively commission and manage the programme of Housing Related Support projects across the borough	Reduction of recurring customers into commissioned services	Collate quarterly monitoring those in sustainable accommodation 6 months after leaving supported accommodation	March 2022
	2. Direct provision of Key Support Workers to support individuals at risk of homelessness from hospital discharge	Work with the Clinical Commissioning Group and Public Health to increase positive move-on from all commissioned pathways	Reduction in homelessness referrals from hospital	Annual review
	3. Work with housing providers in shaping permanent move-on accommodation, with continued measured support to ensure sustainable outcomes	Improvements in health and wellbeing inequalities experienced by customers with complex needs	Collected quarterly to monitor those in sustainable accommodation	March 2022
	4. Establish good quality intelligence and useful data on complex needs	Reduction of recurring customers into commissioned services	Maintained evidence base	Annual review
	5. Ensure the workforce and / or providers are equipped and supported to effectively understand and support multiplicity of need	Work with the Clinical Commissioning Group and Public Health to increase positive move-on from all commissioned pathways	Training opportunities / Performance Development Review	Annual review
<b>Who will help us to achieve this?</b>		Elected Members Engine of the North Homes England	Housing developers Neighbourhood Planning Regeneration	Registered Housing Providers Residents Spatial Planning

<b>Priority: Prevent homelessness</b>				
<b>Ref:</b>	<b>How we will do this?</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>When by</b>
<b>HS07</b>	1. Implement new Homelessness Strategy 2018-2021 Action Plan	Support individuals and households threatened with homelessness to find suitable housing before they become homeless	1. Action Plan reviewed bi-annually by the Homelessness Strategy Steering Group 2. Task and Finish Groups active	1. Bi-annually 2. Strategy lifespan
	2. Work with our partners to help improve the health and wellbeing of homeless people and identify those who are at risk of homelessness	Personalised pathways into supported / settled accommodation, and break the link between homelessness and ill health	1. Report: Sustained tenancy accommodation 6 months after leaving supported accommodation 2. Support Needs Assessment Pathways - help people obtain or keep accommodation	1. Annually 2. Annually
	3. Continue working with partner agencies to deliver our successful 'No Second Night Out' initiative	A reduction in rough sleeping to as close to 0 as possible through a range of interventions providing temporary and longer term housing solutions so that no one has to sleep rough	1. Upstream Project over next 3 years to assist up to 120 people who will be at risk of sleeping rough 2. Severe weather provision available during November – March each year reducing the likelihood of a death, and creation of a <i>Hard to House</i> panel in 2018	Strategy lifespan
	4. Continue to develop partnerships with housing providers across all tenures, including the private rented sector	Increased access to permanent safe accommodation for homeless applicants	Increase in homeless preventions recorded quarterly in P1E returns and assessed for trend data and any areas for concern	Strategy lifespan
<b>Who will help us to achieve this?</b>	Elected Members Engine of the North Homes England Homelessness Strategy Steering Group	Housing developers Neighbourhood Planning Regeneration	Registered Housing Providers Residents Spatial Planning	

<b>Priority: Challenge poor quality housing</b>				
<b>Ref:</b>	<b>How we will do this?</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>When by</b>
<b>HS08</b>	1. Ensure the continued success of the Cheshire Landlord Accreditation Scheme	Improved housing standards (Gold Standard)	1. Review the scheme output and efficiency 2. Explore continued expansion	Strategy Lifespan
	2. Promote landlord and agent responsibilities to effectively manage safe housing	Landlords provide a quality housing offer	Communication campaign	Strategy Lifespan
	3. Raise awareness of tenants' rights to safe and healthy housing	Tenants understand and have control over their housing choices	Communication campaign	Strategy Lifespan
	4. Promote and deliver grants and loans through the Home Repairs and Adaptations for Vulnerable People Policy	People live in safe well-maintained homes	1. Performance monitoring 2. Review policy 3. Contributory factors to Cheshire East JSNA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strategy Lifespan</li> <li>▪ March 2021</li> </ul>
	5. Deliver a home improvement agency service for older and vulnerable homeowners to maintain their home	People have choice and control over their lives	1. Performance monitoring 2. Explore options to deliver an improved and expanded service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strategy Lifespan</li> <li>▪ March 2019</li> </ul>
	6. Regulate houses in multiple occupation through a mandatory licensing scheme	Quality and management standards in the HMO sector are improved	1. Implement legislative changes 2. Communications campaign	Strategy Lifespan
	7. Keep the need for extra controls in the private rented sector under review	A strong, healthy and vibrant private rental sector	In-depth analysis for selective licensing	January 2019
	8. Targeting of regulatory activity at the worst management and poorest housing standards	The private rental sector's reputation is improved and protected from poor quality management	1. Performance monitoring 2. Contributory factors to Cheshire East JSNA	Annual review
	9. Develop greater use of enforcement tools	Safeguard health and wellbeing in housing	Rolling review of Housing Enforcement policy	Strategy Lifespan
<b>Who will help us to achieve this?</b>		Elected Members Home Office	Private Landlords Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service	Police Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector

<b>Priority: Promote affordable warmth</b>				
<b>Ref:</b>	<b>How we will do this?</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>When by</b>
<b>HS09</b>	1. Develop the multi-agency referral network for affordable warmth	Residents can afford to heat their home	Year on year increased use of the referral network	September 2018
	2. Develop and deliver an action plan to implement the NICE Guidance <sup>15</sup>	Reduction in excess winter deaths	1. Action plan developed 2. Monitor and report progress 3. Contributory factors to Cheshire East JSNA	Annual review
	3. Promote traditional methods of improving the thermal comfort of homes	Residents can afford to heat their home	Increase in the use of national funding streams	Strategy Lifespan
	4. Explore opportunities to use new technologies to improve energy efficiency	Residents ability to heat their home is improved	Improvements in energy efficiency	Strategy Lifespan
	5. Improve our knowledge base	Reduction in household fuel bills	Effective targeting of resources	Annual review
	6. Develop initiatives to improve affordable warmth and lever affordable warmth funding	Residents' ability to heat their home is improved	Funding secured for affordable warmth initiatives	Annual review
	7. Work with private landlords to promote minimum energy efficiency standards and improve the energy efficiency of their properties	Continued availability of good quality private rented housing	1. Awareness campaign delivered 2. Successful engagement with vulnerable households 3. Contributory factors to Cheshire East JSNA	Strategy Lifespan
	8. Deliver seasonal campaigns to raise awareness of affordable warmth solutions	Residents can maintain their health and wellbeing	1. Successful engagement with vulnerable households 2. Contributory factors to Cheshire East JSNA	Strategy Lifespan
<b>Who will help us to achieve this?</b>		Elected Members Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service	Housing providers Private Landlords	Registered Housing Providers Winter Wellbeing Partnership
				Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector

<sup>15</sup> National Institute for Health and Care Excellence

## ***Conclusion***

Our Housing Strategy is making a significant contribution to achieving the aims and objectives of the Corporate Plan and the Medium Term Financial Strategy, resolving to support the drive for 'Growth and quality of place' and 'Health, welling and quality of life,' as we deliver on the resident focused outcomes.

Our approach is based upon the continuation and building of strong relationships with our partners to further improve the quality, quantity and choice of housing within Cheshire East, through meeting the aspirations and needs of all our residents both now and in the future - enhancing place and wellbeing. In doing so, we will continue to maintain sensitivity to any environmental or social issues from new developments and work to mitigate these in consultation with the existing local communities.

New housing supply must reflect the needs and aspirations of a more inclusive community, having regard to prospective economic growth. As such, working with our partners we will focus on our resources in seeking imaginative ways of utilising all available housing assets to maximise housing options for local people, facilitating innovation in the scope of housing provision – to ensure housing initiatives will stimulate the housing market and bring a mix of tenure and type of homes for our residents.

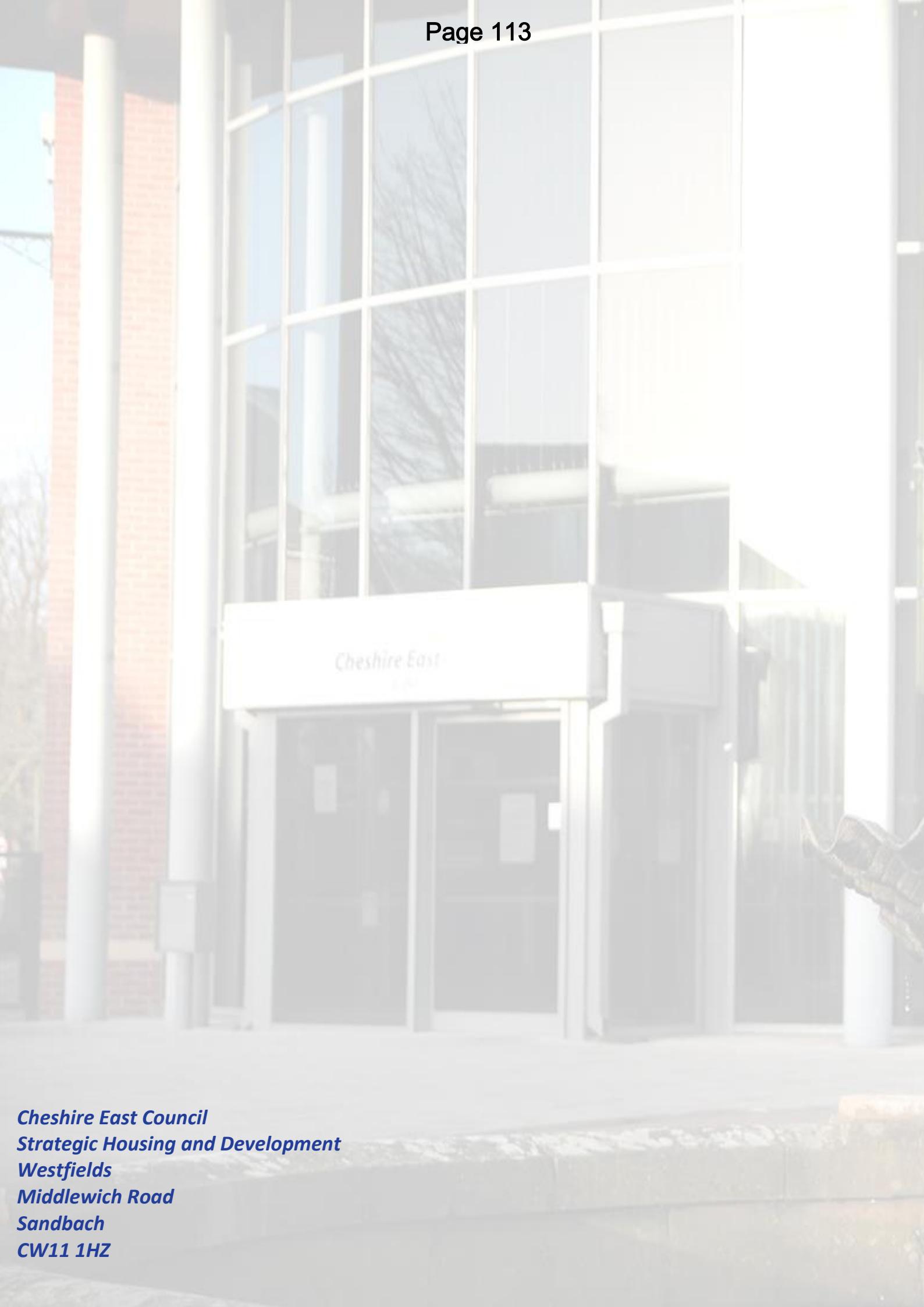
## *Delivering the Strategy*

Central to making this Housing Strategy a success is to ensure we effectively plan, measure and monitor how we will deliver the priorities detailed within this document, which will be achieved through the outlined Delivery Plan within each strategic theme.

The Delivery Plan will contribute to a wider portfolio of strategies; policies and procedures, for example Public Health; Adult Services; Children Services; NHS Trust Commissioning and Community Safety. Therefore, it remains essential that the plan is distributed to all key stakeholders through an agreed reporting mechanism.

The monitoring of the Delivery Plan will be undertaken by Cheshire East Strategic Housing and Development, through completion of services performance management framework and progress reports will be submitted quarterly to the Directorate Senior Management Team and published annually to support the Strategy aims and objectives.

The strategic objectives within the Delivery Plan will remain valid for the lifespan of the strategy, although regular reviews will be undertaken to ensure they are tangible and reflective of changing associated national, regional and sub-regional strategies.



*Cheshire East*

**Cheshire East Council  
Strategic Housing and Development  
Westfields  
Middlewich Road  
Sandbach  
CW11 1HZ**

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## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

## Section 1: Description

Department	Growth and Regeneration		Lead officer responsible for assessment		Gerard Buckley	
Service	Strategic Housing		Other members of team undertaking assessment		Karen Carsberg Karen Whitehead Lynn Glendenning	
Date	08 February 2018		Version		1.1	
Type of document (mark as appropriate)	Strategy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Plan	Function	Policy	Procedure	Service
Is this a new/existing/revision of an existing document (mark as appropriate)	New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Existing		Revision	
Title and subject of the impact assessment (include a brief description of the aims, outcomes , operational issues as appropriate and how it fits in with the wider aims of the organisation)	<p><b>Cheshire East Housing Strategy 2018-2023</b> replace the previous Housing Strategy 2011-2016, seeking approval to formally adopt by Cabinet in April 2018. The new Housing Strategy has been developed through extensive consultation, both internally; with stakeholders; services and the and a comprehensive public consultation exercise. The new Housing strategy sets out how the housing needs of the Borough will be met over the next five years by the Council, partners and stakeholders. The Housing Strategy is a key document for planning and the delivery of housing related services. It supports Strategic Housing and Development in achieving the desired outcomes of the Cheshire East Local Plan. In summary, the central aims and outcomes;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Stimulate the housing market</li> <li>▪ Challenge poor quality housing</li> <li>▪ Commission housing support for people with complex needs</li> <li>▪ Support the Medium Term Financial Growth Strategy</li> <li>▪ Housing offer to support jobs-led growth</li> <li>▪ Improve the housing offer for an ageing population</li> <li>▪ Prevent homelessness</li> <li>▪ Promote Affordable Warmth</li> <li>▪ Support regeneration to improve quality of our place</li> <li>▪ Promote independent living</li> </ul>					
Please attach a copy of the Strategy						
Who are the main stakeholders? (e.g. general public, employees, Councillors, partners, specific audiences)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Adult Services</li> <li>▪ Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust</li> <li>▪ Cheshire East residents</li> <li>▪ Housing Developers</li> <li>▪ Housing Options</li> <li>▪ Neighbourhood Planning</li> <li>▪ Public Health</li> </ul>					

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership</li> <li>▪ Children Services</li> <li>▪ Communities and Partnerships</li> <li>▪ Community and Voluntary Sector</li> <li>▪ Elected Members</li> <li>▪ Registered Housing providers</li> <li>▪ Service Users</li> <li>▪ Spatial Planning</li> <li>▪ Strategic Housing</li> </ul>
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**Section 2: Initial screening**

<b>Who is affected?</b> <b>(This may or may not include the stakeholders listed above)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership</li> <li>▪ Cheshire East Residents</li> <li>▪ Children Services</li> <li>▪ Communities and Partnerships</li> <li>▪ Community and Voluntary Sector</li> <li>▪ Housing Developers</li> <li>▪ Housing Options</li> <li>▪ Neighbourhood Planning</li> <li>▪ Public Health</li> <li>▪ Registered Housing providers</li> <li>▪ Spatial Planning</li> </ul>
<b>Who is intended to benefit and how?</b>	All residents of Cheshire East through the provision of new affordable housing; improved links with private rented sector; prevention of homelessness and provision of housing options.
<b>Could there be a different impact or outcome for some groups?</b>	No
<b>Does it include making decisions based on individual characteristics, needs or circumstances?</b>	Yes
<b>Are relations between different groups or communities likely to be affected? (e.g. will it favour one particular group or deny opportunities for others?)</b>	No
<b>Is there any specific targeted action to promote equality? Is there a history of unequal outcomes (do you have enough evidence to prove</b>	No

otherwise)?												
Is there an actual or potential negative impact on these specific characteristics? (Please tick)												
Age	Y	N✓	Marriage & civil partnership	Y	N✓	Religion & belief	Y	N✓	Carers		Y	N✓
Disability	Y	N✓	Pregnancy & maternity	Y	N✓	Sex	Y	N✓	Socio-economic status		Y	N✓
Gender reassignment	Y	N✓	Race	Y	N✓	Sexual orientation	Y	N✓				
What evidence do you have to support your findings? (quantitative and qualitative) Please provide additional information that you wish to include as appendices to this document, i.e., graphs, tables, charts										Consultation/involvement carried out		
Age	<p>The Housing Strategy has a positive impact on age.</p> <p>Good quality housing is recognised as a key factor in promoting health and wellbeing and supporting independent living, and moving towards more integrated services to prevent ill health and reduce dependence on health and social care services is high on the national and local agenda. The number of older people is growing. Between 2010 and 2030, As the Local Plan states - this is set within the demographic context that Cheshire East will have a 65% increase in the population aged 65 and above, and a 134% increase in the population aged 85 and above over the plan period. With an ageing population there are likely to be increasing numbers of people with complex health problems and disabilities, who may have different housing and service needs to other age groups.</p> <p>Younger people as individuals or households are finding it increasingly difficult to get on the housing ladder, having to remain longer with parents or in more expensive private rented accommodation. Nationally, as a whole has seen a significant increase in the proportion of younger households in the private rented sector over the last ten years. In 2004/05, 24% of those aged 25-34 lived in the private rented sector; by 2014-15 this had increased to 46%. [English Housing Survey 2014-15]. Nationally, around 1 in 5 adults aged 31 to 44, who don't already have children, are delaying starting a family because of concerns about housing [Council for Mortgage Lenders October 2016]. Therefore, this Strategy highlights the need to make provision for younger people to</p>										Yes	No
		✓										

	<p>access affordable housing through the offer of homeownership products.</p> <p>The Strategy goes further in the provision of support for our 18 to 35 year olds who may be subject to the challenges of welfare reform – in that, we will continue working with our partners in the provision of accommodation for 18 -35 years olds who are on low incomes and / or in receipt of benefits, positively mitigating against possible effects on housing demand and homelessness.</p> <p>In terms of care leavers, the Strategy outlines clearly our commitment in working with our partners, to ensure housing; information and advice should include housing options, local authorities should promote housing that facilitates choice and control, and multi-agency working should include work with housing partners. We will secure opportunities for residents to make informed choices about their housing, to access and maintain good quality homes and sustain independent living by connecting them to services across housing, welfare rights, health, social care, education, training and employment, focusing on those who need the most support to achieve independent lives.</p>		
Disability	<p>The Housing Strategy has a positive impact on disability.</p> <p>Almost one in five people in the UK have a disability, with mobility being the most common impairment. At the same time there is a nationally recognised shortage of housing for people with disabilities. For example, around 2% of the UK population are wheelchair users, yet 84% of homes in England do not allow someone using a wheelchair to get to and through the front door without difficulty. Around 15% of households containing at least one wheelchair user feel that their current home is not suitable for their needs, and needs adaptations.</p> <p>Disabled people – with a range of disabilities – tend to have lower incomes, and are twice as likely as non-disabled people to be social housing tenants. Around 16% of the national population has a common mental health disorder, and professionals nationally and locally are reporting an increase in the number of service users with mental health issues. For example: increasing numbers of rough sleepers with mental health problems, many of whom also have alcohol and substance misuse issues; and an increase in numbers of older people with dementia.</p> <p>There is a growing body of evidence demonstrating that an accessible, adapted home can make a significant contribution to improving older and disabled people's quality of life. Because low income often coincides with disability, many disabled people rely on help to adapt their home. Handyperson services play a key role in</p>	✓	

	<p>keeping people safe and early intervention, with around 1,500 people each year helped to prevent falls and the subsequent hospital admissions, as well facilitating getting people home from hospital.</p> <p>As the Strategy highlights, major adaptations are also a critical part support provided by the home improvement agency guides people through the practical elements of designing adaptations, applying for grants and appointing contractors. Over the past 3 years the home improvement agency has facilitated £4.3million of Disabled Facilities Grants for 839 disabled people. Ensuring residents can access adaptations services is important; collaborative working with occupational therapists in Adult Services is vital, but we also need to make sure that people who have a substantial physical disability, struggle to access parts of their home but don't need care, can access the disabled facilities grants, and that vulnerable people who can afford the adaptations but need a helping hand with organising the repairs can access support from the home improvement agency.</p>		
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	No differential impact identified	✓	
<b>Marriage &amp; civil partnership</b>	No differential impact identified	✓	
<b>Pregnancy &amp; maternity</b>	<p>The Housing Strategy has a positive impact on pregnancy and maternity.</p> <p>Through directly supporting the delivery of the Homelessness Strategy 2018-2021, the Housing Strategy key aim is to facilitate the provision of increased housing options. We work directly to reduce the use of temporary Bed and Breakfast accommodation, especially for single pregnant females and family / single parents. The 3 years has seen a progressive reduction in the use of Bed and Breakfast type accommodation and number of nights within our temporary homeless hostel [Cheshire East Homelessness Strategy 2018-2021]. As such, the Strategy's aims and objective is to continue this proactive approach to such use, as it has a detrimental affect on individual's health, wellbeing and quality of life.</p>	✓	
<b>Race</b>	<p>The Housing Strategy has a positive impact on race.</p> <p>Through the base of evidence supporting the Housing Strategy, for example the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership Strategic Economic Plan, provides an understanding of migration patterns in terms of age, access to employment, and, in particular, affordability levels. Quality of life and environment affects everyone and whilst this is a key issue for businesses / employers, the availability of low cost, decent quality housing with access to work in an attractive job market provides a benefit across different cultures/ethnic groups and other equality groups. Therefore, the Strategy proactively works towards the provision of affordable</p>	✓	

	<p>housing and access to measure to support quality of life in support of the Black and Minority Ethnic community.</p> <p>Moreover, as the Strategy outlines, we will continue to maintain and review the Gypsy &amp; Traveller Accommodation Assessment which identified no need for permanent pitches in the Borough. Continuing to work with partners to provide housing and support for refugees under the government's Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme. Furthermore, it is clear that there is a need to continue to improve how we capture and monitor client data, to ensure that we have a good sense of the profile of our customers and how this might be changing over time, and whether particular equalities groups might be being disadvantaged.</p>		
<b>Religion &amp; belief</b>	No differential impact identified	✓	
<b>Sex</b>	No differential impact identified	✓	
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	No differential impact identified.	✓	
<b>Carers</b>	<p>The Housing Strategy has a positive impact on carers.</p> <p>Through our direct partnership working with Adults, Children and Family Services and other stakeholders, the Strategy highlights the opportunities to ensure that carers have the ability to be supported through</p>	✓	
<b>Socio-economic status</b>	<p>People on low incomes are finding it increasingly difficult to find housing in Cheshire East. Residents on a low income or in receipt of benefits may face a number of challenges through the national programme of welfare Reform. For example, those in receipt of Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates, which are used to calculate the amount of housing benefit which can be paid to claimants in private rented housing – are considerably lower than rents, with the tenant having to make up the shortfall. As such, there is a challenge that the situation is likely to continue to worsen as rent levels continue to rise and working age benefits are frozen for four years. Further welfare reforms are compounding the issue, including: social housing tenants receiving lower benefits if they are deemed to have spare bedroom; reducing the overall amount of certain benefits that a household can receive (the 'benefit cap'); limiting Local Housing Allowance for single people under 35 to the shared accommodation rate; limiting housing benefit for tenants in social housing to Local Housing Allowance Rates; the rolling out of Universal Credit as a single benefit payment made direct to tenants.</p>	✓	

**EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM**

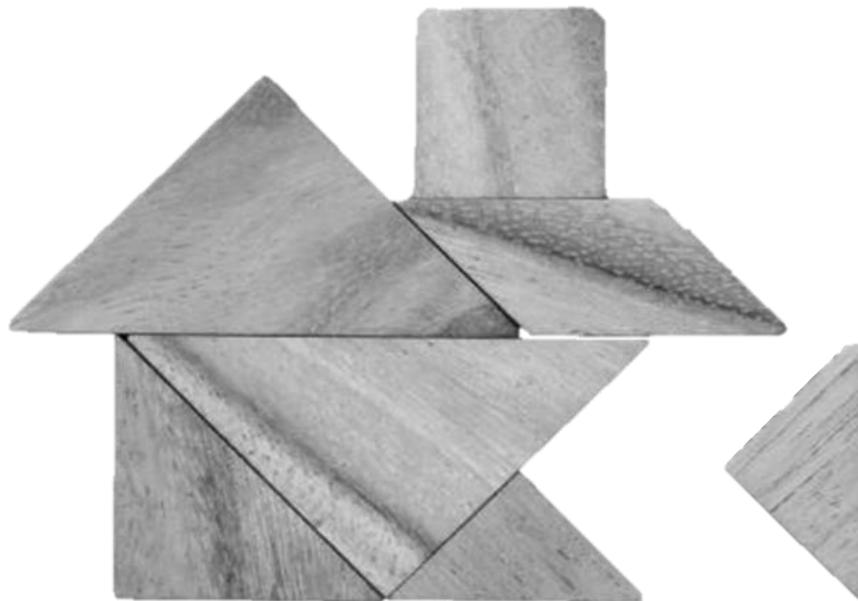
Proceed to full impact assessment? (Please tick)		Yes	No ✓	Date: 11 January 2018
Lead officer signoff:			Date	11 January 2018
Head of service signoff:			Date	11 January 2018

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Appendix 3



**Responses to Cheshire East Council's  
Housing Strategy 2018 – 2023 Consultation**



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Report produced 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2018 by the Research and Consultation Team, on behalf of Strategic Housing, Cheshire East Council. Please email RandC@cheshireeast.gov.uk for further information

## Introduction

### Purpose of the consultation

Between November 2017 and January 2018, Cheshire East Council consulted on a draft version of a new Housing Strategy for 2018 to 2023. This draft Housing Strategy set out how the council plans to increase and improve housing within the borough.

### Consultation methodology

The consultation was widely promoted, both externally (of the council), and internally.

#### External consultation

External consultation on the strategy was conducted between November 2017 and January 2018, most notably via the council's website, via social media, and through [the Council's Digital Influence Panel](#). Respondents could give their views either within a consultation survey, or by formal letter / email.

#### Internal pre-consultation

Prior to the period of external consultation, the Strategic Housing Team at Cheshire East Council consulted with a number of internal stakeholders, including with Public Health, Spatial Planning, Adult Care and Cared for Children, and Care Leavers.

In addition the draft strategy was considered by the Environment and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November 2017, during which members were provided with an inclusive overview of the strategy, together with the proposed plan for external consultation and democratic approval for the final strategy.

### Number of responses

173 responses were received as part of the consultation, and these included:

- 147 survey completions (see sections 1 & 2)
- 26 formal written responses received by email (see sections 3 & 4).

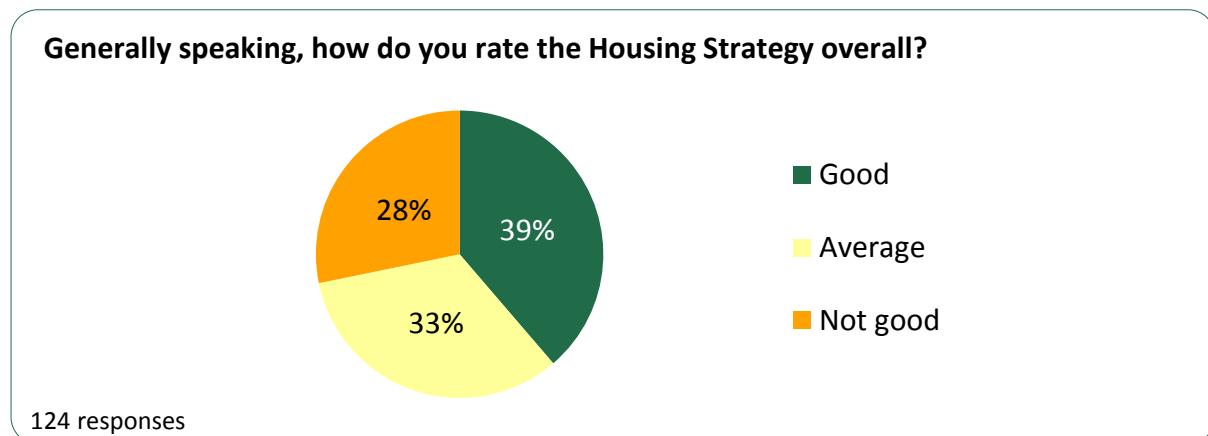
The following report presents the responses to this consultation.

## Section 1 – Overall views of the strategy

The results presented in section 1 summarise responses to consultation survey questions.

### Rating the strategy overall

Overall ratings of the strategy were fairly evenly split, with 39% of respondents rating it as good overall, 28% rating it as not good, and 33% rating it as average.



### Commenting on the strategy

Respondents were asked for overall views of the consultation. 113 different comments were made in response to this question, by 73 respondents.

These comments have been divided into the following 17 categories depending on their topic, with almost half of comments coming under the first 3 categories – “Infrastructure and services” (29 of the 113 comments), “Greenbelt and brownfield sites” (13 of 113) and “Affordable housing” (13 of 113) – see below.

No.	Category – Summary of comments	Count
1	<b>Infrastructure and services</b> – Respondents felt more reference should be made in the strategy to the infrastructure and services that they felt should sit alongside housing development, including: transport provision, roads, parking (inc. on new builds), cycle ways, rail provision, employment, education provision, hospitals, doctors, pharmacies, dentists, local shops, large stores, post offices, leisure facilities etc.	29
2	<b>Greenbelt and brownfield sites</b> – Respondents felt there should be more emphasis on development on brownfield sites within the strategy, and that there should be more reference to the protection of greenbelt / greenfield sites, and “village life”.	13
3	<b>Affordable housing</b> – Respondents also felt there were issues with reference to affordable housing within the document, including that: they felt affordable housing isn’t affordable for those in genuine housing need, they felt there isn’t enough of it, there were too many “4 or 5 bed luxury detached houses” being built, they were unsure of what the actual definition of affordable housing is.	13
4	Some felt that <b>more detail is needed</b> in the strategy, that it is too theoretical or a tick	7

	box exercise, and wouldn't reflect what actually happens. They questioned how deliverable the aspirations are, and queried what the impacts of things such as Brexit, HS2 and the "Northern Powerhouse" would be.	
5	Others were concerned that the council <b>can't "control developers"</b> , that developers determine housing policy and the Local Authority doesn't.	7
6	Others felt that <b>too many assumptions</b> underpin the strategy, ones which are either untested, or are inaccurate forecasts e.g. do people agree with the overall vision for CE? Are the population/housing forecasts right, is air quality data to be trusted?	6
7	A few felt the strategy needs to <b>focus more on wellbeing</b> .	6
8	A number suggested there should be reference to having <b>more social housing</b> , council houses & HMOs, and less private rented housing.	5
9	A few felt the <b>strategy document needs editing</b> , that it is too long, or has grammar and spelling errors.	5
10	Some commented that <b>the strategy is good</b> .	4
11	Two respondents felt <b>new buildings need to be more accessible</b> , and designed for disabled and older residents.	4
12	Some felt the <b>performance indicators are not specific enough</b> .	3
13	Others commented that they felt <b>residents are not listened to</b> , and that the consultation processes is not good.	3
14	Another two felt that there <b>re-use of empty households</b> should feature more.	2
15	One felt that the <b>housing market should dictate house prices</b> .	1
16	One asked how the strategy <b>links with neighbourhood plans</b> .	1
17	Other.	4
	<b>Total comments made</b>	<b>113</b>

## Section 2 – Views on the individual priorities

The results presented in section 2 summarise responses to consultation survey questions.

### Ratings for the individual priorities of the strategy

Ratings for each of the individual priorities of the strategy were broadly in-line with the overall strategy ratings, with between 35% and 48% of respondents thinking the individual priorities were good, and between 24% and 33% of respondents thinking the individual priorities were not good.

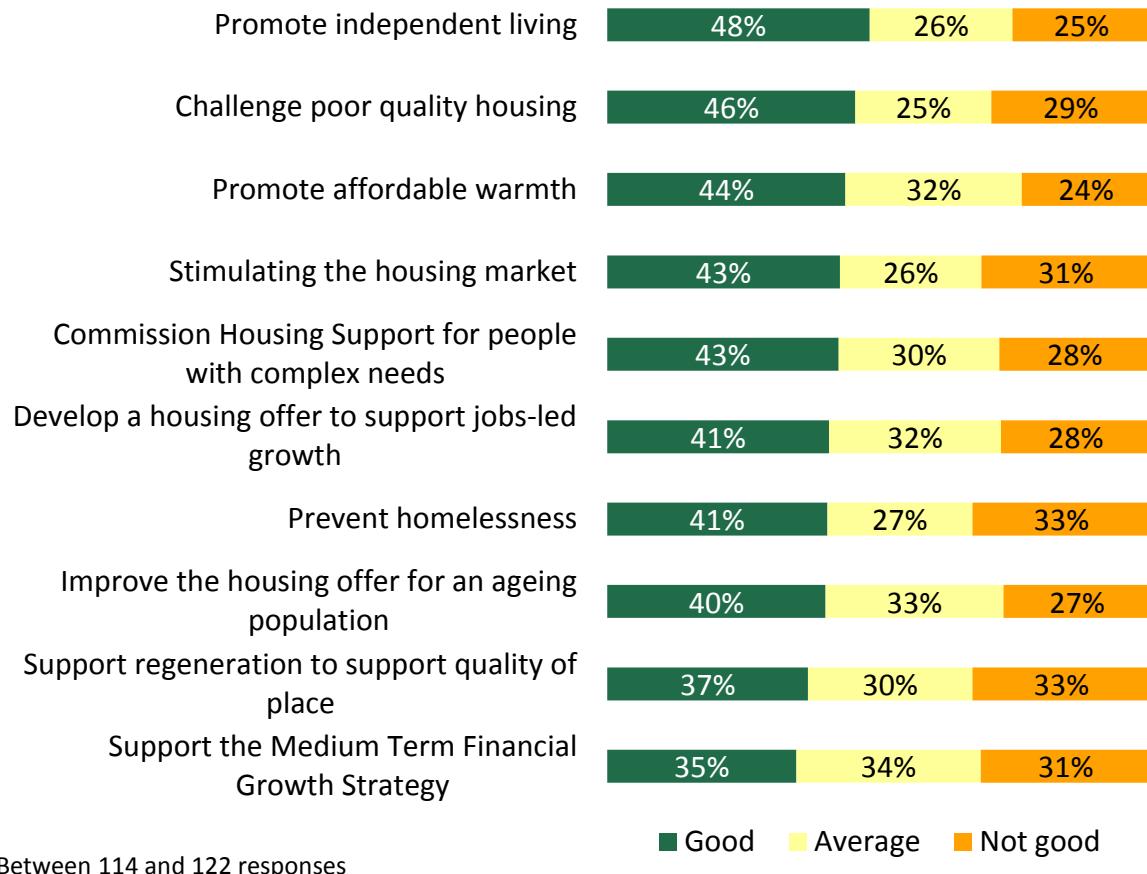
The priorities most likely to be rated good were:

- Promote independent living (48% felt it was good)
- Challenge poor quality housing (46%).

The priorities least likely to be rated good were:

- Support the medium term financial growth strategy (35% felt it was good)
- Support regeneration to support quality of place (37%).

#### How do you rate each of the following priorities of the Housing Strategy?



## Comments made about the individual priorities of the strategy

Respondents were also asked to give comments on each of the priorities of the strategy, if they wished to. All comments made for each priority are given below. These comments are grouped into the same categories as used in section 1.

### Comments made for the priority “Promote independent living” (48% good)

<b>Infrastructure and services</b>
Independent living has other social, transport, educational and leisure issues as well as housing to consider.
If bus services are stopped in rural areas this will trap many elderly people in their homes as they will have no transport.
What about ensuring that there are plenty of opportunities to walk instead of using transport.
<b>Affordable housing</b>
There is a chronic lack of choice and affordable housing for younger families, couples or single people of working age with mobility problems.
<b>More detail is needed</b>
Needs more detail on what EXACTLY you will do. Too woolly. Depends on the deal of private public partnership , the past has been the taxpayer losing, we are still and will pay for decades the financial mismanagement of past policy.
<b>Strategy document needs editing</b>
This is on page 45 and your page numbers are wrong after this.
<b>Accessibility</b>
With an aging population and younger adults living with complex needs, the need to focus on housing that is modifiable to meet individual need and promote independent living is essential. This type of housing need is as essential in rural as in urban areas, especially in south, rural Cheshire where older people may be living in aging homes. There is often a mismatch where individuals are experiencing hardship living in homes that suggest they are 'asset rich' but 'cash poor'. Wheelchair access is often not being considered in new developments or for alterations to existing buildings. It would save the council and the NHS significant funds if ALL new developments were required to make a large proportion of their properties wheelchair accessible to at least the ground floor with a percentage built to be single storey and accessible. Considering the percentage of the population in Cheshire East with a long term health condition or impairment that affects their mobility there is not a corresponding amount of focus on an appropriate housing supply in this strategy.
<b>Other</b>
(This) should also be a priority, nationally as well as locally. Yes for older people. Needs to be very limited.
<b>Repeated comments</b>
Severe limit due to costs and reluctance to provide, very limited plans and no imagination. No Mention of infrastructure. Not based on CEC's actions to date. I don't understand why my council tax money is being spent on this.

**Comments made for the priority “Challenge poor quality housing” (46% good)**

<b>More social housing</b>
Private landlords must be pushed to be more proactive.
Respond promptly and with force to complaints about landlords.
Most social housing is kept in good repair. Some private landlords may not be quite as efficient as social housing groups.
Make landlords do repairs and fine and send to jail.
Over crowding of private rented terraced housing of 11 adults to one 3 bed terrace. Fly tipping in alleyways and no recycling by Polish. A fact I live by it and have reported. Housing checks not performed.
A register of landlords is necessary with effective enforcement action (particularly for HMOs). Planning control should be more robust in opposing inappropriate HMOs.
<b>More detail is needed</b>
(This is) window dressing again, tackle the people who are the main cause of this exploitation.
<b>Focus more on wellbeing</b>
Poor quality rental properties attract further social and localised problems if landlords are not adequately engaged. Any opportunity (for example the proposed changes to legislation in 2018) must be prioritised to protect the health and well-being of tenants - often the most vulnerable of Cheshire East residents.
What about green spaces among the housing to promote health and well being.
<b>Other</b>
People in this situation may not be aware of their circumstances as seen by the authorities or indeed be aware of help available. Properties identified as being in this situation might be targeted with a letter informing of help available for the first instance.
Make tenants more responsible.
New housing is poor quality.
Looks unwieldy.
Too many new houses seem to be of poor quality, lacking in accommodation and being sold as leasehold with all the problems that brings.
This needs more work; how can tenants improve their housing without the risk of eviction by private landlords?
<b>Repeated comments</b>
Severe limit due to costs and reluctance to provide, very limited plans and no imagination.
No Mention of infrastructure.
Not based on CEC's actions to date.
I don't understand why my council tax money is being spent on this.

**Comments made for the priority “Promote affordable warmth” (44% good)**

<b>“Affordable warmth” specific comments</b>
This is an intractable problem in some areas especially where the housing stock is old. Introducing insulation, double-glazing and improved heating systems can be financially prohibitive (even with grants), and are a common feature of some of our more elderly residents in rural communities. These issues are exacerbated by the higher fuel costs associated with rural areas (See Rural Services Network: December 20th 2017).
National policy needed between Government and energy suppliers.
Increase renewables e.g. wind turbines.

Why no targets for insulation?
Perhaps address the 200% mark-up in fuel prices.
Poor people cannot afford warmth and food nothing you have done enables the affordability of warmth.
It's a pity the council doesn't practice what it preaches.
That's a laugh, I have an inoperable cancer and I can't get help with heating costs. Don't believe it.
<b>Strategy document needs editing</b>
Stop wasting time on things like item 4 which are national issues.
<b>Repeated comments</b>
Severe limit due to costs and reluctance to provide, very limited plans and no imagination.
No Mention of infrastructure.
Not based on CEC's actions to date.
I don't understand why my council tax money is being spent on this.

### Comments made for the priority "Stimulating the housing market" (43% good)

<b>Infrastructure and services</b>
Need to be mindful that the roads need to be updated in order to cope with extra traffic the new houses being built will create.
A mix of amenities/transport links (is) required.
(There is) no practical plan for infrastructure.
The market isn't just about building houses. Sort out the infrastructure. People buy into a town not just a house.
<b>Greenbelt and brownfield sites</b>
This is important for job-led growth and regeneration. However great care must be taken that the rural 'quality of place' (the iconic landscape's that attract people to Cheshire East), is not lost in the race to build quickly.
Where are all these houses going? Our beautiful countryside is fast disappearing.
No mention of strategy regarding the Green Belt.
You do not and will not promote brownfield first.
Too many houses on green field sites, more flats with green spaces nearby and must have good bus routes.
<b>Affordable housing</b>
Smaller starter homes needed in all areas – so people can stay in their local community. Children in their schools etc – not moved for social housing or renting/buying first house.
No garden villages in the middle and south of the borough the housing is needed in the north.
We need more AFFORDABLE housing.
This can only be done by true affordable homes and none of this favoured big business who are not in it for the good of the peoples, but profit, profit at any cost.
The only housing market apparently stimulated is 4 – 5 bedroom detached houses!
Most developers only want 4/5 bedroom detached houses.
Not enough affordable housing, affordable housing is poor quality and too small.
Too many houses being squashed together that aren't affordable – and some aren't even wanted, like the small cluster near Heath Farm.
The definition of affordable is too broad. If it means mortgage payments are no more than 80% of the rental value then it is not affordable compared the high prices in Cheshire East. Stimulate the housing market by building the right type of houses, e.g. more starter homes for young people and

bungalows for older folk rather than 4 and 5 bedroom houses.
Developers don't want to build 1 – 3 bed properties when they can build 4 – 6 bed, you can enforce a 30% affordable but I think there is a case for an emergency 90% affordable until we have the housing mix right.
<b>More detail is needed</b>
How is this to be done specifically?
<b>Too many assumptions</b>
Is "growth" the goal we should be working towards? Do we ant a Cheshire which sees remorseless urbanisation to the detriment of landscape?
<b>The housing market should dictate prices</b>
(It is) not the responsibility of a local authority to stimulate housing market.
There is no need to stimulate the housing market in Cheshire.
Cheshire East does not need a stimulation of the housing market! It is one of the most expensive areas in the country to live and has rapidly rising house prices! What 'stimulation' is needed?!?!
<b>Other</b>
Cheshire East Council should build homes, possibly through a subsidiary company or possibly by holding the freehold.
Catering for those who can already afford?
<b>Repeated comments</b>
Severe limit due to costs and reluctance to provide, very limited plans and no imagination.
No Mention of infrastructure.
Not based on CEC's actions to date.
I don't understand why my council tax money is being spent on this.

**Comments made for the priority “Commission Housing Support for people with complex needs” (43% good)**

<b>More detail is needed</b>
What will be the criteria to qualify for this?
<b>The strategy is good</b>
Good to see this featured.
<b>Other</b>
This is becoming increasingly important as medical advances ensure adults with complex needs can live near-normal life-expectancies. Innovative solutions from multi-disciplinary partnerships are necessary to best develop personalised housing support.
Need to be spread around where the need is – so people can stay in their community.
(The) council does the opposite.
This council have been closing down these options.
<b>Repeated comments</b>
Severe limit due to costs and reluctance to provide, very limited plans and no imagination.
No Mention of infrastructure.
Not based on CEC's actions to date.
I don't understand why my council tax money is being spent on this.

**Comments made for the priority “Develop a housing offer to support jobs-led growth” (41% good)**

<b>Infrastructure and services</b>
Jobs-led should be a pre-requisite of housing policy.
Smaller housing needed near jobs – because public transport is now so poor.
How will the infrastructure support additional areas of housing that are not within regeneration areas.
While job seeking information for teenagers and young adults is focussed on, the predicament of older employees with a different set of skills which may be obsolete should receive relative counselling for their situation enabling them to remain within the housing market scope longer.
<b>Greenbelt and brownfield sites</b>
More land should be available around Crewe for development. Get rid of the green gap policy to the south of Crewe.
Release more land in the North.
Give to small local business and proper skills for unemployed and young.
<b>Affordable housing</b>
Both my children have moved outside the borough for houses, not for price reasons but quality of houses on offer.
Either wages need to grow or low cost flats made available as many people in Crewe now multi-occupy and families are crammed into small properties with low wages.
<b>Not enough detail</b>
This is just words; houses are approved where for example there are already offices that are surplus to requirements.
Nice idea, fancy words but just window dressing.
This is vague and meaningless. How are you engaging the business sector to understand jobs growth? How are you connecting that to transport links?
Too short term.
Where will this be done?
<b>Can't control developers</b>
This option plays into the hands of the developers.
<b>Too many assumptions</b>
Do residents really want this level of growth? No consultation held.
<b>Repeated comments</b>
No Mention of infrastructure.
Not based on CEC's actions to date.

**Comments made for the priority “Prevent homelessness” (41% good)**

<b>“Prevent homelessness” specific comments</b>
(The) current policy (is) not working.
(This) needs to be a continued high priority.
In my professional career I became aware of the complexity of issues behind homelessness particular in relation to substance abuse and mental health. The appointment of liaison officers between housing and health to address these issues is very welcome and commendable.
Preventing homelessness is essential.
I don't want to see the level of people living on the streets as you see in Manchester. However, the

market forces should be used to enable mobility of the workforce. So, if houses are available and affordable in other parts of the UK, then homeless people should be housed there. It would then help to regenerate those areas which are struggling, e.g. N E England.
These suggestions are sound and recent achievements in this area are welcome. However little is mentioned in specific relation to those individuals (albeit a minority) who choose not to engage with homelessness support services. This area requires a more explicit protocol within this strategy.
What about asylum seekers and refugees esp. children?
(There is) visible evidence of homelessness increasing across Cheshire East.
Is homelessness really an issue in Cheshire apart from drug users?
More action (is) needed on homelessness.
<b>Affordable housing</b>
More AFFORDABLE housing would help.
Again affordable housing, how is this to be worked out, as to me it is no good saying unless this is done in pounds, shillings and pence.
<b>More detail needed</b>
How?? Expensive rents do not prevent homelessness.
Homelessness is a much more complicated issue than this – where is the detail around helping those who are homeless for other reasons?
Won't hold my breath, very good if you carry out what you say.
<b>More social housing</b>
There is not enough social and affordable housing.
What happened to all of those council houses.
Bring down rents for low income families.
<b>Re-use empty households</b>
Empty buildings should be used.
Utilise care homes that have closed.
<b>Repeated comments</b>
Severe limit due to costs and reluctance to provide, very limited plans and no imagination.
No Mention of infrastructure.
Not based on CEC's actions to date.

**Comments made for the priority “Improve the housing offer for an ageing population” (40% good)**

<b>Infrastructure and services</b>
Ageing people need transport and safety.
My wife and I have been looking to move for several years due to the lack of public transport where we live. If there was a decent bus service there would be no need to move but as there is not it will be essential to move to be close to shops, transport, doctors etc. Unfortunately there is nothing that meets our needs. In addition the cost of moving is creating an additional problem to moving.
<b>Affordable housing</b>
Downsizing is only possible if there are suitable houses / apartments to buy. Build / require developers to build them.
(There) needs to be quality small units near facilities. A mix of flats, bungalows and smaller houses.
Yet again affordable housing.
<b>More detail needed</b>
Lame objectives.

This is too vague to be meaningful. Nor does it take into account that not old older folk need caring for – they just need the right kind of property, e.g. bungalows.
<b>Can't control developers</b>
How are you able to influence what developers build!
<b>Accessibility</b>
Ourselves and our peers are reaching the point of leaving family sized homes and looking to downsize. The development of a range of options for an ageing population is welcomed.
The vast majority of the over 70's want 2 bedroom semi-detached bungalows with integral garage and small gardens which would take up less ground space than a 3 bedroom house with a garage, or the option of a 2 bedroom ground flat and not have to rely on stairs and lifts allowing them to lead a far better independent life and now have to go into care homes.
More bungalows needed – everywhere so people can stay in their local community.
I would also like to see developers being required to pay for improved accessibility to the local environment including lowered kerbs and gates that are accessible to the larger and longer powered and manual wheelchair and hand cycles.
Not enough housing for ageing population.
We need bungalows building not just flats for the older generation.
(They need) ground floor flats & bungalows.
Could be helped by having more bungalows and stop allowing existing bungalows to be converted into houses.
No bungalows at all in Sandbach. No houses at all suitable for the elderly or infirm.
<b>Other</b>
This should be a greater priority, given the ageing population.
Some of the residents in extra care housing are from outside Cheshire East. Need to ensure that a high percentage of older people are residents of Cheshire East. Crewe especially has a high number of older residents due to very few residents moving away to work as Rolls Royce and Bentley previously meant a job for life.
Only in exceptional cases.
<b>Repeated comments</b>
Severe limit due to costs and reluctance to provide, very limited plans and no imagination.
No Mention of infrastructure.

### Comments made for the priority “Support regeneration to support quality of place” (37% good)

<b>Infrastructure and services</b>
Where is the commitment to increase and support the infrastructure that these badly needed accommodations require to ensure a quality of life commensurate with your aims?
No real investment in infrastructure or community.
Quality of place is not being supported if you are not protecting green spaces, environmental factors and resolving infrastructure challenges such as increased volume of traffic.
More details needed with sustainable transport links from home to school and work.
<b>Greenbelt and brownfield sites</b>
Again, the race for development and economic growth must NOT be at the expense of the surrounding rural landscapes and iconic Cheshire villages - these must remain a vital 'green lung' and leisure resource for the residents of Crewe and a sanctuary for the important nationally designated Nature Improvement Area that identifies the HS2a route as it enters Cheshire East to Crewe Station.
The majority of the applications I see in the area are to build on Greenfield sites, so I don't see any

attempt at regeneration.
<b>Affordable housing</b>
There is no such thing as affordable houses do not exist, new or old. My daughter and family certainly could not afford even a 153.000 pound house in crew. Affordable I'm laughing.
The affordable housing is a joke due to the high value of housing in Cheshire East so it is not really affordable.
<b>More detail needed</b>
This again looks good on paper, in reality not to me believable.
How?
<b>More social housing</b>
Private rented sector in Crewe alone is immense 6000+ properties in one organisation.
<b>Re-use empty households</b>
Excellent to see the proposal to consider the readability of converting existing council buildings to residential use.
Still a huge amount of empty dilapidated properties around the area.
<b>Other</b>
This is especially important in the South of the borough where Crewe regeneration must be a priority and "HS2-ready".
Housing needs to be part of the regeneration of most of the towns of Cheshire.
Empty shops, excessive charity shops in all town centres across Cheshire East.
Yes provided it's of the type needed.
This (could) put up the cost of rented accommodation.
There seem to be too many organisations in this list, I appreciate this may not be your fault but it looks unwieldy.
<b>Repeated comments</b>
No Mention of infrastructure.
Not based on CEC's actions to date.

**Comments made for the priority “Support the Medium Term Financial Growth Strategy” (35% good)**

<b>More detail needed</b>
Again, woolly objectives on how you will achieve this.
The "how" statements are meaningless.
This policy won't achieve this.
Don't see how.
Too short term.
<b>Focus more on wellbeing</b>
Whilst new housing is a boost for the council, the quality of life for existing residents diminishes with each new house.
<b>The performance indicators are not specific enough</b>
This needs significantly better customer measures to have any value than simply words.
<b>Other</b>
For houses but not for area prosperity.
How much of taxpayers money will be wasted on the bidding process?
<b>Repeated comments</b>

No Mention of infrastructure.
Not based on CEC's actions to date.

## **Section 3 – Formal responses from organisations**

The following formal responses were received as part of the consultation on behalf of organisations. These responses are presented in alphabetical order.

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## Affordable Homes & Hearle Homes

### CHESHIRE EAST HOUSING STRATEGY 2018-2023 CONSULTATION

RESPONSE BY



#### A NEW BLUEPRINT FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Afordable Homes & Hearle Homes currently have a planning application lodged with Cheshire West & Chester [Ref: 17/01666/FUL], which is due for determination in February 2018. The proposal is for 11 affordable homes (75%) and 4 open market homes (25%), in a Local Service Centre, Rural Exception Site location.

The proposal set before Cheshire West & Chester Council seeks to bring forward a new model of affordable housing which is consistent with both national planning objectives, as well as the Council's own Local Plan and Rural Housing Strategy

The proposal offers a new model of affordable housing, recognised in the Government's White Paper - Fixing The Broken Housing Market - and in Cheshire East's updated housing strategy.

The model offered by Afordable Homes is:

- 100% private home ownership
- Approximately 30% below market value
- Discounted in perpetuity
- Available for local people with a local connection to the village
- Prices are affordable for people on a median salary within the Parish

The proposal has already attracted a lot of local support within the village. As a result of a successful public consultation exercise, we have Expressions of Interest for all of the affordable homes, as well as a waiting list of potential buyers.

The majority of the Expressions of Interest are local young people, between 25-35 yrs old, who have grown up in the village, who have family connections, or who work in the local area. Most of them would not qualify for a Council home and local house prices are far above their ability to afford to buy a home on the open market.

The model we are delivering will enable young singles and couples who work locally to own their own home and continue contributing to their local community, as well as putting down roots in the village and starting families (which helps to keep the local primary school and local services viable). The model also suits older people downsizing.

#### HOW THIS NEW MODEL WILL BENEFIT CHESHIRE EAST'S HOUSING STRATEGY

- Offers a new and innovative model of affordable housing
- Offers 100% home ownership
- Discounted below market value, in perpetuity
- Will contribute to the Council's affordable housing target of 355 affordable homes per year
- Provides smaller family accommodation suitable for 18-35 year olds - supports job growth by retaining local people, through the provision of local affordable home ownership
- Affordable for those earning an average working salary

## CHANGES TO HOUSING POLICY

As part of the process of progressing the planning application in Cheshire West & Chester, there have been some indications that planning and housing policy may have to be adapted to cater for this new type of affordable housing, particularly in Rural Exception Sites.

One of the key issues is the way in which social housing criteria are applied, and the assessment of 'current need' versus future needs [this issue has been the subject of a recent Government consultation exercise].

In order to ensure that rural areas maintain a balanced and sustainable population, it is vital that the eligibility of prospective buyers is not based solely on absolute current need. Such a narrow requirement potentially precludes a couple who do not currently have children, from buying a house which is larger than their 'current' need, because it ignores their plans to have children in the immediate future.

Council housing as provided by Registered Providers, is based on an allocation system, which assesses a tenant's housing needs, and gives priority to those who have a greater need, say for example homelessness, disability or a large family.

Private discounted market affordable housing needs to have a less restrictive approach in order to ensure that affordable housing is available for those who have future needs as well as current needs. Afordable Homes is keen to work with Cheshire East to discuss how planning and housing policy can accommodate this new model of affordable housing.

## GARDEN VILLAGES

In 2014, Afordable Homes submitted a proposal to the Wolfson Prize: How would you deliver a new Garden City which is visionary, economically viable and popular?

This project interested Afordable Homes due to the principles of Garden City/Village development which seek to promote a fairer, more equitable and community-led ethos.

The document submitted by Afordable Homes proved to be very much in line with the 5 shortlisted entries, and the subsequent winning entry. Afordable Homes has had the privilege of working with David Rudlin of Urbed, the competition winner, and Barton Willmore Partnership, one of the top 5 shortlisted companies.

The Garden Village proposed by Cheshire East is something which is of great interest to Afordable Homes. This proposal has the opportunity to encourage small and medium sized house builders and those who share the same values and vision of Garden Village development.

The model being developed by Afordable Homes would be a perfect fit for the new Garden Village in Cheshire East.

Andrew & Jean Ford

 AFORDABLE HOMES

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January 2018

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## Alsager Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, and Weston and Basford Parish Council

The Alsager Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group would like to make the following comments on the Consultation document - Cheshire East Housing Strategy 2018-2023.

1. CE Housing Vision is that all residents in CE are able to access affordable, appropriate and decent accommodation.

***Comment: We support this vision***

### 2, Introduction

The overriding aim of the strategy is to improve the quality, choice and supply of housing for current and future residents. The current population of the Borough is 376,700 (2016 mid-year estimate) and this is estimated to grow to 427,100 by 2030. (OPS forecast for the 2015 CE Housing Development Study)

This growth is being shaped by the local Plan and housing is a key priority. CE intend to increase housing supply, accelerate delivery and explore modern methods of construction. Where the market is not delivering the type of housing across the Borough the Council agree there is a case for intervention as long as the risks are measured and any intervention does not distort or restrict the market.

***Comment: We would hope that the Council's priorities are in the order of quality, choice and supply. There is uncertainty about the relevance of the 2030 population estimates when this strategy runs to 2023 albeit the Local Plan runs to 2030? Surely the Housing Strategy should look forward to 2030 and how and where the additional population referred to can be housed?***

### 3. Challenges and Opportunities

- Increasing the number of quality, mixed tenure smaller type family homes
- Maintaining a housing delivery role in the economic regeneration of our town centres, villages and neighbourhoods
- Working with partners to provide accommodation for 18-35 year olds
- Improve the housing offer for an aging population including those with special needs and single storey accommodation as a choice
- Support people who want to downsize

- Intervention where the market is unable to meet housing needs including stimulation of growth in the private rented sector

There is also a need to address the challenges in the existing stock.

CE has the opportunity to utilise their land assets to meet housing need and provide revenue for the Council.

***Comment: All very laudable but none of the existing policy framework including the Local Plan includes policies to deliver any of the above.***

***The strategy contains some interesting facts on page 13 regarding supply, affordability, health, local economy, demand, tenure, occupiers and housing costs.***

#### 4. Growth and Quality of Place

CE is the gateway to the ‘northern powerhouse’ and is enjoying the benefits of targeted regeneration programmes including HS2 however there are funding challenges which means that the Council’s strategic objectives have to be achieved by best use of available resources and promoting fresh, innovative and new ideas. (cynically aren’t these all the same thing?)

To meet the demand CE acknowledge that their strategic housing role must ensure that the Right Homes are in the Right Place with all new housing having good access to employment, healthcare, schools, retail and other facilities, so enabling low car use, sustainable travel and greater quality of life.

***Comment:***

***This is at a time when the Council are withdrawing bus services from Local Service Centres across the Borough, there are waiting lists for doctors and dentists and a general reduction in the provision of local services and community facilities.***

#### 5. Housing need

The number of households is expected to increase by 20% from 159,441 in 2011 to 191,000 by 2030. In addition, the number of jobs is projected to grow with 31,400 jobs being created over the period 2010- 2030. (What is not clear is whether these numbers include the impact of HS2 or Brexit and how they relate to the Local Plan Strategy.)

The LP states that CE will have a 65% increase in the population age 65 and above and a 134% increase in the population aged 85 and above over the plan period.

***Comment: Yet the LP does very little to address this in its housing policies and the Council are allowing developers to argue away low cost affordable smaller houses on almost***

*every new development across the Borough. See both Seddon and Gladman's responses to the Congleton Reg14 NP Consultation.*

## 6. Affordability

***Comment: This section deals with house prices across the Borough and comparisons with national averages. Unsurprisingly Crewe has the lowest median house price £125,000 followed by Macclesfield £166,000, Congleton £173,000 and Alsager £175,000. Nantwich and Sandbach are close to the average £214,000, whilst Wilmslow £342,000 and Knutsford £330,000 are the highest. For smaller settlements Haslington and Shavington are £318,500 to over £400,00 in Bunbury, Prestbury and Wrenbury.***

## 7. Land Supply

CE acknowledge that the LP Strategy highlights the need to work further to ensure the continued supply of available land to meet both current and future housing needs.

***Comment: The 5-year land supply is already under threat and is being questioned at appeal. It is not clear following the Budget if or when the Government propose to introduce legislation to make developers build on land where they have consent.***

## 8. Private Rented Sector

CE fully support a well-managed and flexible PRS and believe that the major regeneration of the town centres in Crewe and Macclesfield offer 'unique' possibilities for higher-end PRS flats and family size accommodation.

***Comment: It is not clear from the existing policies in the Local Plan how such development will occur and if flats are to be built anywhere it is likely to be in the north of the Borough where there is easy access to the Manchester conurbation.***

## 9. Market Housing

CE claim that the LP sets out the requirements for new residential developments to provide a mix of housing tenures, types and sizes to help support the creation of mixed, balanced and inclusive communities meeting the needs of an ageing population.

***Comment: If this is the case why are communities across the Borough objecting to new developments which are usually made up of 4 and 5 bedroomed houses with a token amount of 'affordable' housing tucked into a corner of the site and why are housebuilders objecting to housing policies in NP's which require a greater mix, provision for the elderly etc on the grounds of viability? Clearly the LP Housing policies are not working.***

## 10. Affordable Housing

More Affordable Houses are needed to meet increasing demand and in the right location. Housing needs work undertaken for the Local Plan estimates that the objectively assessed need for affordable housing was a minimum of 7,100 dwellings or 355 per annum over the lifetime of the plan. Policy requires affordable housing to be provided as follows;

- In developments of 15 or more or 0.4 ha in the Principal Towns and Key Service Centres at least 30% of all units are to be affordable
- In developments of 11 or more dwellings (or a maximum gross floorspace of more than 1,000sqm) in Local Service Centres and all other locations at least 30% of all units are to be affordable.

The Council do however acknowledge that the affordable housing sector has experienced rapid change because of tighter budgets, development viability and recent changes in Government policy for more investment.

***Comment: There is a problem in the provision and delivery of affordable housing which is a national not a local one and unfortunately planning policy is not responsive enough to quickly respond to any shift in Government Policy. Viability arguments put forward by developers are also an issue and the ability of Councils to respond robustly to their arguments resisting any reduction in numbers. If the Government are committed to the increased provision of affordable housing then this is one area of housing policy they need to focus upon.***

## 11. Empty Homes

The Council consider that properties become 'empty homes' when they are left for more than six months without any obvious signs of renovation or rental. When left empty they have the potential to cause blight, prevent investment and regeneration, devalue surrounding properties and attract anti-social behaviour. The Council claim to have reduced empty homes by 53% during the lifetime of the previous housing strategy through intervention, information and advice, enforcement and policy changes around Council Tax. The Council's approach is to work with owners to support and encourage voluntary action to bring the homes back into use. Where this fails then the Council will consider enforcement action.

***Comment: Each community should be looking at the number of empty homes in their community and reporting these to CE.***

## 12. CE Priorities

Stimulate the housing market

The Council's aim is to improve the supply of affordable, market and homes to rent. Demand in Cheshire East is being shaped by growth and the need to meet the demand for smaller size homes of mixed tenure to meet the need of older residents looking to downsize and single person households.

Support regeneration to support quality of place

To ensure that housing focuses on quality of design and the right mix of housing is available.

To facilitate and encourage sustainable development of affordable homes.

Improve the housing offer for an ageing population

It is crucial that the Council have a clear vision and support the shaping of a housing market for older people that is responsive to their changing need.

Develop a housing offer to support jobs-led growth.

The LEP and the 'Constellation Partnership' share a common vision which includes HS2 across the Growth Zone including Stoke and North Staffs with a potential of creating 100,000 jobs and over 100,000 new homes.

Support the Medium Term Financial Growth Strategy.

This is a rolling 3-year strategy which is devised to support the CE Corporate Plan 2017-2020 to ensure that the financial resources, both revenue and capital, are available to deliver that plan. Housing has a clear role to play to achieve key community outcomes for residents.

***Comment: This will need a change in the Council's housing policies to ensure that smaller, affordable homes are delivered, quality of design and place are secured, and affordable and smaller houses are delivered.***

### **Conclusion**

***There is concern that all of this sounds very laudable however the existing political and policy framework, including the recently adopted Local Plan is failing to deliver. The housebuilders have shown a complete disregard for the provision of affordable and smaller housing and oppose any policies that seek to deliver these forms of housing.***

***Perhaps of greater concern is the lack of co-ordination between the various policy statements and initiatives currently being pushed out for 'consultation'. This strategy appears to have no regard to the Local Plan and we do not know how it may relate to the awaited Sites Allocation DPD. In addition, the HS2 Vision document currently out for consultation talks about 7000 new homes and 35,000 new jobs whereas this housing***

*strategy refers to 100,000 new homes and 100,000 new jobs. A significant difference with major implications for the south of the Borough in particular.*

*The view is that they should talk to each other, go away and produce a joint coherent strategy as part of the Review of the current Local Plan, not mess around and muddy the waters with a number of independent and contradictory so called strategies.*

It is hoped that due consideration is given to the comments of this group and we look forward to seeing positive outcomes for all the residents of Alsager and Cheshire East as this consultation moves to its conclusion.

Chair

Alsager Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

## Audlem Parish Council



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8th January 2018

### **AUDLEM PARISH COUNCIL RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON THE HOUSING STRATEGY 2018-2023**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

With 13.4% growth envisaged within CEC, Audlem Parish Councillors agree that '*housing of the right type in the right place to support sustainable growth*' (p15 para 1 and elsewhere) should be prioritised. The proposed 'jobs led' approach to housing provision has merit. If people live in good quality, affordable housing located near their work, schools and other essential services then commuting distances (and emissions) are reduced. Quality of life improves when people have time to participate more in their communities which is vital if community groups and services are to continue to thrive.

Growth has to be linked to '*quality of place*'. Unfortunately recent local experience has shown that – contrary to '*putting residents at the heart of everything we do*' - community views on design for larger projects are ignored. Audlem Councillors have been dismayed that affordable housing proposed in recent local planning applications is of a much lower size (in some cases below minimum recommended standards) and quality than the regular market housing. This should not be allowed to be the case; better quality housing should result in lower ongoing costs for less well-off members of the community.

#### **DRAFT HOUSING STRATEGY PRIORITIES:**

Cllr Arnold's vision of '*Putting residents at the heart of everything we do*' is to be welcomed, but is not easy to achieve when many decisions are made because of government or pre-determined local policy.

Unfortunately in many of the actions outlined in tables HS01 to HS05 in the column '*Who will help us achieve this*' residents feature on the periphery. This implies that a long list of agencies' input will be given more serious consideration than that of the ultimate end user.

Additionally, in '*How the Strategy Links*' there is no mention of the LSC's, smaller towns and villages which also have a very small part in the CELP. The detailed tables fail to mention

Town and Parish Councils at all. Having encouraged communities to draw up Neighbourhood Plans it seems that the lower tiers of government are once again to be sidelined whilst other agencies determine what will happen in their locality.

Councillors comment on each of the priorities outlined below:

### **Stimulate the housing market (P27): Average**

Just how would this be achieved when developers effectively control supply? There is no mention of encouraging developers to release land for building.

In the preamble reference is made to '*innovative forms of affordable housing*'. If this means consideration of prefabricated or non-traditional forms of building this would be supported, with the proviso that the buildings were of good quality and had long term sustainability.

The number of empty homes is referred to on page 23. Many potential landlords could be worried that they will not be able to remove unsuitable tenants or have huge expenditure in terms of repairs at the end of a tenancy. It is possible some empty home owners would be happy to work in cooperation with the Local Authority, as they do elsewhere, to ensure that private housing is utilised to provide homes for those less well off. This requires guarantees are put in place by the Council that the rent will be paid and the property returned to its original condition at the end of the tenure. Where the owners of empty homes are resistant to working in cooperation with the Local Authority then financial penalties should be considered.

### **Support regeneration to support quality of place (P28): Average**

In some areas of the Borough regeneration will be key to ensuring that town centres and villages are brought back to life. As referred to above, quality of design and appropriate development is key to ensuring that communities look more favourably on proposed development. Whilst it is clearly important to work with providers and other agencies, more should be done to engage with local Town and Parish Councils as to how to achieve this. They may offer up different and/or innovative suggestions which could assist in this aim.

### **Improve the housing offer for an ageing population (P29): Average**

The strategy refers to the need to integrate housing, care and health but little pre-planning seems to be done between the various social services, the CCGs and CEC to ensure that infrastructure is ready for new developments. Housing often appears many years before the promised supporting welfare infrastructure.

The outline described is laudable but may be difficult to achieve without full consultation and buy-in from the category under discussion – the older population of the Borough. They

will not welcome things being done ‘to them’ without full consultation as to what their requirements really are. Carers groups (such as ADCA in Audlem) can help facilitate this debate.

Audlem has a fairly large proportion of residents over the age of 65 and recent planning approvals have not provided any single storey properties to encourage them to downsize. There is a danger that an assumption is made that ‘smaller’ means ‘very small’ and often specifically targeted housing (such as McCarthy & Stone) is also very expensive. Many older people would be happy to downsize if they could find a home close to amenities which would take much of their existing furniture and possessions, was on one level and had some sort of outside space to potter in so that their overall quality of life was not significantly diminished.

### **Develop a housing offer to support jobs-led growth (P30): Average**

This strategy is essential to ensure that '*housing of the right type is built in the right place*'. For too long developers have determined where housing is built by going to Appeal, thereby overturning a Local Authority’s planning strategy.

It is crucial that affordability issues are addressed as swiftly as possible if economic growth is to be as strong as anticipated. To achieve the desired outcomes a strong line will have to be taken on the type of properties approved and the proposed reduction in requirement for affordable housing will not help meet these aspirations.

Audlem Parish Council would support Cheshire East Council taking more control over affordable housing provision in the Borough especially if this could guarantee that the homes built remained affordable throughout their lifetime. It is clear that the average house price of £214,000 is way beyond the reach of anyone earning the average salary in the Borough. Those on low incomes often have the furthest to travel to work or require a car for their duties which they can ill afford. It is important for them to be able to live nearer to where they work. Freeing up redundant Council land (especially in the more expensive areas of Cheshire East as identified on p17) to achieve more affordable homes for those on lower incomes could help achieve the desired result.

Councillors are concerned that on page 22 the requirement for affordable housing in new developments appears to have been downgraded from 30% for developments with more than 10 houses to 30% for developments with more than 15 houses in Principal Towns and Key Service Centres. For LSCs the proposal is for 11 or more dwellings – another reduction in requirement. If there is an identified need why is this being proposed? Is it because developers use a viability argument to get out of making any affordable housing provision?

### **Support the Medium Term Financial Growth Strategy (P31): Not at all good**

In the current climate of ever-reducing government contributions towards local authority spending, the reliance on government grants to support the proposals in the Strategy is risky as they cannot be guaranteed throughout the lifetime of this Strategy

## **Health, Wellbeing and quality of life**

There is little to argue with in the narrative. Housing is just one issue which needs to be addressed; without a warm, safe home all of the other aspects become irrelevant.

If the plan is to achieve a good quality of life (for all ages in the Borough) it is important that access to 'improved sustainable services and facilities' are put in at the start of development and included as part of the planning process. The information provided by developers is often significantly overstated and exaggerated to enhance their case and after Reserved Matters there is frequently an application to remove stipulated Conditions which improve the local facilities. This must be addressed if infrastructure improvement is to occur.

In the tables HSO6 – HSO10, the intended outcomes are good but how to do it is more complex. What is proposed requires significant coordination of efforts from a number of organisations. The history of such collaboration is not entirely good, with each organisation trying to protect its own 'patch'. How does Cheshire East intend to overcome this?

The ability to stay in one's own home is very important to people who are older and/or have mobility or other issues. They may require external assistance to allow them to do so. Supportive help and advice on how to adapt to changing needs or cope with inherent problems is to be welcomed, but it is difficult to see how Cheshire East can achieve this without the government grants referred to. If funding is cut, how will this aspiration be met?

Exploring options for rehousing before adaptation is necessary but often people are unwilling to move out of their immediate locality and their support circle and this aspiration may be difficult to achieve. A more localised approach may be necessary.

Additional support for care leavers, those with complex needs and the homeless is to be welcomed. As is the focus on housing quality and help to ensure that homes are safe and warm. However, the homes provided need to be close to sources of employment and public transport if their residents are to have any chance of improving their circumstances. Again, how can this be funded as the need is greater than the ability to finance the services?

## **Promote independent living (P44): Average**

All new development should be required to include better placed electrical sockets, slightly wider doors and other design elements which would better allow for changes in mobility as people age.

## **Commission Housing Support for people with complex needs (P45): Good**

The continued effective commissioning of Housing-Related Support projects is essential, together with the other elements of the strategy.

## **Prevent homelessness (P46): Average**

The aims outlined are laudable. Rehousing homeless people is a significant cost to local authorities and needs to be dealt with as soon as possible. However:

This is to be the subject of a separate strategy which covers a different timeframe (2018 to 2021) from the Housing Strategy. This makes linking the two, and ensuring continuity, more complex

Where is the funding to support these planned interventions?

## **Challenge poor quality housing (P48) and Promote affordable warmth (P49): Average**

Audlem Parish Council would support any proposals to ensure that conditions in the private rented sector are to a proper standard to provide safe, well insulated homes. '*Educating*' the less pro-active landlords into the importance of ensuring that their houses are damp free would probably only be successful if financial penalties could be imposed.

## **CONCLUSION**

Audlem Parish Council welcomes this document and the information it contains on how Cheshire East Council intends to manage its Housing Strategy. This is very much top line thinking and more information is required on the detail of how these aspirations can be put into practice.

The Strategy relies on good cross-departmental and cross-discipline communication if it is to make progress on any of these issues. Does Cheshire East Council have sufficient resources to ensure that it can be successfully implemented?

Councillors are also disappointed at the apparent failure to work with Town and Parish Councils in achieving these aims. There are concerns at the lack of emphasis in the document on ensuring residents' views are fully understood and also at how these worthwhile aims can be achieved when CEC's budgets are under severe pressure and government funding cannot be guaranteed.

## Cheshire East Labour Group

### Labour Group comments on draft Cheshire East Housing Strategy, 2018-23

The draft strategy presents a reasonable assessment of the 'as is' current housing market and actual and potential challenges facing Cheshire East. It also has a coherent link to other key local strategies such as the Local Plan and the place making agenda.

However, perhaps its weakest area is on affordability. Indeed, whilst it is referred to in passing in various places, this key element of the housing market doesn't merit a specific reference in draft strategy's key priorities! Why?

The draft delivery plan is also weak, and in places contradictory and muddled.

More detail is required to explain how Cheshire East land can be used to meet housing need and bring in revenue. It should be acknowledged that those households that cannot compete in the open market will rarely, if ever, be able to generate enough income through rent to even cover the development cost (loan etc) before progressing to contributing a positive financial return. It is suggested that non-housing financial inputs and outputs should also be included in a more sophisticated whole system model.

We would also RECOMMEND THAT the following specific changes are made to the strategy:

1. A far greater role for social landlords in meeting housing need, with partnership arrangements where the Council provides the land for social rented housing in return for nomination rights through Cheshire Homechoice.
2. A specific target that a minimum of 75% of the 'affordable homes' delivered to be for social rent over the life of the strategy, with bungalows and larger houses included.
3. Far stronger local regulatory and registration frameworks to oversee for-profit landlords in receipt of public money through Housing Benefit etc.
4. The creation of a needs-based budget to help deliver meaningful outcomes under the provisions of the Homelessness Prevention Act.
5. Long term partnership and financial arrangements with voluntary sector partners working with vulnerable and homeless households to provide for sustainable long-term planning and delivery of services.
6. The designation of Community Regeneration Areas where the current or projected concentration of poor housing, homelessness and HMO's is now affecting local housing market viability and sustainability – tools to include stronger local charged-for private rented registration and annual unannounced inspection regimes, removal of permitted development rights for creation of bedsits and/or HMOs.
7. Stronger tools to encourage sustainable communities where people can walk and cycle to work and school as well as climate change related commitments on well-insulated, low-energy homes free from congestion generated air pollution.
8. A commitment to developing, with statutory and voluntary partners, a specific housing plan for meeting the demands and needs of the growing number of households in their 60s in Cheshire East.

9. The development of an annual target to further reduce the number of empty homes in Cheshire East during the life of the strategy. Whilst they have fallen by 53% since 2011, mainly due to the abolition of the council tax empty property discount and the introduction of a premium council tax rate of 150% of the normal rate for properties that have been empty for more than 2 years - both proposals that Labour councillors put forward and helped to implement, there have been NO formal management orders made over the past four years. A schedule needs to be drawn-up of the most persistent long term empty properties, with action plans for each property to bring it back into occupation.
10. The requirement for the publication of all viability assessment reports produced by a planning applicant in justification for reducing the 30% Local Plan minimum affordable housing.

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## Crewe Town Council

Crewe Town Council has considered the draft Housing Strategy and resolved to respond as follows:

1. The preparation of a housing strategy for Cheshire East is welcomed.
2. With one exception the general priorities are supported. The exception is the “Growth and Quality of Place” priority to support the MTFS. Whilst the strategy and action plan must take account of the resources available, “supporting the MTFS” could be construed to mean that it is a priority of the Housing Strategy to raise income or capital for the implementation of the MTFS. Clearer wording is required to indicate that the strategy will be implemented by making best use of the resources available.
3. Whilst the generality of the priorities is supported, the detail underpinning them needs greater clarification. In particular:
  - a. There is insufficient mention and weight given to the need to prioritise the development of Brownfield sites to support the regeneration of Crewe and to relieve pressure on greenfield sites. There is reference to “Brownfield First” in the action plan. This needs clarification – a Google search of the Council’s website does not reveal any such policy, only references such as “Cheshire East has clearly adopted a brownfield first development policy” (Cabinet 16 September 2014). Is there such a policy? Does it need updating in the light of changes to government policy? And crucially, how will it be implemented in Crewe so as to bring sites in and around the town centre into housing use as part of the regeneration strategy.
  - b. The management of HMOs is underplayed. Whilst well-managed HMOs can play an important part in a balanced housing market, their proliferation in certain neighbourhoods in Crewe has a detrimental impact on the community as a whole. Greater consideration of the problems associated with both licensed and small unlicensed HMOs is required in the strategy. In particular, there should be a commitment to the investigation of the use of Article 4 directions.
  - c. It is essential that compulsory private landlord registration (like the one operating in Liverpool) is introduced to cover the whole of the private sector (both HMOs and single dwellings). Such a system would be rapidly self-financing through income from modest registration fees, and would ensure that landlords act responsible and actively manage their properties. It is clear that the present voluntary registrations scheme is ineffective, as only responsible landlords are likely to register.

4. The strategy provides insufficient analysis of the social rented sector. Registered providers have suffered reduced income as a result of central government decisions which has led to consolidation in the sector and a cutting back of “soft” services to their customers aimed at reducing anti-social behaviour and benefit dependency. Nevertheless, social housing can address housing needs not being met by the private sector in terms of affordability, stability, and specialist provision. The strategy fails to develop the potential of decisions taken by other authorities referred to on page 10 “to develop in their own right”. Cheshire East Council should make the most of the opportunities afforded by changes in central government policy to develop council owned social housing. Such an initiative could have financial benefits to the Council, by making the most of low interest rates to borrow, or by generating higher rates of return than is available by putting cash reserves on deposit.

5. The Action Plan should give greater consideration to local areas within Cheshire East, and their distinct problems and opportunities. In the case of Crewe, the text makes mention of fuel poverty, low incomes, the need for new private rented development, and concentrations of HMOs in the town, but there are no specific actions to address these matters in the action plans, and no commitment to developing local area plans. This is a serious omission given the extreme contrasts in housing need and provision across the Borough.

## **Disley Parish Council**

Disley Parish Council welcomes the draft strategy, in particular the priority for improving the housing offer for an ageing population. Disley and Newtown has an ageing population, which is above the Cheshire East and national average. The need for people to down-size their housing was the main factor in responses received to a consultation as part of the Disley and Newtown Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan is now in the final stages of consultation under Section 16. The Housing Policies for the Neighbourhood Plan were informed by a separate local Housing Needs Survey undertaken in 2017.

A considerable number of Town and Parish Councils across Cheshire East have also developed Neighbourhood Plans, setting out future housing policies, which have no doubt been similarly informed by local housing needs surveys. Therefore, it is suggested that the Cheshire East Housing Strategy should recognise Neighbourhood Plans in East Cheshire which contain local housing policies developed through considerable community engagement and consultation.

The draft Disley and Newtown Neighbourhood Plan can be found [HERE](#).

The Disley and Newtown Housing Needs Survey can be found [HERE](#).

Kind regards

On behalf of Cllr. David Kidd, Chairman of Disley Parish Council.

**Goostrey Parish Council**

Please find the comments from Goostrey Parish Council below. An acknowledgement of receipt is requested.

1. Goostrey PC suggests that CEC require Building Regulations M4 (2) Category 2) - equivalent to Lifetime Homes Guide standards - as a Condition in new homes so that they can be more easily adapted for older and disabled people if necessary in the future.
2. Goostrey PC notes that the document as a whole is not written in a way which makes it easy for the public to comment on.

Kind regards.

## Holmes Chapel Parish Council



## Holmes Chapel Parish Council

**Clerk of the Council: Sue Davies**  
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**1 Church Walk, Holmes Chapel, Cheshire, CW4 7AZ**

4<sup>th</sup> January, 2018

### **Housing Strategy 2018-2023 - Consultation**

Holmes Chapel Parish Council have considered the consultation at its Strategy and Finance meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> January 2018, and have the following comments to make:

#### **Affordable Housing**

There are references to affordable houses as a general term including social, rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing. The Parish Council considers that there should be a more positive statement included regarding the provision of social housing.

Regarding affordable housing, the policy across CEC is for 30% of housing to be subsidised in one way or another to make it 'affordable'. In many cases the houses in that market are still not affordable especially in the more expensive parts of the Borough. Could there be a more flexible approach such that the developer/land owner contribution is the same but the number of houses classed as affordable varies. Thus, a much greater contribution could be provided in the expensive areas but a smaller number of dwellings – less affordable houses but at least 'affordable'.

#### **Infrastructure**

The document makes no mention of the impact of the strategy on local infrastructure. A housing strategy alone is unsustainable unless it is integrated with strategies and plans to provide the infrastructure on which the residents of the additional housing will depend.

Healthcare and schools are mentioned only once in the document, on Page 14: "*To meet this demand, Cheshire East Council, along with our key stakeholders, acknowledge that our Strategic Housing role must link decisions for homes with economic growth throughout the Borough, to make sure that the Right Homes are in the Right Place, seek to ensure that all new housing is located with good access to employment, healthcare, schools, retail and other facilities, so enabling low car use, sustainable travel and greater quality of life.*"

However, the strategy does not offer any thoughts as to how to ensure that sufficient facilities are available to meet the demand created by the proposed additional housing.

Traffic considerations are not mentioned at all.

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## **Commercial Land**

To enable 'Jobs Led Growth' it is essential that commercial land is retained within the smaller communities such as Holmes Chapel. In table HS04, there appears to be no reference to ensuring a sensible proportion of commercial land is retained and not used for housing.

## **Design Aspects**

The Strategy has no reference to the Cheshire East Design Guide. The Strategy should consider the design features of housing developments such as the housing density to prevent the building of new developments with too little space between houses and insufficient servicing road.

The parish Council would like a statement whereby developments on the periphery of more rural settlements should be of comparatively low density.

In addition, developments designed with individuality should be encouraged. The large building companies tend to work with limited design styles which leads to little variation in the appearance of new developments across the Borough.

## **Housing for Elderly Residents**

There seems to be an issue with some apartment blocks catering for elderly residents (eg McCarthy and Stone) whereby resale values seem to fall dramatically after a few years. Is this an issue the housing policy should address in order to create a stable market? If prices are falling when most housing is increasing in value is there an issue of design, maintenance contracts or some other factor at work?

## **Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Planning**

The document refers to the Local Plan but makes no mention whatever of Neighbourhood Plans. It thus omits a major aspect of the planning process and takes no account of the democratically expressed wishes of local communities regarding the future development of their towns/villages.

In the column 'who will help to achieve this' there is no mention of Parish Councils. This seems surprising as the PCs are the people along with ward members with appropriate local knowledge which should be of advantage.

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## Peaks & Plains Housing Trust (Formal response) I

PEAKS & PLAINS  
Housing Trust



### Response to Cheshire East Council - Housing Strategy 2018-2023 - Draft for Consultation

We welcome the publication of the draft Housing Strategy 2018-2023 as it provides a positive platform to encourage the delivery of additional housing and to ensure that quality and standards are raised within the existing housing stock. It also acknowledges the strong relationship between housing and health and how these are inter-dependent.

We support the two central themes of 'Growth & Quality of Place', and 'Health, Wellbeing and quality of life' and the key statements that homes should be "of the right type" and 'in the right place'.

The strategy recognises the changing demographic and economic circumstances from the previous, and responding to these issues will continue to be a major component in the successful delivery of the strategy. Cheshire East has plenty of potential if the right measures are put in place.

The strategy recognises links to other key drivers such as jobs-led economic growth which will attract people to Cheshire East. However, we must not lose sight of the need for a strong and attractive night time economy, to ensure that the people who chose to live in Cheshire East have attractive options to spend their leisure income and time within Cheshire East.

Placemaking will be a key component in achieving this, so it is important that this is front and centre in the strategy.

It is pleasing to see that the Council acknowledges that interventions might be needed in some circumstances where the private market is unable or unwilling to bring sites or development opportunities forward. We understand that the council's resources are finite in this respect but we feel that such interventions as CPO powers could have been more widely used in the past, to facilitate some problem sites, so this is a positive step.

We welcome the potential for a wider use of the council's resources such as its land and property assets, and how this could be achieved through collaboration and/or Joint Venture arrangements.

Work still needs to be done to improve some of the blockages that frustrate development and this will not happen without a concerted effort.

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## PEAKS & PLAINS Housing Trust



Looking at smaller household need, and aligned to this the ageing population, from an affordable housing perspective we need to be conscious of the ageing stock that exists within the Borough and to ensure that we address these issues and that we are in a position to give people choices which make downsizing a really attractive alternative.

Although the use of Assistive Technology is mentioned in HS06 as a way of promoting Independent Living, we feel that the potential is still understated as it touches many different types of condition from loneliness to more obvious applications which could allow early discharge from hospital, or prevention of admission to hospital. To that end we would encourage a wider acceptance and awareness of this potential, and far more work needs to be done with partner agencies and providers.

Actions speak louder than words so it is important that where it is appropriate that the council takes the lead, that it does so in a decisive and pro-active way to ensure that a momentum is developed and maintained

Peaks & Plains Housing Trust is already working with many of the agencies identified within the strategy and we remain committed to the central themes and to delivering and improving a wider housing offer and to increase the tenure mix and opportunities that this presents for a wider demographic than we have done in the past.

With a positive commitment and a willingness to collaborate we will see the energy needed to make the housing strategy a success.

Nigel Bennett  
Head of Development  
Peaks & Plains Housing Trust

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8<sup>th</sup> January 2018

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## Peaks & Plains Housing Trust (Formal response) II

### HOUSING STRATEGY CONSULTATION

Peaks and Plains Housing Trust is pleased to be provided with the opportunity to comment on the draft housing strategy. As a key partner of the council in meeting housing needs in the Borough, we hope that our views prove helpful.

We wholeheartedly support the focus on the two central themes identified in the foreword; namely Growth and quality of place together with Health, wellbeing and quality of life.

We also share the ambition of the key goal of the Housing Strategy; “to guarantee Cheshire East residents have a place to live that supports their health, wellbeing and contributes to the quality of life”. However the strategy is silent on what it considers the starting point on each of these and where it wants to end up. Consequently it will prove very difficult to judge at the end of the strategy period whether it has been a success.

We fully support the intention to “deliver housing through a place-based approach, thus sustaining the “unique character and identity” where it exists in Cheshire East. Unfortunately in too many parts of Cheshire East, this does not exist, as the council’s design guide acknowledges, in its introduction: “We have created places that have watered down the character and variety within our town and villagescapes, undermining the remarkable qualities of our area by creating places with little or no regard for local context and that look like anywhere else in the country rather than being specific to here.” We at Peaks & Plains recognise this and have indeed at times regrettably contributed to it through the development of “anywhere” type housing ourselves. We accept our responsibility in this and are keen to work with a more challenging and ambitious development control team to prevent what your design guide describes as “places (that) do not function well for people, creating neighbourhoods which are banal, inhuman in character and scale, poorly connected and also dominated by traffic and parking. We can and must do better to prevent the continued decline of Cheshire East’s specific local identity.” This represents a bold and welcome statement of intent and one that significantly changes previous and current practice. Unfortunately however it is not at all clear how this strategy will deliver the step change required.

We are disappointed not to see the provision of affordable housing listed on page 8 as one of the council’s priorities. Provision of more affordable housing to assist those who cannot afford to access the market feels like a major omission given the housing market pressures in the Borough. The council’s own evidence base surely justifies this being seen as a priority, not to mention the significant planning policy of 30% affordable provision on sites over 15 homes.

On the other hand, we do welcome within the priorities; the commissioning of housing support for people with complex needs within the council’s priorities. We see this as a significant and increasing challenge in that too many applicants registered on Homechoice

are unable to maintain a tenancy without such support; support which is very difficult to access and sustain.

We welcome the commitment made by the statement: "Cheshire East has the opportunity to utilise their land assets to meet housing needs, which are not fully being met by the market. Disposal of land assets will also provide much needed revenue to the Council"- However for us it rather raises many more questions than it answers. For example:

- Which needs is the council thinking of? Almost by definition those not met by the market are those requiring the greatest subsidy or high levels of (expensive) tenancy support. Consequently either or both diminish any "much needed revenue for the council"
- Does the council intend to develop homes themselves?
- Is the strategy to dispose of land and if so will it be for social purpose rather than highest capital receipt?
- Does the council intend to manage homes developed?
- What is the scale of the problem being targeted and the proportion of the problem is the council seeking to resolve?

We wonder whether it's appropriate on page 18 to describe Housing as being "expensive in Cheshire East" if the average house price of £214,000 is currently 9.8% below the England & Wales average (£238,000]. Given the Borough's numerous housing markets, completely unrelated to the administrative boundary, is it appropriate to cite a Borough average which is somewhat meaningless? The truth is a hugely varied pattern of house prices; some of which compare favourably with national averages and many that do not by a long way.

On Land supply we fully agree that "there are insufficient development opportunities in the right places, to build the homes we need". This feels like the appropriate place to promote the role of S.106 provision. We would like to see a more robust approach to manage / prevent / control Housing Developers use of viability arguments for avoiding their planning obligation. It was enormously disappointing to see the redevelopment of the Kings school sites in Macclesfield fail to have any s.106 affordable homes as opposed to the 30% Planning Requirement and at SMDA, the 30% requirement reduced to 10%

The Private Rented Sector is referred to as having "not been the tenure of choice, mainly due to concerns of security of tenure and property conditions". Having identified the problem there is nothing identified by way of response. Whilst it states that the council is "seeking to explore our role in successfully enabling direct invention into further growth of the sector"- it would be useful to identify what these interventions are likely to include.

We absolutely concur with your view that a neighbourhood with a mix of housing tenures, types and sizes will be more able to meet the changing needs and aspirations of its residents, through changing life stages, household shapes and sizes or changes in income.

That of course includes the provision of affordable housing and we welcome the council's ambitious affordable housing requirements in developments of 15 or more dwellings in the Principal Towns and Key Service Centres of at least 30% of all homes being affordable. We would refer to our earlier comments on s.106 provision. We would like to see a bolder statement in the housing strategy to reinforce the planning policy. At the very least we would like to see a more transparent process, such as that recommended by Brighton & Hove Council where Developers are to submit un-redacted viability assessments to be independently assessed by the District Valuer Services in an attempt to prove that meeting this affordable housing target would render the scheme commercially unfeasible; which are then published.

In the section outlining the council's priority to stimulate the housing market you state that

"In supporting the Government's housing policy approach, we will work to improve the housing offer through a package of measures to stimulating the investment in our housing market to support our continued economic growth" without explaining what the "package of measures" includes. It would be helpful to understand what these amount to and indeed what additional investment will be expected to flow from them.

We found the delivery plan tables difficult to interpret. The Column headed "Who will help us to achieve this? Seems to be an exhaustive list of all the partners who might contribute to the overall priority as opposed to the detailed projects listed in column B.

The tables are also short on specific measurable and targets; especially in terms of how many extra homes might be provided compared to simply leaving it to the market. For example does the delivery of 355 affordable homes depend upon the implementation of the remaining interventions. If not, then it might be helpful to identify how many additional homes might be provided if each intervention was successful.

There is also some detail lacking in the "How Will we do it" column. For example on the Stimulate the Housing Market table, the phrase "funding opportunities" is really very vague and the council's precise role with regards to it is also unclear. Similarly the all-encompassing phrase "planning policy" does not make clear which ones or how they will specifically stimulate the housing market.

We look forward to the publication of the final document and to working together with the council to deliver its housing strategy ambitions.

**Pegasus Group – TEM Property Groups and the Tatton Estate**



**DRAFT CHESHIRE EAST HOUSING STRATEGY 2018-2023**

**DRAFT REPRESENTATIONS TO CONSULTATION**

**TEM PROPERTY GROUP AND THE TATTON ESTATE**

Date: January 2018

Pegasus Reference: ST/P17-2988/R001v2

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TEM Property Group and the Tatton Estate  
Cheshire East Housing Strategy  
Representations



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TEM Property Group and the Tatton Estate  
Cheshire East Housing Strategy  
Representations



## 1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 On behalf of our clients, the TEM Property Group and the Tatton Estate, we have the pleasure of setting out our comments and representations towards Cheshire East's Housing Strategy below.
- 1.2 TEM Property and Tatton Estate are already responsible for over 500 residential tenants within a range of different dwellings. Moving forward, they have significant aspirations to deliver more private rented sector (PRS) dwellings within developments whereby they will have an ongoing interest in the management of the dwellings that they help to deliver, accompanied by affordable housing and some market housing for sale.
- 1.3 Opportunities for this have been formally identified in the Cheshire East Local Plan: Part 1, which deals with strategic sites. Indeed, two of the strategic housing allocations identified within the Part 1 Local Plan belong to Tatton Estate including land at:
  - NW Knutsford (Policy LPS 36), which is allocated for circa 250 larger family homes and other uses;
  - Parkgate, Knutsford (Policy LPS 37) which is allocated for circa 200 larger family dwellings (at circa 25 dwellings per ha) and benefits from a consent with no unit cap
- 1.4 Through the planning application process, it is anticipated that greater dwelling numbers will be achieved on the above two sites with a different type of dwelling mix than what is typically being delivered around the Borough by other developers including the national housebuilders.
- 1.5 We have also put forward a number of smaller, sustainable brown and greenfield sites via the Council's Brownfield Site Register and Call for Sites process which has been carried out in advance of the publication of the Part 2 Local Plan: Site Allocations & Development Management Policies DPD and whilst these have not yet been added to the register they in aggregate provide a strategic stock of potential new housing.
- 1.6 The Tatton Estate's interest largely sits within the north of the Borough where there is evidence of significant demand, affordability issues and a growing aging population. This in turn is affecting businesses who need to recruit but employees find it difficult to find the right type and quality of accommodation, often irrespective of price and tenure.
- 1.7 In light of the above, TEM Property and Tatton Estate are taking a much more active involvement in the provision and delivery of existing and new homes within Cheshire East, both as a market in its own right but also to support the business growth which is crucial to the area. They therefore would welcome a housing strategy from Cheshire East Council that clearly seeks to meet the housing needs of all within the Borough, especially key employers.

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## 2. COMMENTARY ON HOUSING STRATEGY

2.1 Firstly, we welcome the Council's production of a Draft Housing Strategy and the opportunity to provide meaningful comments towards its content. We also welcome the following points that are made at the outset of the draft document, including:

- The Council's 'strong ambition' for jobs-led, economic growth across all areas and the acknowledgement that 'housing is essential to support this continuous growth'; and
- The Council's 'guarantee' to residents to have a place to live which supports their health and well-being and contributes to the quality of life.
- The Council's recognition that good quality, safe, and affordable housing is essential to meet this goal.

### Purpose of the Housing Strategy, Scope and Timeframes

2.2 At the outset, we note that the purpose of this document is to ensure that the Council's housing strategy links with the policy decision making within the Council that ultimately supports the health and well-being of its residents<sup>1</sup>. With this in mind, we raise the following points relating to timeframes and scope, and the need to start taking into account foreseeable events.

2.3 The draft Housing Strategy seeks to cover a 5-year period between 2018-2023. Whilst we accept the housing market can change rapidly and therefore it is important to have a strategy that is reviewed on a regular basis, we think it would still be prudent if the Council set out how they were going to meet their objectives over the longer term too. Indeed, a number of the points and aspirations raised within the document will require an ongoing long-term approach in order to be successful (e.g. how to tackle homelessness).

2.4 If nothing else, providing a longer-term strategy would also allow closer alignment with the Local Plan (Part 1), which seeks to ensure the delivery of up to 36,000 homes up to 2030. This is a considerable point beyond the Housing Strategy timeframe but considering the Council's Housing Strategy in the first 5 years and then beyond would also allow for consideration of other foreseeable events and horizons.

2.5 For instance, it is noted in the document on page 14 that Cheshire East is enjoying the benefits of targeted major regeneration programmes and masterplans from the investment in rail connections (HS2) and its significance for Crewe and all the stations north that will interchange with it. However, it is worth remembering that the Local Plan (Part 1) does not account for growth derived from the delivery of HS2. Indeed, the Council agreed that they would undertake a review of the Local Plan once HS2 was formally agreed. Phases 1 and 2a have now both been confirmed and 2b is

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<sup>1</sup> Page 4 of Draft Housing Strategy

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progressing rapidly (likely now joined with Northern Powerhouse Rail / HS3) and together these will also have major economic impact on the area around the M56 corridor which abuts the northern boundary of the Borough with other major catalysts like Manchester Airport and that will clearly influence growth around Knutsford, Wilmslow and Handforth.

- 2.6 In light of this, it would be helpful if the Council's Housing Strategy started to consider the implications of such growth derived from HS2 and what that could mean for Cheshire East's housing market in terms of opportunities and also risks (e.g. increasing impacts on demand and affordability in the north of the Borough).
- 2.7 The rationale for this longer-term overview could extend to looking at different types of housing products and the scope for new models and ways of doing things in what is currently described by central government as a 'broken housing market'.
- 2.8 For instance, the concept of PRS housing has been a relatively hot topic in central locations such as London and Manchester. However, there is a growing evidence base of need within market towns and communities in rural areas where young professionals and families require quality and flexibility, as well as sometimes being priced out of the regular housing market to buy. Instead, they look towards the rental market. However, given the Government's tax changes for individual investors in buy-to-let properties such as mortgage tax relief, stamp duty and council tax increases, the continued growth of this element cannot be relied upon. There are, however, inherent difficulties in delivering genuine PRS schemes of a decent scale due to valuation gaps, a lack of investor funding, willing landowners to sell their land at discounted prices or strong policy support.
- 2.9 The Housing Strategy could start to look at the issues facing PRS delivery in Cheshire East and how the Council could seek to facilitate this either by creating bespoke policies or exceptions tailored to facilitate this type of development, including the implications of CIL, affordable housing policies and other related areas of interest.
- 2.10 It would be useful in parallel to this to look at the current low take-up of offsite fabrication. Despite its ability to deliver homes quickly and cost effectively, there are risks associated with what is a relatively new and untested product offer in the open market. It would therefore be helpful to identify how similar policy support might help this gain momentum.

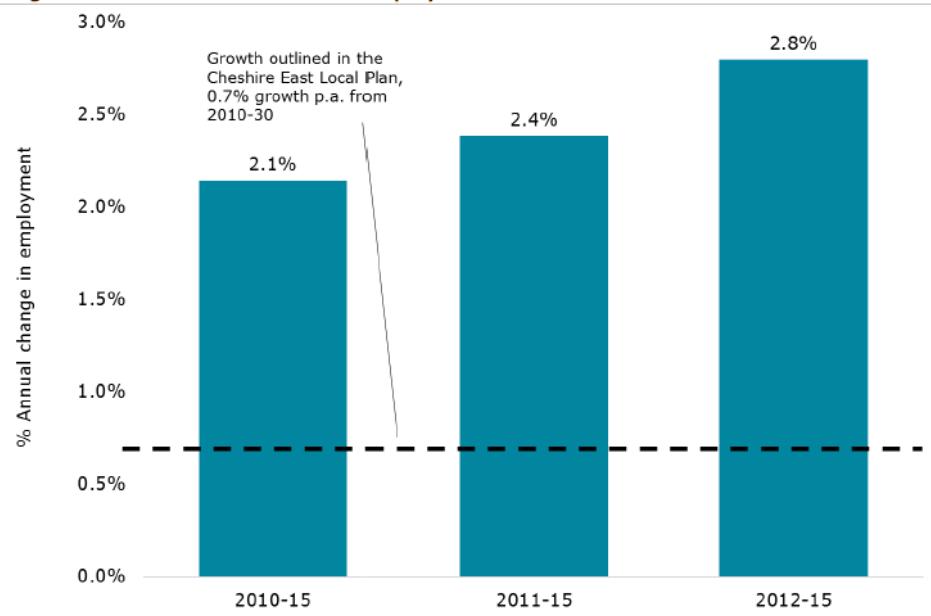
#### **Jobs Growth and Housing Needs**

- 2.11 On page 15 of the document, it is noted that the Cheshire East's projected population will increase by 20% from 2011 to 2030 from 159,441 to 191,000. It is also noted that the Local Plan outlines that economic growth is expected to increase the number of jobs by 31,400 between 2010-2030.
- 2.12 Crucially, the housing requirement in the Local Plan was forged from this jobs growth figure, which effectively equated to 0.7% per annum growth over the Local Plan period.

2.13 However, we think the Council's housing strategy needs to be mindful of the following facts:

- Between 2010 and 2015<sup>2</sup>, jobs in Cheshire East increased by around 19,000 – an annual change of 2.1%. This is higher than the annual increases in:
  - the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) area (which had an annual change of 1.9% between 2010 and 2015);
  - the national annual increase (1.3%); and
  - it is more than double the annual jobs growth seen in the North West (0.9%) over the same period.
- As already noted, the Local Plan currently allows for employment growth of 0.7% per annum between 2010 and 2030 compared to the 2.1% annual jobs growth in Cheshire East between 2010 and 2015. When focussing on shorter timescales, annual jobs growth in the district has been even higher – at 2.4% from 2011-2015 and 2.8% from 2012-2015 (see Figure 1 below).
- The 19,000 additional jobs in Cheshire East created between 2010-15 means the district has already achieved **60.0%** of its entire employment growth target for the Local Plan period of 2010-30. To achieve the remaining 12,400 jobs by 2030, jobs in the district will only need to grow by 0.4% per annum between 2015 and 2030.

**Figure 1: Annual Growth Rates in Employment in Cheshire East 2010-2015**



**Source:** Business Register and Employment Survey

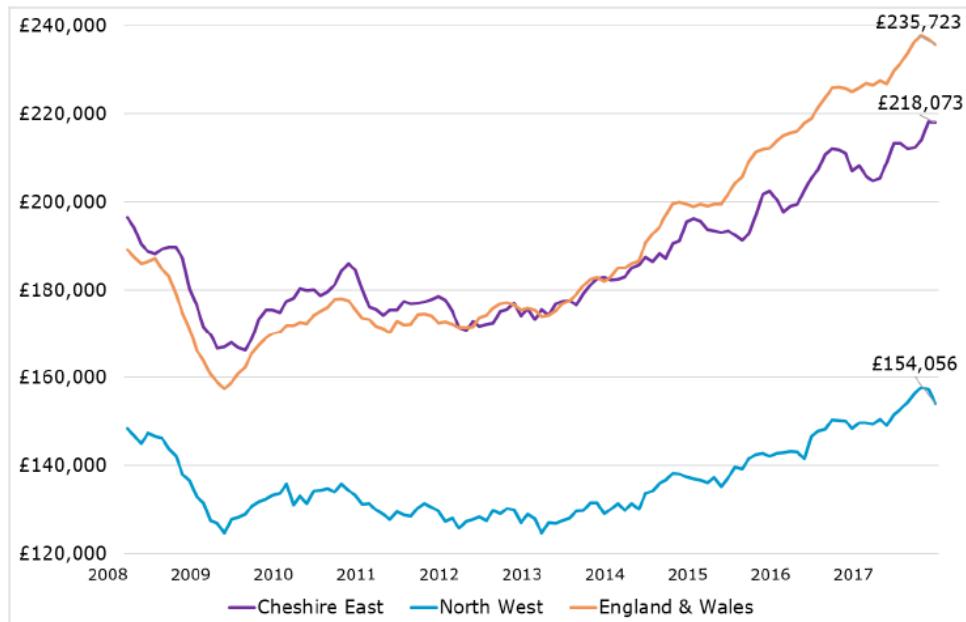
<sup>2</sup> Jobs data have been sourced from the Business Register & Employment Survey (BRES), published by the Office for National Statistics. BRES data are also available for 2016, however due to a methodology change it is not possible to compare and analyse trends over time going back as far as 2010. The timeframe of 2010-2015 has therefore been used to ensure consistency.

- 2.14 In short, Cheshire East has already achieved a significant proportion of its jobs growth as set out in the Local Plan. More recent evidence also indicates there are few signs of a slow-down, even in the context of Brexit. Whilst there are clearly some uncertainties still facing the national economy in the face of Brexit and other economic considerations, Cheshire East appears to be well placed to overcome these concerns. Indeed, the potential benefits created by major investments, such as HS2, we strongly anticipate that the jobs growth figure for Cheshire East over the Local Plan period is likely to be substantially higher than currently envisaged.
- 2.15 However, Cheshire East has still yet to deliver a substantial amount of the housing deemed necessary in the Local Plan. This essentially means in-commuting patterns will be driven up, as will house prices, which will clearly exacerbate existing affordable housing issues.
- 2.16 The above figures would suggest that the Council's Housing Strategy should be recommending that an early Local Plan review might be prudent.

### Affordability

- 2.17 We concur with a number of key messages in this section including:
- o housing in Cheshire East is expensive;
  - o young people and especially those in vulnerable groups find it difficult to find a suitable home; and
  - o many adults are delaying starting a family because of housing concerns.
- 2.18 We would go further however. Recent research commissioned by our clients from Atlas Residential shows that irrespective of price and tenure, there are massive gaps in housing stock. Very few new, good quality homes exist and irrespective of age and quality. There is a particular shortage of smaller properties such as 1 and 2 bedroom homes. This affects not only young people, but professionals over 30; divorcees; and empty nesters looking to downsize.
- 2.19 Whilst we are not able to source the exact figures the Council quote, we also concur with the general position and trend shown on housing prices in the Borough and we particularly note the high median prices within the north of the borough in Wilmslow (£342,000), Knutsford (£330,000) and Poynton (£275,000).
- 2.20 Indeed, average house prices in Cheshire East have increased by 10.1% (around £22,000) over the past decade. Although this is lower than the average growth in house prices nationally (18.6% - £44,000), it is almost 10 times the increase seen in the North West (1.1% - £1,600). Figure 2 shows the average house price trends over the last decade in more detail.

**Figure 2: Average House Prices, December 2007 - October 2017**



Source: UK House Price Index, 2017

- 2.21 The ratio of house prices to earnings provides a measure of the affordability of housing within an area. In 2016, the median house price to workplace-based earnings ratio in Cheshire East was 7.36, compared to 5.62 in the North West and 7.59 across England and Wales. This indicates that Cheshire East is less affordable than the regional average<sup>3</sup>. Indeed, it is the 4<sup>th</sup> least affordable Borough within the entire North-West region and as noted above, prices in Knutsford are some of the highest in the Borough.

#### **Land Supply / Local Plan**

- 2.22 On page 20, the draft Housing Strategy notes that land supply is a critical component for the delivery of new affordable homes and it is recognised that there are insufficient opportunities. This acknowledgement is welcomed.
- 2.23 This section goes onto note that the Local Plan Strategy highlights the need to work further to ensure a continued supply of available land to meet both current and future housing needs. Indeed, this is critical particularly in locations where demand and development is curtailed by the strict

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<sup>3</sup> Median ratio of house price to workplace-based earnings – published by Office for National Statistics, March 2017.

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restrictions on developing in the Green Belt, which can only be released via the Local Plan route either through site allocations or positively worded policies.

- 2.24 In this regard, the Part 1 Local Plan only identified strategic sites in and around the principal settlements within Cheshire East. For those villages and smaller communities that fall outside of the Green Belt within the middle part of the Borough, there has also been the ability to promote development outside of the Local Plan process with reasonable prospects of a successful planning decision outcome. The position in the north of the Borough, however, is very different and key service villages and smaller settlements have been far more restricted.
- 2.25 The Part 2 Local Plan has the remit and ability to address this through the allocation of more housing sites in the north. However, the Council's Housing Strategy should start to make the case for this given the associated difficulties in terms of affordability and lack of supply in this part of the Borough. Indeed, affordability needs provide a compelling and exceptional reason to release more land for development. We would kindly ask that the Council's housing officers consider the following recommendations that could be put to the Council's planning department:
- A recommendation to the Part 2 Local Plan that local housing need assessments for each settlement in the north of the Borough is carried out to see what needs arise. This is critical for communities in greenbelt areas which unless given local plan allocations will be prevented from any growth at all.
  - A recommendation to the Part 2 Local Plan that seeks to deliver an additional level of supply in the north of the Borough (over and above needs set out within the Local Plan) to assist in the delivery of market and affordable homes. A common buffer used is 20% which could be considered.
  - A recommendation to the part 2 local Plan that supports the inclusion of a policy that allows the delivery of affordable homes on Green Belt sites located on the edge of key service centres or villages where there is an identified need.
- 2.26 Clearly it would be for the Council's planning officers to determine if such recommendations could be supported through the Part 2 Local Plan process but we do not see why the Council's housing officers and Housing Strategy could not explicitly set out recommendations that would make a genuine and positive difference towards meeting the overall objectives/priorities of the Housing Strategy (as set out on pages 23-26).

#### **Private Rented Sector/Build to Rent**

- 2.27 The Council's recognition of the importance of this sector is very much welcomed including the Council's full support for well managed and flexible Private Rented Sector (PRS) / Build to Rent (BRT) schemes across all areas of the Borough. Indeed, TEM see this as a vital housing offer and component to attract and retain economically active people, ranging from graduates to senior

professionals who currently really struggle to find fit-for-purpose properties to rent in the northern parts of the Borough in particular.

- 2.28 This struggle to find suitable and available properties ranges from one bedroom units and co-living spaces up to larger family homes, both to rent and to buy. There is a shortage of co-living accommodation in particular. By way of example, Alderley Park have recently launched 50 studio units for key workers – scientists rather than postmen in their case - but confirm far more quantity and mix is required. For Barclays' and their technology centre, local agents confirm that they frequently see groups renting larger family homes and subletting (often illegally) in order to "create" one bedroom and co-living space that is otherwise not available. The HUT Group, one of only two UK "unicorns" (£1bn+ businesses based outside of London) is based in Northwich and attracting and retaining technology workers continues to be a critical issue for their business. Quality purpose built rental accommodation with shared facilities is a concept that is tried and tested, is popular and should therefore be encouraged.
- 2.29 At a Cheshire Science Corridor Event in 2017, Peter Crowther at MSP described housing as the critical issue for Alderley Park's success moving forward. Housing has never been more critical or strategic. The LEP have now also publicly confirmed a desire to see purpose built 'PRS' or 'Build to Rent' come forward in Cheshire and Warrington.
- 2.30 In light of this housing backdrop and market, having a secure, long term rental opportunity would assist in a wide range of health and well-being objectives (noting that the draft Housing Strategy also deals with this aspect of housing too). Indeed, the effective management of a larger purpose built rental development can deliver benefits in terms of the management of shared open space, community facilities, community pool car opportunities (thereby encouraging a reduction in private car ownership and more sustainable modes of transport), and the ability to create an engaged community with common lines of communication on how their community is managed and looked after. This can be achieved almost on day one whereas it could take many years for a new typical housing estate to establish a sense of community, which clearly impacts on our overall health and well-being.
- 2.31 The wellbeing accrued from the knowledge of being able to have a secure, long term rental opportunity for young families cannot be underestimated. It allows them to have the confidence that they can house their child in a safe community and in a location where they can provide a consistent position for schooling without the fear that their landlord might sell or occupy personally.
- 2.32 In terms of the need and demand for PRS in Cheshire East and around Knutsford in particular, TEM have appointed Atlas Residential to look at the local market. Atlas Residential manage and develop BTR schemes and whilst their involvement to date has typically been in the south, they see great potential in and around Knutsford for this concept. Indeed, their draft research (which is contained at **Appendix 1**) indicates that the local PRS market in Knutsford will be in excess of 1,050 households by 2018 and over 1,200 by 2020. Their research indicates a strong appetite and demand for PRS/BTR in the future.

- 2.33 It is also important to note that from a planning policy and viability perspective, the intricacies and funding model of how PRS/BTR schemes work needs to be taken into consideration. Indeed, the funding model of PRS/BTR schemes operate in a different manner to the traditional build to sell model and this needs to be fully accounted for in any future policy decisions. This is recognised within the NPPG.
- 2.34 It is clearly evident that the Government are now looking towards PRS as a potential solution towards solving the housing crisis<sup>4</sup>. This is replicated at both the national and local level, where there are many examples of successful arrangements between Councils and Developers for BTR schemes<sup>5</sup>. The concept of PRS is not considered within the NPPF, but the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) does refer to this important component of the housing market. The NPPG acknowledges that different types of residential development, such as those wanting to build their own homes and private rented sector housing, are funded and delivered in different ways. This should be reflected in viability assessments (Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 10-009-20140306).
- 2.35 The NPPG elaborates on PRS/BTR Schemes further, by further emphasising that the economies of such schemes differ from build to scale and should be determined on a case by case basis. To help ensure that these schemes remain viable, local planning authorities should consider the appropriate level of planning obligations, including for affordable housing, and when these payments are required. In February 2017, a consultation paper was published which suggested explicitly referring to build to rent and 'affordable private rent' within a revised version of the NPPF<sup>6</sup>. The government are therefore well-aware of the different approach which is required in terms of the definition of 'affordable private rent', and the increasingly prominent role BTR schemes can play in the housing market.
- 2.36 The NPPG therefore provides clear guidance that PRS/BTR Schemes may require a different approach to planning obligations or an adjustment to policy requirements, because of their differing funding models. We politely raise this point to the Council's attention, and emphasise that any future policy or housing strategy should consider how PRS/BTR Schemes may require different policy and planning obligation requirements to ensure that they remain viable prospects. In doing so, more certainty can be provided that PRS Schemes can make an important contribution to the housing market at large, as the borough, LEP and market all aspire.

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4. The following news article provides a useful summary of the Government's policy approach to PRS in recent years: <http://www.iceniprojects.com/government-looks-prs-solve-housing-crisis/>

5. The Local Government Association helpfully outline some of the benefits of BTR and how the planning system and planning policy can help to facilitate growth in this sector:

<https://www.local.gov.uk/parliament/briefings-and-responses/planning-and-affordable-housing-build-rent-lga-consultation>

6. London First provide a helpful summary of the key points of note in relation to the government's recent consultation on BTR and suggested planning policy changes:

<http://www.londonfirst.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Planning-and-Affordable-Housing-for-Build-to-Rent-London-First-Response.pdf>

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- 2.37 Indeed, we would ideally be looking for the Council to adopt a statutory affordable PRS housing policy through Part 2 of the Local Plan. In the meantime, there would be scope for the Council to informally adopt an interim policy on the back of the definition in the NPPG and cite how PRS/BRT scheme will contribute to affordable housing provision by virtue of their distinct offer and introduction of a new type of housing product to the Cheshire East market. The Council's Housing Strategy would be the ideal document to introduce and informally address this matter. The Council could then take a decision to include such considerations at the development control/planning application stages of development proposals. This would significantly assist the delivery of more homes within this distinct sector.

### **Affordable Housing Delivery**

- 2.38 It is recognised and noted that more affordable homes need to be met within Cheshire East and the draft Housing Strategy, which we concur with.
- 2.39 However, we note that the Housing Strategy goes onto note that there will be a need to continually review the approaches the Council use to increase provision (and presumably the policies that influence their delivery). Indeed, we concur with the Council that the sector has undergone rapid change because of tighter budgets, development viability and recent changes in government policy.
- 2.40 It would be useful if the Housing Strategy also cited other potential threats to the delivery of affordable homes. For instance, we note that the Council are currently consulting on CIL charging rates for new housing floorspace, and sizable rates are being put forward for the north of the Borough at £168 per sq. m. Whilst we are contesting this figure, unless the Council adopt an exceptions policy as part of the CIL schedule and associated documents (which we note Cheshire East are not proposing), once CIL is adopted, there is no way the payments can be avoided. In locations where CIL is not adopted, there can often be a sensible discussion as to what takes priority (i.e. infrastructure provision or affordable homes or other forms of developer contributions).
- 2.41 From our extensive experience, in locations where CIL is adopted, the components of development that ends up being lost from proposals where viability becomes an issue is affordable housing and/or PRS. CIL can therefore propose a major risk in terms of the Council achieving the targets set out in the current Local Plan (Part 1). This risk would provide further justification to release more land for development through Part 2 of the Local Plan because it cannot be guaranteed that all current housing allocations identified in the Local Plan will actual meet the 30% requirement.

### **The Council's Priorities**

- 2.42 The Council's suggested priorities within the Draft Housing Strategy include:
- Stimulate the Housing Market;
  - Support regeneration to support quality of place;

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- Improve the housing offer for an ageing population;
- Develop a housing offer to support jobs-led growth; and
- Support the Medium Term Financial Growth Strategy.

*We address the first and fourth point together and have no comment on the fifth priority.*

**Stimulating the Housing Market / Develop a housing offer to support jobs-led growth**

- 2.43 TEM support and advocate these priorities and welcome the continued recognition that housing development is essential to support continued economic growth. That said, it is notable that Cheshire East has managed to sustain economic growth even during periods of limited housing delivery. Indeed, as we have already highlighted, during 2010-2015 Cheshire East had already achieved 60% of its jobs growth requirement over the Plan Period up to 2030, which was based on delivering 31,400 jobs.
- 2.44 What isn't transparent in the Council's Housing Strategy is that only 2,770 dwellings were completed in Cheshire East between 2010-2015, against a requirement of over 9,000 homes (1,800 per annum) and against the context of an envisaged jobs growth rate of 0.7%.
- 2.45 The DCLG figures below demonstrate that there has been some progress with the figures for 2015/16 getting closer to the annual requirement of 1,800 dwellings. However, there is still some way to go before this figure is reached and there is a significant backlog of homes to deliver and in the meantime.
- 2010/11 = 350 dwellings
  - 2011/12 = 320 dwellings
  - 2012/13 = 600 dwellings
  - 2013/14 = 610 dwellings
  - 2014/15 = 890 dwellings
  - 2015/16 = 1,090 dwellings
- 2.46 The current mismatch between jobs growth and housing supply is placing additional pressures on the local housing market in terms of affordability.
- 2.47 This base line position should be made clear in the Housing Strategy, particularly under this priority, because the evidence demonstrates that more needs to be done to stimulate the housing market in terms of delivery and to ensure jobs growth is appropriately matched with the supply of new homes. Indeed, in moving forward it will be critical to encourage 'sustainable economic and housing growth', ensuring that those taking jobs in Cheshire East can also find a suitable home at the same

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time, and indeed house many of the current in-commuters. We believe this priority should be amended to reflect the above position.

- 2.48 If not planned for promptly and if not at the forefront of the Council's Housing Strategy now, the above mismatched position between jobs growth and housing supply is also likely to continue. Indeed, under the 4th Priority, reference to the recently reviewed Local Enterprise Partnership's Strategic Economic Plan, the delivery of HS2 and the Constellation Partnership Initiative across Cheshire, Stoke and North Staffordshire, which seeks to deliver 100,000 new jobs and 100,000 new homes is referenced.
- 2.49 Just to be clear, these economic ambitions did not form part of the Part 1 Local Plan and would result in a jobs growth housing growth figure in excess of that currently planned for. As such, if the Housing Strategy is to be successful it should be pushing for a joined-up approach and recommending that an early review of the Local Plan will be fundamental if future housing needs are going to be met.
- 2.50 The Cheshire Science Corridor mentioned above is through a key policy pillar of the LPS and clearly knowledge workers, more than any other category, need the right quality and mix of homes – within communities not just housing estates – and this needs to be embedded throughout the Housing Strategy.

#### **Support regeneration to support quality of place**

- 2.51 We support the Council's objectives in this regard and agree that the quality of place can have a major impact on the economic and social return from communities. We note the Council's Design Guide and only ask that where it is demonstrated that alternative forms of high quality design can be proven, equal weight be given to the benefits of such schemes during decision-making processes.
- 2.52 In terms of other aspects of design, we would suggest that density matters also need to be carefully considered. There should be a recognition that density levels will vary across the Borough, especially when considering PRS/BTR. These schemes will often require higher densities, with 3 to 4 storey elements, in order for these schemes to be economically viable. There should therefore be a recognition of this, and the need for a flexible approach to achieve a variety of densities across the Borough. This pragmatic and flexible approach to housing densities would particularly help to deliver successful PRS schemes, which are growing in importance (as recognised at both the national and local government level).
- 2.53 We also support the delivery of mixed communities and a range of market and affordable housing products.

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### **Improve the housing offer for an ageing population**

- 2.54 We agree that there is an aging population and there needs to be a housing strategy in place to cater for this demographic trend.
- 2.55 Given the Council are now progressing a Part 2 Local Plan and specific site allocations and development management policies, we would suggest now is the most opportune time to consider policy options for this. This could involve the allocation of specific sites and/or generic policies albeit we favour the former.
- 2.56 Whilst it is not uncommon to see generic policies in Local Plans that simply require a blanket percentage provision of homes suitable for elderly accommodation across all development sites, this ignores the fact that elderly housing provision might not be suitable in all locations currently identified for development in Part 1 Local Plan. Indeed, there needs to be a balanced approach to this matter, and an understanding that housing developments need to cater for people of all age groups in order to maintain vitality. In this regard, overly prescriptive planning standards on the percentage provision of homes for elderly accommodation could pose an unnecessary threat to achieving this aspiration.
- 2.57 Moreover, national housebuilders are likely to be promoting the vast majority of strategic sites that have been identified in the Local Plan Part 1. National housebuilders do not typically have a range of care homes or single-story house types within their portfolio and therefore there is a general tendency to avoid the delivery of such products on their sites. Clearly, this is not an unreasonable approach for a housebuilder to take if it is not their core business but it does mean that certain authorities end up failing to capture sufficient housing developments suitable for the elderly.
- 2.58 The Council are likely to see far more delivery of housing products suitable to the elderly if specific sites for different types of accommodation are allocated through Part 2 of the Local Plan, which would help to attract the likes of McCarthy and Stone, Pegasus Care, Audley, BUPA, Adlington and other recognised developers in this sector. This could include the allocation of specific sites to meet the specific needs of the elderly, whether this be the provision of C2 Use Class care homes, extra care villages, retirement homes, adaptable homes or simply single level properties. For example, bungalows can be located on sites that might otherwise be more sensitive in landscape impact terms (due to their low height). Extra Care apartments and their associated need to plan for less private car ownership could also deliver homes on sites that might otherwise be more restricted (i.e. smaller, urban sites).
- 2.59 As a final point, if the Council are to consider the introduction of Part M Building Regulations through the Local Plan in relation to adaptable homes, all we would ask is that this will need to be fully factored into the Council's emerging CIL viability analysis because it will add additional costs towards the delivery of new homes.

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- 2.60 We appreciate much of the above detail will be for the Local Plan process rather than the Housing Strategy but it would not be inappropriate for the Housing Strategy to support the concept of allocating specific sites for the delivery of elderly accommodation.

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### 3. CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1 Overall, the TEM Property Group, the Tatton Estate and Pegasus Group are largely supportive of the Council's Housing Strategy subject to the amendments above and it is considered that it would benefit from a greater level of context and clarity so it is clear to all where the Council stand on its economic and housing requirements and ambitions.
- 3.2 It would also be helpful if the document could set out a range of potential recommendations to other departments within the Council as to what might assist the delivery of new homes and the delivery of the Housing Strategy's priorities. Indeed, the Housing Strategy should be making recommendations that can then be fed into other key Council documents that control and encourage the delivery of new homes. The most obvious document which is currently under perpetration is the Part 2 Local Plan – Site Allocations and Development Management Policies.
- 3.3 In this regard, our main comments are as follows:
- We are fully supportive of the Council's recognition of the importance of the Private Rented Sector/Build to Rent schemes. We urge the Council to follow the guidance contained within the NPPG, which makes it clear how the funding mechanisms of PRS schemes differ to the standard buy to sell format. There is a subsequent need to look at affordable housing requirements and obligations for PRS schemes in a different manner. Any future planning policy and decisions will need to reflect this, and the Housing Strategy should clearly set a guidance point to inform such planning policy going forward through informal policies that could influence the development control process when determining planning applications, Supplementary Planning Documents or Part 2 of the Local Plan.
  - The Housing Strategy and any affordable housing needs/targets that are set by this document or other forthcoming planning documents will need to be very mindful of the implications of additional financial burdens placed on developers through the Council's CIL charging schedule. We would suggest a full review of this is carried out as part of the CIL process and subsequently through a further review of the Housing Strategy and associated planning policies.
  - Cheshire East has already achieved a significant proportion of its jobs growth as set out in the Local Plan. More recent evidence also indicates there are few signs of an economic slow-down and we strongly anticipate that the jobs growth figure for Cheshire East over the Local Plan period is likely to be substantially higher than currently envisaged. We therefore suggest that the Council's Housing Strategy should be recommending that an early Local Plan review might be prudent in such circumstances, which could be subsequently articulated through Part 2 of the Local Plan.
  - Whilst we agree that there needs to be a housing strategy given the ageing population, we would not advocate this transferring to a policy approach which outlines prescriptive

TEM Property Group and the Tatton Estate  
Cheshire East Housing Strategy  
Representations



standards in relation to the percentages of elderly housing on site. This can pose an overly restrictive constraint to the market, as well as not allowing for sufficient flexibility which takes into account the fact that not all sites and locations are suitable for such housing. Instead, the Council should be looking to identify specific sites that would be suitable for elderly housing provision through Part 2 of the Local Plan.

### Pickmere Parish Council

Pickmere Parish Council considered the consultation draft of the Housing Strategy at its last meeting and had the following comments.

All members expressed concern about the esoteric nature of this exercise, especially in terms of the high cost of preparing such a document in the context of the current financial environment, and the lack of relevance to issues at a Parish Council level. There was one topic with which the Council could relate, and it was that of Gypsy and Travellers (sic). Strong criticism was made of the fact that the draft Strategy was not proposing any action to resolve issues surrounding known problems with travellers, e.g. at Spinks Lane, Pickmere, or identify replacement sites. Nor did the strategy report what action had been or was being taken by CEC to identify suitable sites, but it simply proposed updating CEC's 'assessment of need'. The need is considered to be well known. It was pointed out that CEC were well aware of particular problems but was not actually giving the solution of those problems sufficient priority.

I trust these comments will be taken into account.

Regards,

Clerk – Pickmere Parish Council.

**Poynton Town Council**

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing on behalf of Poynton Town Council in response to the draft Housing Strategy 2018-2023. The Town Council would comment as follows:

- Despite the clear expressed views and wishes of local communities, Cheshire East have insisted on imposing changes to the Green Belt. In Poynton, three so called "strategic sites" in the Green Belt were rezoned for housing, despite strong opposition from local people and a complete failure to address issues such as the impact of additional traffic and increased demands on local services. Sites have also been selected for housing which include flood risk areas.
- We remain disappointed that there continues to be an apparent reluctance to agree to the redevelopment of Brownfield Sites. Indeed, Cheshire East have even refused to consider a brownfield site in Poynton which they own, the former Vernon Infants School, for redevelopment, preferring to use Green Belt land instead.
- Cheshire East appear to be reluctant to rezone "brownfield" sites for development despite the owners of those sites supporting their reuse for residential housing. An example is the Armcon site bordering Poynton. The owners of this large industrial building wish to redevelop it for housing, but Cheshire East refused to even consider it for inclusion in the Local Plan.

Generally, the Town Council feels that the draft Housing Strategy appears to be based on the deeply flawed Local Plan. It also repeats the false analysis that building houses produces economic prosperity, and ignores the negative impact of increasing traffic and population on the environment.

Kind regards,

Deputy Town Clerk, Poynton Town Council.

## Sandbach Town Council

Comments on Cheshire East Housing Strategy 2018 – 2023

From Sandbach Town Council

It is not clear as to why a Housing Strategy is required at this time and how much value or influence it will have given the recent adoption of the Cheshire East Local Development Plan for the period up to 2030. This document should have been produced much earlier in the Local Plan process, where it would have had a purpose in driving and shaping the Local Development Plan. It appears to be too late of be any major value.

An alternative would be to remove new housing from the strategy and have this document look at remediation measures to improve the existing stock of housing, looking to improve energy usage, refurbish property to meet the needs of the elderly and other groups highlighted in the predicted changing demographics.

A Housing Strategy should define the requirements for housing the existing and expected future population of Cheshire East, and that would be fed into a Local Plan alongside the requirements for employment, education, transport and health facilities. This document is too late and fails to develop detailed strategy.

The draft includes ten headline priorities many of which are worthy of support, such as “promoting affordable warmth”, improving the choice of housing for an aging population, prevent homelessness. It also includes worrying priorities such as stimulating the housing market, some areas of Cheshire East such as Sandbach require restraint not stimulation.

In summary:

- Overall, the document lacks substance. It gives a strong, positive picture of the housing strategy (though in places it borders on the self-congratulatory).
- The link between the priority goals and how to delivery them is weak – most deliverables seem either intangible or lack substance. For example, how is the priority of housing for an ageing population to be delivered?
- Other than mention of the strategy on jobs and growth, there is no reference to other strategies that are necessary to deliver the housing strategy, such as the road network and provision of medical facilities and schools.
- The underlying philosophy seems to be to rely on the market: the social rented sector – surely necessary given the failings of reliance on the market - hardly gets a mention.

And in a little more detail:

There are a number of claims of past successes and a number of laudable goals. However, there is frequent iteration of key goals and priorities, quite a lot of generalisation, repeated

claims with little of substance on how to make the strategy happen, and no mention of other strategies that are essential to successful delivery.

For example, there is frequent comment on the alignment of the strategy to that of Jobs and Growth. However, there is no reference to any allied infrastructure (both technical and social) that should be essential in providing the larger platform to facilitate delivery. Missing references include the provision of adequate health care, roads and schools required to service the growth in housing. The links between the sections on priorities and the sections entitled Delivery Plan are weak, in that delivery usually refers to documents or budget management, rather than any specific areas of actions.

Comments on specifics within the consultation draft:

- 1) P7. The text references the overriding imperative of the marketplace whilst mentioning the broken housing market. The clear statistical evidence, both nationally and within the Borough of Cheshire East, testifies to the fact that a market-driven ideological approach to housing has failed both nationally and locally. The forward states that the councils vision of "Putting residents at the heart of everything we do" seems to conflict with page 7 where "Our Residents" are at the end of the list detailing who the strategy is for: a. Ourselves (i.e. Cheshire East) b. Our partners (who have not been identified at this stage) c. Our residents. This sequence should be reversed
- 2) P9. The opening paragraph claims that a great deal has been achieved, whilst citing no evidence. The final bullet point states that Cheshire East will intervene where the market is unable to meet housing needs, but the only area for action references the private rented sector, and does not specify what kind of actions.
- 3) P10. The opening paragraph claims a successful economy (although whether national or local is not made clear). Either way, there is no reference to any evidence. The second paragraph states that Cheshire East will utilise their own land to meet housing needs. There are two dangers - firstly the need to protect community assets such as open spaces inside and bordering settlements, schools or key council buildings, the strategy must ensure that the assets are not compromised by the of selling land for short term gains - as happened with land adjacent to Westfields. The second danger is that external developers take the profit from the value of community land that should have been shared by the residents. It appears that the only direct action area is to sell off Cheshire East land holdings. The opportunity for enabling building for social rented accommodation does not appear to be explored in any detail.
- 4) P12. The diagram of how the strategy links together does not appear to have any meaning. It should either be qualified to make sense, or removed.

5) P14. The opening paragraph claims “enormous success” in attracting investment, which is to be greatly welcomed. However, there is no evidence quoted directly or referenced. The benefits being enjoyed from further major investment lists only two items, one of which is HS2, whose benefits are uncertain and beyond the timeframe of this strategy document. The final sentence quotes entirely excellent and laudable goals of “good access to employment, healthcare, schools, retail and other facilities, so enabling low car usage, sustainable travel and greater quality of life”. However, no evidence of past success or effective future actions to achieve these goals is quoted.

6) Within the long chapter on Growth and Quality of Place, there is no section on the social rented sector; just a small reference under the section on Affordable Housing. This would appear to be a major and significant omission, and reflects the overall emphasis on the marketplace as the only tool (see point 2 above).

7) P24. The paragraph on the priority “Support generation to support quality of place” states the need to ensure the right mix of housing, but, as elsewhere, the link to the associated Delivery Plan is weak.

8) P32-49. The entire chapter on “Health, wellbeing and quality of life” contains much well-meaning material and generalisations that make references to national policies and quotations from central government material, but little or nothing specific to the Cheshire East Housing Strategy.

9) A general editing point, but it would be helpful in future versions of the strategy to number the paragraphs and sections throughout, for ease of reference as a working document.

10) It is not clear who this document is directed at, the terminology is not always clear, technical planning language is used, knowledge of other CEC planning and strategy documents are assumed - this is not helpful if residents are expected to understand and work with this document.

11) Unanswered questions CEC need to be clear about who they expect to enable this proposed strategy, CEC need to explain the role expected from:

- The private sector
- Large and small commercial developers
- Small scale buy to let landlords
- Emerging corporate landlords such as Legal and General
- Quasi Governmental o Registered Social Landlords o CEC subsidiary
- Retain provision internally to CEC. Do you want CEC to build/manage/own its own stock of housing to enable this housing strategy? Do you want CEC to work with the

successors to the RSL's that operated within the three boroughs prior to the formation of CEC to ensure the provision of appropriate housing?

On behalf of Sandbach Town Council

January 2018

## Scanlans

This is a well thought out document and will provide a useful tool in dealing with the housing issues in the locality.

However I would have expected to see as a key priority the provision of increased numbers of affordable homes throughout the area.

I note the opportunity to use Cheshire East land for increased housing provision but wonder whether in these cases the priority will be to achieve the maximum price for the land or to provide housing including affordable housing.

To this end I would cite the sale of the Council land in Macclesfield to Redrow where the effect of the contamination and other constraints which, in other market circumstances would simply be reflected in a reduced land value ,were reflected by a reduction in the number of affordable homes in order to support the land value.

If a site is less valuable due to constraints it should achieve a lesser sale price- not be subsidised by artificial planning relaxations , whether the land is owned by the Council or another third party That was an artificial mechanism to support land value/sale price at odds with and at the expense of the Councils avowed intention to achieve 30% affordable on ALL sites.

I would also suggest that where the Council are able to support affordable housing through contributions rather than by onsite provision the affordable housing should be targeted at those areas of highest housing values and lowest incomes.

Handforth for example has one of the highest levels of house prices - if one excludes ex-Council/housing association stock- but the third lowest incomes- surely that is a classic demonstration of an area where housing support for low cost/ supported home ownership and discounted rental levels is urgently needed - even if it is at the perimeter of the Council area and remote from its centre core and with non- majority councillors.

To be clear I support the policy but have concerns about the implementation where there is likely to be a conflict between the priorities of the housing /planning departments and those of the finance/ estates departments and would urge that the former take priority over the latter.

## The Guinness Partnership

Dear Sir or Madam,

I understand that the consultation period ended on the above yesterday, but would be most grateful if you could take into account the comments below:-

Housing Growth – one key factor that we encounter as a problem is the planning process. Even when paid for a pre-application we have found response times to be lengthy with some of the consulted Departments not responding in the times set. Also engaging and having dialogue with the Case Officer has proved problematic with not be either able to speak to them or have e-mail responses. This has delayed development which in majority of cases would have had an impact on the funding (HCA) for the scheme. Appreciate that a scheme will be decided upon by a Committee, but the process leading up to scheme being presented to Committee can be lengthy, unnecessarily problematic and a costly exercise.

Section 106 Housing Opportunities – There is a lot of potential for affordable homes through 106 and whilst at the moment there are Registered Providers that are able to take these up, the money to purchase such homes is not finite and there may be a time where RPs decline submitting offers of purchase. To help with making the finances stretch that bit further, would it be possible to consider how this could be avoided. One suggestion is that have affordable homes have set price per house, tenure type & location, the Council also has an agreed list of Registered Providers who have funds to purchase the properties. Each new development then gets allocated to an RP on a rotation basis, if that RP is not in a position to purchase it then goes to the next RP on the rotation. I believe other local authorities have this model and it has worked, it also ensures that the developer is fully aware of what the cost would be to them to provide affordable housing on their development at inception.

Jobs Led Growth – how will demand be ascertained? Will there be consultation with key employers in CEC to determine salaries for affordability, plans for growth and where housing is required. Also would accommodation for graduates/apprentices help with growth?.

HMOs – such accommodation is important to the housing offer, but as you identify they do tend to be in specific areas and can be problematic within the local community, what would be the plan to try and break this offer up and make it throughout CEC?

Care Leavers accommodation – important provision to be made, but for this to be successful 1:1 support is vital to the individual to give them the life skills required when leaving care. Also location is key, close to all amenities but not in areas where there is a lot of vulnerable people.

I hope that the above is satisfactory and that you will be able to take our comments into account.

Regards

The Guinness Partnership.

## The Skills & Growth Company



Housing Policy  
Cheshire East Council  
Research and Consultation Team  
Second floor, Westfields  
Middlewich Road  
Sandbach, CW11 1HZ

20 December 2017

Dear Sirs,

### **Cheshire East Housing Strategy 2017/18 – Response to consultation**

The Skills and Growth Company welcomes the Cheshire East Housing Strategy and its aims to increase and improve housing in the borough, and we welcome the opportunity to comment on the Council draft strategy.

The focus of the Skills and Growth Company is to support economic development, leading to business creation, expansion and jobs growth within the borough. Our work complements the UK's Industrial Strategy in supporting the economy of the future, and the Northern powerhouse in delivering significant growth in the north of England linked to HS2, Constellation and the Cheshire Science Corridor. The quality and availability of the housing offer is a critical factor in building that vibrant economy, and we would welcome continued engagement in the delivery of the Council objectives.

Our specific responses have been grouped into the Council strategic priorities, outlined in the Housing Strategy.

#### Priority: Stimulate the housing market

Cheshire East has a number of priority sectors which will form the basis of our future economy – technology, life sciences, advanced manufacturing and energy. The Skills and Growth Company is supporting these sectors, alongside other high growth companies, to increase productivity, job creation and improve skills. Although housing is not seen to be a significant barrier to most businesses, we are aware of some specific issues which we would welcome further work to overcome;

- Attracting and retaining young talent is critical to our future economy. Providing housing that is suited to younger people (in terms of style and price) and is

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0300 123 5001 | [info@skillsandgrowth.co.uk](mailto:info@skillsandgrowth.co.uk) | [www.skillsandgrowth.co.uk](http://www.skillsandgrowth.co.uk)



Registered Office: The Skills & Growth Company Ltd, c/o Cheshire East Council, Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ  
VAT Registration: 229904879

geographically aligned with employment opportunities (including high level/degree apprenticeships) would encourage school and college leavers to remain within Cheshire East, and draw the graduate talent in that our businesses require.

- New housing stock and developments need to be serviced with high capacity digital connectivity – ideally full fibre. This will future proof the development and address increasing market demand for on-demand internet services (e.g. BBC iplayer streaming services )
- The issue of affordable and accessible housing for the Cheshire Science Corridor (Alderley Park, Astra Zeneca, Jodrell Bank, etc.) is of particular interest given the access to high value and sustainable employment, and the growth potential in this area.
- Similarly we are seeing an increase in growth in creative & digital industries particularly across the north of the Borough, linked to the digital cluster in Greater Manchester. These industries require a ready supply of talent, who not only require affordability but also a wider ‘place’ offer to be attracted away from the larger cities.
- It is also likely that we will see an increase in digital and fintech employment in the Crewe area linked to HS2.

#### Priority: Support regeneration to support quality of place

Vibrant and vital town centres are key to a thriving economy, and we are collaborating programmes such as the Crewe Masterplan and the Macclesfield Town Centre Strategy to support this. We welcome the alignment of the Council ambitions with this objective, in particular in increasing the town centre housing offer and contributing towards place-shaping.

As part of the UK Industrial Strategy we are currently investigating the ‘smart solutions’ that may be appropriate to our towns and villages – these allow effective use of existing infrastructure and will future-proof our economy. As the applications for these technologies emerge, we would welcome the Council input to bring these solutions forward.

Clean growth is also a critical strand of the Industrial Strategy, not just the meeting of carbon reduction and pollution targets, but also in stimulating the market for low carbon technologies. We would welcome an increased focus on these clean growth targets for housing and we may be of assistance in developing opportunities to further integrate energy efficiency, electric vehicles, and heat and power networks.

#### Priority: Support the Medium Term Financial Growth Strategy

The Skills and Growth Company will play a key role in delivering the financial growth strategy through supporting business growth, higher value employment, and in securing capital funding for economic infrastructure (digital and energy in particular) to support that future growth. We

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would welcome the opportunity to work with the Council to integrate our objectives with the Councils. In particular;

- Our Business Engagement and Inward Investment teams have increased the commercial floorspace used within the region and assisted in the growth of employment opportunities. The continued development of business parks and employment zones, accessible to high quality and affordable housing, will continue to increase employment and revenues.
- The Connecting Cheshire programme to roll out high speed broadband to areas not covered commercially, and we would welcome continued involvement with the Council and housing providers in facilitating this connectivity.

Our work with businesses already established within the borough leads to a strengthening of the businesses themselves and also to their ties to Cheshire East. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss further measures the Local Authority could take to supporting social value and local procurement.

#### Priority: Promote independent living

Many of the innovative areas of our work could have significant benefits for independent living. In particular;

- High speed broadband connectivity is vital for independent living. We currently have achieved a 96% coverage of households through Connecting Cheshire and aim to increase this further. We are also investigating full fibre networks and 5G. It is critical that housing providers ensure that they are making full use of this programme, and they seek to support this through the provision of basic digital skills to their residents.
- In future, digital innovations such as autonomous vehicles and the internet of things will provide assistance to those for whom independent living is a challenge. Cheshire East also has a particular strength in digital health to overcome health inequalities and inflation through. We will seek to ensure that Cheshire East is at the forefront of these innovations and would welcome the Council involvement as these start to emerge.

#### Priority: Prevent Homelessness

The prevention of homelessness we recognise is an important priority that will require a multi-agency approach to bring about improvements.

As a company we would feel our key areas to add value would be assisting companies to access government funding to tap into the non-traditional labour markets, this could help people with mental health issues or irregular work histories to access the job market.

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Additionally we would see our ability to bring various partners together and organise and mediate an approach to be a strength which Cheshire East might utilise in this area.

Priority: Promote affordable warmth

We recognise that tackling affordable warmth, and energy, is a critical factor in overcoming deprivation and increasing economic wellbeing. The Skills and Growth Company is currently delivering a number of initiatives which will assist the Council objectives, and we would welcome continued engagement on these.

- We are leading the development of heat network schemes in Crewe and Macclesfield for the authority, with further schemes planned in the near term. Coupled with the district heating schemes we are seeking resources to test the potential for a geothermal resource within Crewe which could provide the heat to the network from a natural resource. District heating is a solution which can directly tackle affordable warmth, particularly in areas of high population density, and overcome the potential for future cost increases.
- Fairerpower, our responsible and (on average) cheaper energy offering is currently providing savings, especially to the customers with the least means. The PayGo offer from Fairerpower has proven particularly helpful to those in fuel poverty and we would welcome further opportunities to work with social landlords and other agencies to bring that help to more households. In the future Fairerpower intends to expand its offering to include affordable warmth to those in off grid areas.

We hope that these comments are useful in the development of the strategy, and it appears there are a number of areas where continued engagement would be beneficial.

Yours sincerely



Your Name Julian Cobley  
Job Title Managing Director

## Section 4 – Formal responses from individuals

The following 4 formal responses were received as part of the consultation from individuals.

### Individual response 1

This may have been covered within this comprehensive document; apologies if so.

I would like to see town and village empty retail spaces or vacant spaces above retail spaces to be utilised to provide homes for people. Most young/old people do not have demand for houses with gardens but to have a convenient living space close to shops, bars and restaurants, as is evident from the huge numbers of apartments being built in city centres.

A cohesive plan to include properties close to bus routes and railway stations will also help working people get to their destination. The village railway station car parks are full before 9.00am, so additional parking spaces are required if permission is being granted for additional homes.

Regards.

### Individual response 2

Good morning,

Surprisingly there is no mention of the exception rule which could enable affordable dwellings to be built outside a settlement boundary – where there is a genuine need.

Is this part of the strategy?

### Individual response 3

Hello,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments.

I suggest a strategy that compels builders to complete their developments rather than 'banking' lots.

I remember a BBC report on Housing where a Cheshire East officer said there were 17,000 unused planning permissions. If builders were compelled to complete unused permissions this would go a long way to meeting the targets in the Local Plan.

I also suggest that the housing includes a mixture which people can actually afford to buy or rent.

Regards.

#### **Individual response 4**

Too many houses are being built on green belt land.

Too many larger houses are being built because a bigger profit is made from larger homes.

Eventually my wife and I would like to downsize from our current 4 bed detached to a bungalow or 2 bed semi , but very very few bungalows are being built generally it's the 4,5 or 6 bed homes being built.

Affordable housing isn't buying part and rent the remainder as we all know this generates large returns for the housing developer.

Where developers promise to build some smaller units , provide landscaping , plant trees and bushes and screening with landscaping to gain planning consent these promises should be written into a binding contract for said planning consent and not like the PRESENT where most agreements are ignored and dropped once planning consent has been obtained.

A lot of new homes are in the wrong place and too expensive with many people having to commute longer distances to work adding to the already busting at the seams road network.

These are but a few things that need to be considered more carefully when building more houses.

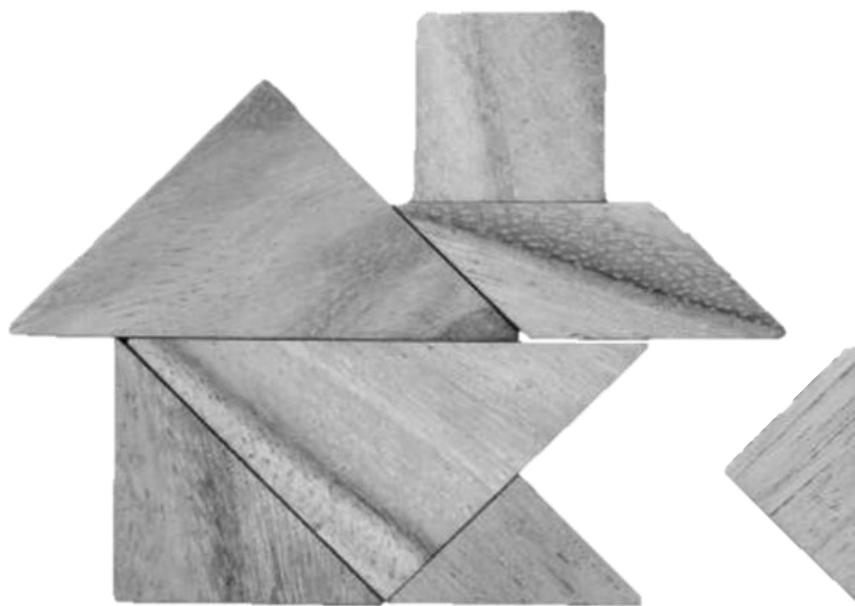
Many thanks.

## **Appendix 1 – A profile of survey respondents**

Consultation survey respondents were more likely to be male than female, and were most likely aged 45 to 74.

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Count of survey respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	78	68%
Female	36	32%
<b>Total valid responses</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>Age range</b>	<b>Count of survey respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Under 25	0	0%
25-34	3	3%
35-44	9	8%
45-54	24	21%
55-64	25	22%
65-74	51	44%
75-84	4	3%
85 plus	0	0%
<b>Total valid responses</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>100%</b>

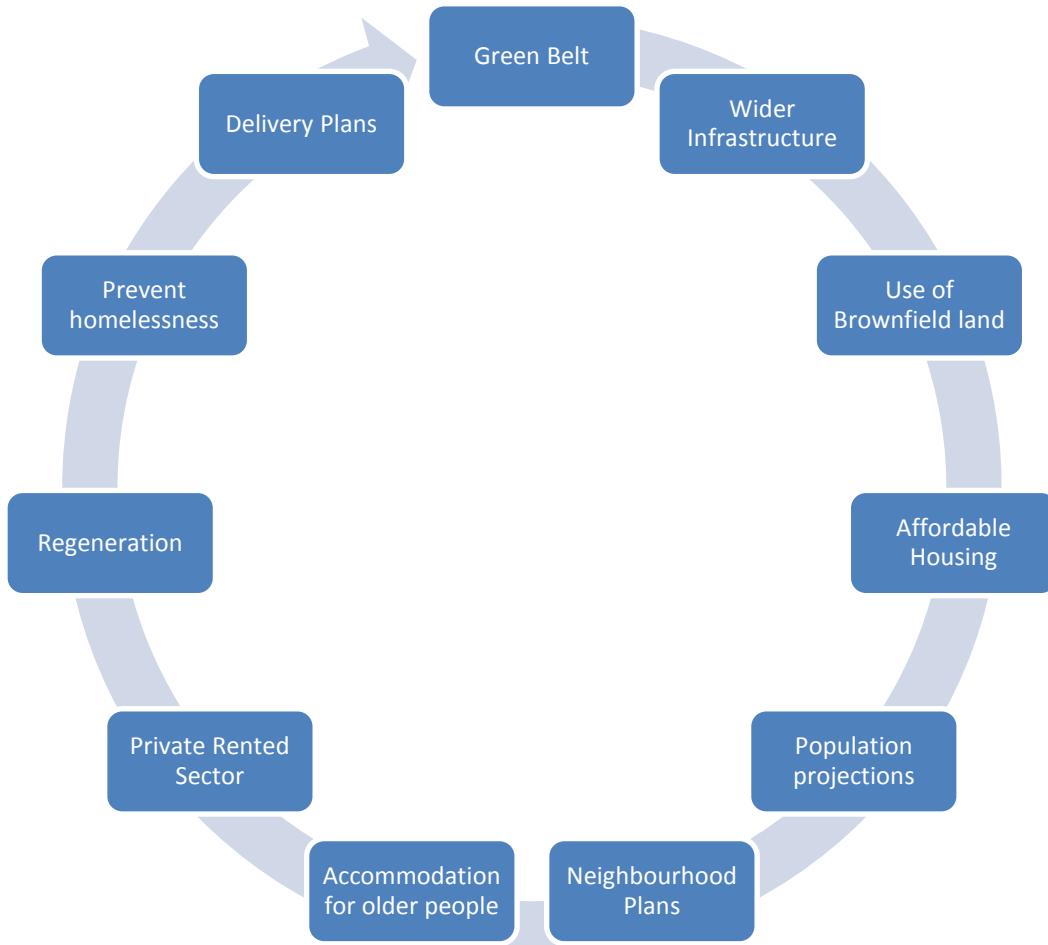


# Housing Strategy 2018-2023

## Consultation Feedback Summary

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of the feedback from the Housing Strategy 2018 - 2023 formal public consultation, which took place between 27 November 2017 to 08 January 2018.
- 1.2 Consultation feedback was received through two methods;
- Online survey: Residents; partner organisations; Parish and Town Councils and other interested parties were able to participate in an online survey of the draft strategy, the results of which are detailed in Cheshire East Housing Strategy 2018 2023 Consultation Report by Research and Consultation.
- Email / letter In addition, people were able to provide comments and feedback directly to Strategic Housing though email and letter.
- 1.3 In total, we received 173 responses;
- Online survey: Online survey:
- Email / letter Email / letter
- 1.4 The main themes from both methods of consultation are summarised;



2. Consultation Feedback:

2.1 The comments from the consultation were collated and assessed, with relevant amendments made to ensure we capture any concerns and suggests. Where necessary and practical, individual replies will be made to Parish / Town Council and other organisations. However, as we are unable to make such specific responses to online survey comments, we have provided a response in terms of the themes as outlined in 1.4 above;

Ref	Theme	Respondents comments	Our response
1.	Green Belt:	A number of respondents expressed concern that Green Belt was not directly referred to within the strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Council's approach to the significance of Green Belt is detailed within the Local Plan, and not directly the responsibility of the Housing Strategy</li> <li>▪ Reference to the Council's approach to Green Belt has been included within the housing strategy – in the Land Supply section</li> </ul>
2.	Wider Infrastructure:	Several respondents highlighted the need to include direct mention of the wider infrastructure associated with housing development – highways; public transport; schools and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Housing Strategy is principally a high level strategy, with reference to the Local Plan and other mechanisms that will support the delivery of infrastructure in the borough.</li> <li>▪ However, the consultation feedback comments are acknowledged. As such, to ensure we capture strategic links between housing development and the infrastructure of a neighbourhood, we have made necessary amendments to the strategy to reflect the consultation comments</li> </ul>
3.	Use of brownfields land	Reference made, but what are you doing?	Consultation comments have been noted and relevant amendments have been made within the Strategy to reflect this, in which we highlight our approach through – <i>Brownfields First</i>
4.	Rural housing	It was felt that the Strategy did not adequately cover housing issues within rural areas.	Given that more than a third of Cheshire East residents live in rural areas <sup>1</sup> , we appreciate such concern. While rural issues are generally covered within the draft documents, we have revisited and made the necessary amendments to capture such concerns

<sup>1</sup> Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2016 mid-year population estimates for small areas (October 2017 release). ONS Crown Copyright 2018. ONS licensed under the Open Government Licence v. 3.0. [2] 2015 Rural-Urban Classification for Cheshire East (at Lower Layer Super Output Area level), Research & Consultation Team, Cheshire East Council.

Ref	Theme	Respondents comments	Our response
5.	Affordable Housing	Some respondents expressed concern that the definition of affordable housing was too broad	Definition of affordable housing is a nationally directed policy, by the National Planning Policy Framework.
		Not enough smaller 1 or 2 bed room new builds, developers are reluctant to build smaller size homes.	The Strategy is very clear in terms of the need for 1 and 2 bedroom homes - to support young people seeking to access the housing market; as a clear option to attract workers in areas that are geographically aligned with employment opportunities and importantly allow increased downsizing for our ageing population. Policies in the Local Plan Strategy, including policy SC4 Residential Mix seek to support an appropriate house type mix in the borough.
		Various comments outlined that the differences in house price value and level of income within the Borough caused issues in accessing the market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Council fully acknowledges the issues of affordability across Cheshire East, and works hard to continually gain intelligence in accordance with affordability for residents in the borough and work with stakeholders to make sure we have accurate information to reflect housing need and aspiration for our residents. Our new Housing Strategy is based on clear evidence of housing need - which is utilised to ensure specific policies are accurately targeted to support measures to increase access to affordable housing for all our residents</li> <li>▪ Policies in the Local Plan Strategy, including policy SC5 Affordable Homes, seeks to meet the assessed need for affordable homes in the Borough up to 2030.</li> </ul>
		Many comments in terms of helping young people; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ access affordable housing – both urban and rural</li> <li>▪ more starter homes needed for young people</li> <li>▪ Chronic lack of choice and affordable housing for younger families, couples or single people of working age</li> </ul>	We fully acknowledge the concern and agree with the importance in supporting young people in all areas of the borough to access affordable housing, whether it is to buy or rent. On reflection, we agree the Strategy could be stronger in highlighting this and have amended where necessary to directly reflect our approach to helping our young people to access affordable housing.
		Need for CEC to build / land lease	While the Council are not directly in a position to develop homes at this time, the Strategy does highlight our ambition to 'Stimulate the Housing Market' through a number of measures in which we and our partners will seek to be creative and flexible in securing the levels of affordable housing the Borough needs for the future.

Ref	Theme	Respondents comments	Our response
6.	Overdevelopment	A number of respondents expressed concern that there is overdevelopment in some areas of Cheshire East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The level of housing development throughout Cheshire East is based on the objectively assessed need [OAN] for housing in the borough – which is the total number of new homes required to meet the projected increases in population, incorporating expected levels of jobs growth and balanced against the quality of life in the borough to set an overall housing requirement in the borough, which has been outlined by our Local Plan. This also informs our five year housing land supply target in the borough</li> <li>▪ Housing developments decisions are primarily informed by ensuring that there is the Right Home in the Right Place, sustainable developments that duly considers the neighbourhoods wider infrastructure and to ensure we protect our Green Belt</li> </ul>
7.	Lifetime Homes Guide Standards	A number of respondents highlighted <i>Lifetime Homes Guide Standards</i> : Wheelchair access is often not being considered in new developments or for alterations to existing buildings.	While this has been superseded in England by inserts into Building Regulations, we can seek to further link the Strategy with the planned review of the Vulnerable and Older Person Housing Strategy through the Delivery Plan.
8.	Population projections	Information in terms of the population projections were questioned within the Strategy – specifically in relation to Local Plan and information about demographic change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The actual population growth seen between 2010 and 2016 [7,600, or 2.1%, as stated on page 16 of the Housing Strategy] partly reflects the fact that the Local Plan was not adopted until 2017 and therefore housing provision so far does not yet match that set out in the Plan. However, it is likely that the population will grow faster if the Plan progresses as envisaged: that is, if the housing development backlog is eliminated and employment land development and jobs growth matches the aspirations of the Plan. In other words, there is a time lag between the Plan being developed and implemented and the Plan having an effect on demographic and economic growth - and the 2010-16 population growth statistics are an indication of this</li> <li>▪ The projected 20% change [from 159,441 in 2011 to 191,000 in 2030, as stated on page 15 of the Housing Strategy] relates to the number of households, not the number of people in the population. The household growth rate is likely to differ from the population growth rate because of changes in average household size [that is, the average number of people per household] – and because some members of the population [for example some students and people in residential care homes] live in communal establishments, not in households</li> <li>▪ The Council has an adopted Local Plan Strategy which has considered the appropriate level of housing in the borough to deliver sustainable development. The Local Plan is fully evidenced based and has been subject to extensive examination.</li> </ul>

Ref	Theme	Respondents comments	Our response
9.	Neighbourhood Plans	A number of Parish and town councils expressed concern that there is little or no reference to Neighbourhood Plans within the draft Strategy. They further highlighted the important of the housing need information within the Neighbourhood Plans - recognised evidence based document for Planning purposes.	To ensure we capture the important work of the Neighbourhood Plans we have included references to their importance in the Strategy.
10.	Accommodation for older people	Some respondents indicated a need for the right type of accommodation for our older population - with many echoing concerns of need due to the ageing population for Cheshire East	We are pleased so many residents highlighted the need for accommodation for older people - which is reflected throughout the Housing Strategy.
11.	Private Rented Sector	Many people took the opportunity to stress the need for a well-managed Private Rented Sector, ensuring quality, choice and security.	Such comments are very welcome, in which we fully support through the Strategy, and have clarified and strengthened our delivery plan to support this aim
12.	Regeneration	Number residents stressed the importance of strategically linking housing with current regeneration projects.	The Strategy contains specific links with regeneration projects within Cheshire East, which have a direct influence of housing. As such, we will maintain our commitment to ensure the supply of housing continues to be central to regeneration and renewal of our neighbourhoods, working directly with our partners in areas of housing need through facilitating and encouraging sustainable development of affordable homes.
13.	Preventing Homelessness	There was wide spread support for this as a Priority, with a number of residents welcoming our approach of prevention to this issue.	We very much welcome the comments in terms of supporting our approach to preventing homelessness. As the Strategy highlights, we have been enormously successful in our work to prevent families and individuals becoming homeless and will continue to do so as we further work to prevent homeless in Cheshire East
14.	Delivery Plans	Several comments were made that the format of the Delivery Plans was hard to follow. Additionally, we talked about targets to measure within the plans, but the majority of tasks in the Plans in the section titled 'how we will do this' are not all targets.	Having taken the opportunity to review the Delivery Plans - we fully accept the comments and have redesigned them to allow clearer clarity of the flow and contents.

## Cabinet

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**Date of Meeting:** 10 April 2018

**Report Title:** Homelessness Strategy

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor A Arnold – Housing, Planning and Regeneration

**Senior Officer:** Frank Jordan – Executive Director - Place

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### 1. Report Summary

- 1.1 Cheshire East's Housing Options Service has an overarching aim of providing an exemplary service to provide housing advice and assistance to prevent homelessness and to help residents find suitable accommodation. The Service is facing a number of challenges which have been brought about by emerging national policies and local pressures.
- 1.2 The Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty upon local authorities to carry out a review of homelessness in their area and formulate and publish a strategy for the future based on the results of that review.
- 1.3 A Homelessness Strategy 2018 – 2021 has been produced by Cheshire East Council which provides a framework and an action plan so that any agency or individual can clearly understand what the Council and its partners are doing to support people in housing need.
- 1.4 The strategy sets out four clear aims which are to:
  1. Enable more people to remain in their home and prevent them from becoming homeless.
  2. Help people who are homeless to secure accommodation.
  3. Provide interventions so no-one has to sleep rough in Cheshire East.
  4. Ensure adequate support is in place to help people maintain and sustain accommodation
- 1.5 The Homelessness Strategy takes into account the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which will come into force in April 2018 and places statutory responsibilities on Local Authorities to prevent homelessness.

- 1.6 The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Planning and Regeneration provided to carry out a public consultation on a draft Homelessness Strategy. This was conducted between the 13th October and the 15th December 2017. The draft document was placed on the Council's website, a press release was issued and consultation events were held. The draft document was also widely circulated via e-mail to a wide range of partner organisations and services.

**2. Recommendation/s**

- 2.1 Cabinet are recommended to:
- 2.1.1 approve the Homelessness Strategy (**Appendix 2**).
  - 2.1.2 note that the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Planning and Regeneration will oversee the delivery of the strategy in partnership through the members of the Homelessness Strategy Steering Group.
  - 2.1.3 note that the funding arrangements are in place to enable the delivery of the strategy
  - 2.1.4 delegate authority to the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Planning and Regeneration to make any further revisions to the strategy.

**3. Reasons for Recommendation/s**

- 3.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty upon local authorities to carry out a review of homelessness in their area and formulate and publish a strategy for the future based on the results of that review. As a statutory document, it was important that the Council can demonstrate that they have consulted widely with internal services, external agencies and residents.
- 3.2 Following consultation we have ensured that the Council has identified any gaps and issues in the draft strategy and this has led to the formulation of a robust action plan which is appropriately supported and adequately resourced to address any issues and delivery of the service.

**4. Other Options Considered**

- 4.1 There are no alternatives to the recommendations as it is a statutory requirement for the Council to have a Homelessness Strategy in place. Cheshire East Council needs to ensure that the Strategy is robust in

order to deliver effective actions prior to the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 being implemented.

## 5. Background

- 5.1. The Homelessness Strategy is a key document in achieving the Corporate objectives of delivering the right type of housing in the right place, regenerating our towns and villages, and supporting the wellbeing of our residents.
- 5.2. The accommodation of vulnerable people concerns a host of Council services that collectively work towards improving prospects and well-being for affected client groups. In its development there has been liaison with Adults' Services, Children's Services, Public Health and Housing to ensure that the strategy reflects the priorities and initiatives of these services.
- 5.3. Principally, the strategy supports and expands the Council's commitment to enabling independence, reablement, and recovery through the appropriate provision of accommodation and support services.
- 5.4. As such, the Strategy will set the direction of travel the Council needs to take and the accommodation priorities it will focus upon. This will inform future service commissioning work and planning policies to deliver better provider management and the future development of appropriate housing.

## 6. Implications of the Recommendations

### 6.1. Legal Implications

- 6.1.1. Under the Homelessness Act 2002 it is a statutory requirement that local authorities have a strategy in place to prevent and deal with homelessness. This strategy is not only aimed at preventing homelessness in the local area but to ensure that sufficient accommodation is available for people who are or may become homeless. Furthermore, the strategy outlines how the Council will secure the appropriate support for people who are or may become homeless or who have been homeless and need support to prevent them becoming homeless again.
- 6.1.2. The Council as the local housing authority and social services authority must take their Homelessness Strategy into account in the exercise of their functions.

- 6.1.3. Before adopting a Homelessness Strategy the Council must consult such public or local authorities, voluntary organisations or other persons as they consider appropriate. This report demonstrates that this has been undertaken.
- 6.1.4. A new Homelessness Strategy must be completed at a maximum of every five years.
- 6.1.5. A copy of the published Strategy will be made available at the Council's principal offices for inspection and copies can be provided on request. The Strategy will also be published on the Council's website.

## 6.2. Finance Implications

- 6.2.1. The successful delivery of the strategy relies on the Service retaining its current base budgets as well being allocated the Flexible Homeless Support Grant and the New Burdens funding.
- 6.2.2. The Flexible Homeless Support Grant (£196,000 for 2018/19) has been ring-fenced from Central Government for the delivery of prevention services. The New Burdens Grant (£36,575 for 2018/19) will not be ring-fenced but will be essential to effectively manage the anticipated 50% increase in footfall to the Housing Options Service. This will provide enough resources to ensure that the strategy is delivered successfully.

## 6.3. Equality Implications

- 6.3.1. Whilst not a legal requirement, it is still considered best practice to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment which has been carried out during the development of the Strategy (**Appendix 3**). Third party agencies have been involved in the formulation of the Equality Impact Assessment and it has been determined that there are no groups who will be negatively impacted by the strategy. It was assessed that a full Impact Assessment was not required. A Health Impact Assessment and a Community Impact Assessment are to be completed in relation to the final version of the strategy.

## 6.4. Human Resources Implications

- 6.4.1. Due to the implications of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which are addressed within the Strategy there will be some implications for Human Resources and Organisational

Development. This will include ensuring that all Cheshire East staff and Elected Members are aware of the new duty to refer individuals and households, who are at risk of homelessness within 56 days, to the Housing Options Service. Some early discussions with Organisational Development and Democratic Services have already commenced to ensure adequate time and provision is given to ensure that this new statutory duty can be met by April 2018.

- 6.4.2. Whilst not an implication of the Strategy, the Housing Options team will be undergoing a restructure during 2017/18 in order to be in a strong position to respond to the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

## 6.5. Risk Management Implications

- 6.5.1. There is a risk that different elements of the Council have different approaches to accommodation and relevant support services, as well as divergent information on the character and needs of vulnerable client groups. The delivery of this strategy will help manage this risk by co-ordinating and connecting the work of Cheshire East Council services and wider partners and providers, ensuring a consistent and strategic approach to vulnerable people's accommodation.
- 6.5.2. As with any strategy, there is a risk that strategic direction does not translate into action on the ground. This has been mitigated by the creation of a comprehensive action plan for each key area and the action plan will be monitored by the Homelessness Strategy Steering Group. The Steering Group is chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Housing and Planning and is made up of senior officers and partners. Annual updates will be presented to the Environment and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee to give reassurances that the actions are being progressed.

## 6.6. Rural Communities Implications

- 6.6.1. Rural communities will positively benefit from the introduction of the Strategy as it aims to demonstrate how the Council can provide an effective and efficient service to all areas of the Borough and acknowledges that the homeless services on offer by both Cheshire East and other providers need to be strengthened and developed in these areas.

6.6.2. The Strategy specifically highlights a section on rural homelessness and during 2018/19 we will explore homeless issues in rural communities as highlighted by recent research from the Institute for Public Policy Research.

### **6.7. Implications for Children & Young People**

6.7.1 The implications for Children and Young People will be positive as there is specific reference to improving pathways between services as well as ensuring that young people are supported in accessing a breadth of accommodation and support to enable them to live independently. Implications for the Child In Need / Child Protection teams are noted in the Strategy to maintain positive relationships around delivering services for homeless 16/17 year olds.

6.7.2. Children leaving care are also positively referenced with a focus on delivering sustainable, joined up services with Permanence and Through Care Teams. This includes consideration around tenancy ready courses, training flats, and how we can use guarantors to support those securing properties in the private rented sector.

### **6.8. Public Health Implications**

6.8.1. There are no specific implications for Public Health with the exception of an anticipation that a collaborative and supportive relationship is maintained in delivering the action plan.

## **7. Ward Members Affected**

7.1 All wards and all local ward members

## **8. Consultation & Engagement**

8.1. Over the 9 week consultation period, 114 people submitted comments on the draft Homelessness Strategy. The draft Strategy was promoted via the following routes and activities:

1. The draft Homelessness Strategy was promoted at the "Connected to Decision Making Event - How do we work together to improve and deliver services?" which was held in Congleton on the 31st October. Service providers and service users were asked to comment on the four strategic priorities. Thirty people engaged in the session, saying that the priorities were the right ones, with no one expressing disapproval.

2. An interview was held with Cheshire Without Abuse in Crewe on the 13th November to gather additional information. The organisation wanted to give feedback but was unable to make the consultation event on the 25th November.
  3. A workshop was held on the 14th November in Macclesfield with faith groups and voluntary / third Sector representatives. There was a willingness to provide for the first time Severe Weather Emergency Protocol provision (accommodation for all rough sleepers during the coldest weather) in Macclesfield through a partnership of local churches. This option is being actively explored.
  4. A consultation event was held on the 25th November at Crewe Alexandra Football Ground. Forty people from a range of services, statutory bodies and the voluntary sector attended. An open and frank discussion took place about homelessness in Cheshire East.
  5. A presentation on homelessness was given to The Environment and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 23rd January 2018 and a training session on the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 was given to Elected Members on 30th January 2018.
- 8.2. The consultation events held as part of the consultation process demonstrated that there is a real commitment from agencies and providers in Cheshire East to achieve positive outcomes for people who are homeless or who are at risk of homelessness.
- 8.3. The online consultation saw 38 people respond. When asked about the Strategy's priorities and intended actions the overwhelming majority of respondents were supportive, on average over eighty per cent. As many as eighty-nine per cent of respondents agreed with Priority 1: "Enable more people to remain in their home and prevent them from becoming homeless."
- 8.4. The consultation feedback has led to additions to the strategy in relation to:
1. Increased communication, and the circulation of useful information between organisations
  2. Entrenched rough sleepers and the contribution that the faith and voluntary groups can make in relation to securing appropriate accommodation.
  3. The Hard to House panel for those who have used existing options

- 8.5. The consultation responses have been collated and are attached in **Appendix 1** along with the Council's response to them.

## **9. Access to Information**

- 9.1. Appended to the report.

## **10. Contact Information**

- 10.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

Name: Lynn Glendenning

Job Title: Housing Options Manager

Email: lynn.glendenning@cheshireeast.gov.uk

## Appendix 1

### Consultation results

Online consultation comments and Cheshire East response

**Question: Several key issues require more attention and are addressed in the draft Homelessness Strategy (page 15) Are there any other issues which you think need to be included?**

Comment	Response
<p>Information, advice and advocacy for clients, especially clients with mental health problems. The need for this client group to have independent specialised case workers, who are not just dealing with their practical problems, but also in a position to assist in dealing with the same life challenges that have resulted in homelessness or the threat of.</p>	<p>Improved information provision is a priority in the Strategy (access to free information, p.36)</p> <p>Housing and Health Link Workers work with people with mental health problems and provide a wrap-around service (p.10)</p>
<p>Use of mobile homes / caravan parks or boats should be available for homeless people.</p>	<p>A range of innovative options are under discussion nationally and Cheshire East is keen to embrace innovation and good practice which will deliver improvements and savings. These options will be considered.</p>
<p>We all know people who are homeless or are threatened with homelessness suffer so much anxiety, feeling of loss, feeling of worthlessness, feeling of isolation and abandonment by humanity they so much belong to, they are frightened, they are occupied by what their future is, bleak, they are frightened and usually paralysed by being homeless, what I don't understand is the system that actually penalises these people in terms of benefits. Please lets stop this rhetoric barbaric behaviour of punishing them further by taking away their benefits when they cannot go to jobcentre plus to sign on. They then are faced with several double sworded problems, no money, and no where to put their heads down for a rest at the end of the day. When someone has no home or threatened of losing their home, this is a very serious issue that affects their mental health, thinking capacity it leaves them with no personal organisational skills, they are out of the roof. Yet we sit in our offices and stop their benefits when they do not sign on, this then affects their housing benefits which are stopped too and they remain with nothing to fall back on. How do you expect someone to survive?. I am asking for some of these regulations and procedures to honestly think before you actually enforce them. It takes up a lot of time for people who work to support people who are homeless. I hope you understand what you do when you take away people's benefits when they are struggling with finding where to sleep and put their children</p>	<p>There are DWP regulations in place which sanction people who fail to meet their conditions, and this is not something CE can influence.</p> <p>CE and partners (such as CAB, and New Leaf) provide support to people to enable them to acquire skills, and knowledge, and increase opportunities to access employment opportunities (p.25)</p>

<p>down to rest. I hope you understand what it means to have no home and then to find that the little hope you had of having a meal or paying for a room has actually been taken away because you were too stressed, anxious, just paralysed to do anything due to the fear of facing a bleak homeless life and you could not then remember to sign on. Stop it...I say stop it. It is inhuman very inhuman. I work to pay my tax so that the person who does not have a job or a house could share that to have some food, clothes, heating, a roof over their heads. If it wasn't for me to share my salary through tax with the less privileged I would not be working. I work and pay because I am privileged to and thus I am happy and most should I say privileged to be able to share with those that do not have. I do not work and pay my tax for councillors and their administration to cook up expensive, complex ideas, systems that only benefit the rich in the end and further oppress the already oppressed.</p> <p>Stop this idea of stopping people's benefits even when you know they are homeless and thus powerless. We are misusing this power God has given us, we are using it to further oppress the weak, poor, vulnerable and those that need us to push them upwards to be where we are. What we are doing by cutting benefits of people who already are in dire straits is just so barbaric and so inhuman. Stop strengthen the already rich, instead be a rainbow in those that need to see the lovely bright colours by putting humane systems in place.</p> <p>It is very funny for one to loose their ESA and then what follows is their housing benefits being cut..how bizarre..what can you call this? retrogressive, barbaric and it is a conscious plotting by those in power to continue their control of the powerless. Housing strategy? go out there and find out from the people that you put on the streets, I will not be able to tell you what they feel, how they feel and how being where they are has affected their belief in humanity. How being out their has affected their children's futures, their generations to come will always be affected by this..you have the power to change it. Stop this inhumane treatment of other humans. We will never loose anything by creating an equal county by we will benefit a lot.</p>	
<p>Cheshire East could also set up a soup kitchen (I'm sure there would be lots of volunteers) once or twice a week to help the homeless and those who have accommodation but cannot afford food</p>	<p>There are many local charities and community groups providing hot meals and drinks as well as clothing and bedding for rough sleepers in Crewe, and there is also similar provision in Macclesfield. (Strategy, p.33)</p>
<p>Page 15 onwards is very helpful but we do need to have better 'immediate' responses for rough sleepers whose health and well-being is already often undermined by other factors (drugs, alcohol, mental illness). These issues are</p>	<p>People with complex needs are acknowledged as a priority in the Strategy with strengthened links with the Third Sector and Adult Social Care (p.29). Housing and Health Link Workers work with residents leaving hospital who have mental</p>

<p>exacerbated in winter months as temperatures fall and many rough sleepers move into urban areas from more sub-urban/rural areas where 'pop-up' tents provided moderate shelter during warmer weather. We need to be more innovative in the use of empty properties (houses) but also temporary shelter - possibly in currently empty shops in our towns. We could adopt a 'No second night' policy (similar to YMCA in Gresty Road) in empty shops in our towns.</p>	<p>health issues. A Hard to House panel looking at solutions for entrenched rough sleepers and other households that have complex issues that affects their access to housing has recently been established. Empty shops are privately owned and classed as commercial properties the Council works closely with private landlords and owners of empty properties to look how they may be brought back into use.</p>
<p>Better intervention and resources to help people who could become homeless and also more understanding of peoples needs</p>	<p>The Homelessness Reduction Act will see earlier and better interventions, and a plan will be agreed with all eligible people outlining what accommodation would be suitable and what support is needed to help them to keep or obtain accommodation. (Strategy, p.8)</p>
<p>I welcome the inclusion of a gap analysis as there are real concerns about the patchwork quilt of current provision - particularly for young people. Often young people have to travel out of their own local area to access safe accommodation and this takes them away from local support networks.</p>	<p>Many young people are homeless due to being told to leave a family home, the main cause of homelessness. The Strategy highlights the role of the Single Point of Access (p.28). Care Leavers and Corporate Parenting are mentioned on p.28.</p> <p>Care leavers aged 18 - 20 will have a local connection with the authority which has looked after them. In addition, a care leaver will also have a local connection with an area if they have lived there for 2 years, including some time before their 16th birthday.</p>
<p>Support for rough sleepers in Crewe area. A greater commitment to end rough sleeping There is a lack of provision for homeless young people in Macclesfield and Congleton - they have to go to Crewe. Private sector leasing to be explored as an option for housing for people who cannot access housing register</p>	<p>There are many local charities and community groups providing hot meals and drinks as well as clothing and bedding for rough sleepers in Crewe, and there is also similar provision in Macclesfield. (Strategy, p.33).</p> <p>The Strategy highlights that CE is working to develop an enhanced PRS offer and is driving up standards via the Gold Landlord Standard (p.30). In addition we are also exploring options in relation to Private Sector leasing.</p>
<p>Just think what u would do if u were in their shoes u should b ashamed</p>	<p>The Strategy outlines what steps are being taken to assist those in need.</p>
<p>Where adequate housing can't be found for any reason that they be given adequate clothing and food to ensure warmth and sustenance which is a basic human right!!!</p>	<p>There are many local charities and community groups providing hot meals and drinks as well as clothing and bedding for rough sleepers in Crewe, and there is also similar provision in Macclesfield.</p>
<p>Not removing homeless people's belongings , ie sleeping bags , clothes , blankets etc . I am absolutely disgusted that you as a council have got ANSA putting up notices about this . That's not support that's robbery in my eyes .</p>	<p>This was an isolated incident which has been addressed and lessons have been learnt. A review of housing options for rough sleepers is under way to provide more targeted interventions.</p>
<p>CEC and ANSA need to cease their program of removing the belongings of Rough Sleepers, most of which have been donated. It is incomprehensible that the same Council writing this strategy also has other departments actively targeting these vulnerable folks and removing</p>	<p>This was an isolated incident which has been addressed and lessons have been learnt. A review of housing options for rough sleepers is under way to provide more targeted interventions.</p>

their warm bedding and clothes!	
Using buildings that have been derelict for years. e.g. Webb House. ( This was built optionally for those in need) Could be run by volunteers.	Derelict buildings are costly to renovate and would need capital funding or external funding which in either case may not be available. There are already suitable buildings offering accommodation with support which people may be referred to if appropriate. Many derelict buildings are not in the ownership of the Local Authority and whilst we can work with owners to encourage them to bring them back into use, we are not able to determine the use.
The surge in homelessness seems to be directly related to the policy of withholding social support benefit as 'punishment'. Where people are at risk of being homeless, their accommodation rent should be paid directly and food provided. No-one should be forced onto the street and go hungry. Specialist social and social care should be provided to support them in dealing with any problems until they are fit enough to return to work and support themselves. More Social housing and sheltered housing should be provided to re-home the homeless as a priority.	There are DWP regulations in place which sanction people who fail to meet their conditions, and this is not something CE can influence.  Specialist social care is provided in accommodation with support services, and housing related support and the Single Point of Access provide services for those with complex needs. (Strategy, p.28)
I am sure there are other issues. However, I think the document lists most of the key issues and if progress was made to resolve a proportion of these it would be a major step forward. Support for those who leave prison, hospital, or secure mental health units is a priority.  I would welcome major attention on the issue of welfare reform and its impact on homelessness.	Joined up working will produce improved housing pathways (Strategy, p.37).  Welfare Reform is addressed in the Strategy, with an increase in households moving from out of work benefits and into employment which will mitigate the impact of Welfare Reform (p.25)
We need more council run council houses. We also need workers who have the leeway - and are encouraged - to act in a humanitarian way. Stop closing and selling off our public properties.  Start supporting planning applications which will provide homes for single individuals as well as families.  We need adequate bus services, cycleways and walkways across Cheshire East, to allow those still in poorly paid or unemployed conditions to reach job centres, work, shopping etc.  Stop focussing on top end jobs, especially within Cheshire East Council, and start serving the people. That's your job.	Cheshire East Council work closely with housing providers within the Borough to provide affordable social housing.  The Cheshire East Local Transport Plan 2011 - 2026 seeks to ensure a sustainable future, with the key transport role as: Improving transport connections and accessible services, but also supporting provision of appropriate housing, while protecting the countryside and encouraging more sustainable living. This will include ensuring that Cheshire East's ambitious plans for growth in the spatial priority areas of Crewe and Macclesfield encourage sustainable living.  A key issue is ensuring that there are attractive and available sustainable alternatives for the trips people make. This means walking and cycling for shorter journeys and efficient public transport for longer journeys.
I think there needs to be a transition support team for homeless people who are offered housing as they struggle to manage and wind back on the familiar streets.	Cheshire East Council commission support services that are available to people who move into their own home and as part of someone's Personal Housing Plan any support needs they may have will be identified.
There are three issues that need to be included: a) More accommodation is needed for single	a) Applicants on Homechoice are allocated a band dependent on their housing needs, with

<p>males on Band D and E, who currently have virtually no chance of ever getting into social housing.</p> <p>b) It is vital to support the outreach scheme proposed by the YMCA, to reach out to entrenched rough sleepers, with the object of trying to get them back into a civilised way of living.</p> <p>c) Lockers are required for rough sleepers personal belongings, for their own wellbeing, and to keep the town tidy and free of unnecessary clutter.</p>	<p>Band A for those with the most urgent housing needs.</p> <p>People can only be put in their appropriate band.</p> <p>D - Households who do not meet any of the reasonable preference criteria and/or are otherwise adequately housed</p> <p>E -Households who have no local connection to the sub-region of Cheshire East / households who have had preference reduced</p> <p>The average wait in Band D and E is between 1 and 3 years.</p> <p>People are encouraged to seek an alternative solution such as the Private Rented Sector.</p> <p>b) Work is being done to assist entrenched rough sleepers off the streets via a 'Hard to House' panel.</p> <p>c) Local charities may be able to support rough sleepers to store their belongings.</p>
<p>page 15 just showed average rent costings</p>	<p>Detailed information about average rents in the social and private sectors is contained in the Homelessness Strategy Review (p.12-16, 62-63)</p>
<p>1) Support with benefits and the management / understanding of Universal Credit.</p> <p>2) Tenancy sustainment support to enable people to remain in their own homes.</p> <p>3) Consider providing pre-tenancy preparation courses - could work with Guinness Partnership or other social landlords/landlords using void properties to manage short term leases for new to housing/living on their own customers. Working with the RP or other agency this would give people experience of managing/running a home and provide reference information for longer term lets, This will enable to build more sustainable tenancies. Would need to be supported with floating support for this to work. This could be done on a secondment basis to set up the pilot/project. with short, medium and long term outcomes.</p>	<p>DWP coaches and CAB and other organisations provide advice and guidance and assistance with UC claims.</p> <p>Tenancy sustainment is a key element of prevention work.</p> <p>Tenancy readiness courses, training flat, and use of guarantors can go some of the way to addressing this. (p.28)</p> <p>RPs have identified households at risk of losing their home and have provided tenancy support to 120 households. The Strategy aims to address the issue of eviction for rent arrears. (p.31)</p>
<p>Rough sleepers who won't cooperate with police and council</p> <p>Is there enough accommodation for young people and young females?</p>	<p>Work is being done to assist entrenched rough sleepers off the streets via a 'Hard to House' panel (p.37)</p> <p>CE has a corporate responsibility towards all children and young people in care and care leavers from 18-25 years of age. (p.28) Eviction by parents was the largest reason for clients approaching Housing Options in 2015-2016 (169). The HRA says that we must take specific account of care leavers.</p>

**Question:** The chart on page 20 of the document shows the 4 Strategic Priorities, with the outer boxes showing the main issues to be worked on under each of the Priorities. How strongly do you agree or disagree that the issues stated are aligned with the right strategic priority?

Comment	Response
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<p>This is an ambiguous question! I agree with much of what is suggested here but the data related to children and young people being evicted from home requires further attention. C&amp;YP are acutely vulnerable. The circumstances that lead to parental eviction are usually indicators of vulnerability that are exacerbated when eviction takes place. CYP who are rough sleepers need to be considered in the same context as 'cared for children' and should be supported in the same way(16 - 25 years). If evicted children are under 16 - parents should be charged for care costs paid by the Council (in line with current protocols). So too the issue of safeguarding must be paramount for both children &amp; vulnerable adults.</p>	<p>CE has a corporate responsibility towards all children and young people in care and care leavers from 18-25 years of age. (p.28) Eviction by parents was the largest reason for clients approaching Housing Options in 2015-2016 (169). The HRA says that we must take specific account of care leavers.</p>
<p>The main issues to be worked upon are too brief.</p>	<p>More detail will be available on the completed monitoring plans which will be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timed (SMART)</p>
<p>Whilst preventing people becoming homeless is very important and should be a priority. It's not always possible to help some people. These need to be assessed properly and appropriate aid put in place. If however aid is refused, intervention is needed to discourage homelessness. Remove belongings and discourage the public from giving them aid. This will require a strategy to fully explain to a reluctant public.</p>	<p>The Strategy talks about rough sleeping and intends to engage with entrenched rough sleepers. Whilst the aim must always be to enable people to move away from a life on the streets into appropriate accommodation, nevertheless an approach is required to provide assistance to rough sleepers, without this assistance sustaining a life on the streets. Creating a link between prevention and relief, and street support, will likely provide more opportunities to help people dis-engage from street life. More information will be required to identify specific needs (p.33) and will be addressed by the Hard to House panel.</p>
<p>All issues are priority, but for me more emphasis on providing assistance to the Rough Sleepers is needed. Actually folks going out, finding these guys and making sure they are fully aware of what help is available to them - several in Crewe are not native english speakers, so definitely require additional assistance in accessing support.</p>	<p>There are many local charities and community groups providing hot meals and drinks as well as clothing and bedding for rough sleepers in Crewe, and there is also similar provision in Macclesfield. (Strategy, p.33). Information in different languages can be made available. (p.36)</p>
<p>It doesn't address the main cause of homelessness which is the withholding of benefit and provision of sufficient emergency shelters and sheltered housing to eradicate homelessness completely</p>	<p>The main causes of homelessness are as stated in the Strategy: out by family and friends, domestic abuse, and the end of an AST. 110 households have approached Housing Options over 2015-2016 due to loss of social housing due to arrears.</p> <p>One of the Strategy aims is to work with RP partners to identify the causes of evictions. (p.31). RP partners are working with households at risk to ensure there is maximisation of benefit take up.</p>
<p>What this does clearly indicate is that Cheshire East has not kept pace with council house building and rent stability to allow tenants to have a permanent right of occupancy. We are not</p>	<p>The CE Local Plan has set a target for housebuilding of a range of new homes including much needed affordable housing. (p.8)</p>

itinerants. People need the right to remain. Never mind the present Government ideology. The Local Authority should be providing for the electorate within its own area. Full stop!	
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**Question: Are there any additional issues that need to be added, and if so against which Priority?**

Comment	Response
More flexible and appropriate practical assistance for the hard to accommodate groups. In the past people with alcohol problems for example have lost their temp accom because they were unable to keep to the rules of that accommodation, almost setting them up to fail. For some people a basic safe shelter is all they are able to engage with at that time, which is still preferable to the street.	Work is targeted to assist single homeless and those with complex needs via a 'Hard to House' panel (p.37)
More help with rent deposits and mortgage payments are needed.	<p>The Emergency AssistanCE scheme is designed to support vulnerable people facing immediate hardship, to prevent homelessness, and to keep families together. The scheme provides rent deposits (not letting fees or rent in advance). (p.34)</p> <p>Cheshire East Council also has a prevention fund that can assist people with deposits and rent in advance. The Housing Options team also offers money advice for people that approach us that have rent or mortgage arrears.</p>
Better training for Cheshire East Officers...to be able to understand the problems and situations. Not to have a tick box system.but treat each case individually.and at present they dont	<p>A Strategy aim is to promote the Housing Options Team (p.28).</p> <p>Officers have already received training on domestic abuse and on the Homelessness Reduction Act.</p> <p>Each case is treated individually with outcome-focused interventions. The HRA will see each eligible applicant receive a Personalised Housing Plan. (p.7) Reasonable steps should be tailored to the individual, and the plan should be realistic.</p>
Issues around maintaining local networks including the VSCF	The Strategy aims to develop new and enhance current partnerships with the local Third sector. (p.23)
No specific reference to working in partnership with the private rented sector.	The Strategy aims to develop an enhanced PRS offer, and also to increase the number of properties better maintained and managed through the landlord Gold Standard (p.30)
There are enough empty shops in the town centre could one of them not be used as a place for homeless people to sleep at night especially as the nights are getting so cold . Maybe you might wake up and do something when you find these poor people frozen to death on the streets.	Empty shops are privately owned and classed as commercial properties. The Council works closely with private landlords and owners of empty properties to look how they may be brought back into use.
Provision of emergency shelters, and sheltered	When the weather is cold the SWEP is used, as

housing with social and medical support workers	is the WHAM initiative. No Second Night Out in 2016/2017 assisted 50 people and prevented them from sleeping rough. (p.32)
The priority is a sound roof above your head. and security of tenure, at a price easily affordable by the lowest paid worker. Anything less is a failure on the part of the Local Authority. Re NEXT PAGE - Rural Homelessness: Nothing on page 22 specifically about rural homelessness. The stuff about that is on Page 40. Is this a deliberate confusion.. or just a poor proof-reading?	Rural homelessness is to be found on p.21.
There needs to be a toilet facility for homeless people that is open 24/7.	This will lead to entrenched rough sleeping and perhaps to an increase in numbers. The aim is to prevent rough sleeping and to engage with entrenched rough sleepers. (p.32)
help people to secure accommodation - those leaving the armed forces who want to settle in Cheshire East who may or may not have a local connection to the area	Cheshire has a long history of armed forces being based within the county and, Cheshire East has become a signatory to the Cheshire, Halton & Warrington Community Covenant. The Community Covenant is a voluntary statement of support between communities and the armed forces community.  Cheshire East monitors homeless presentations and ensures that ex-members of HM Forces receive the appropriate banding and local connection on Homechoice. (p.36, pathways for all)
Against priority one - keeping people in their own homes. It is in everyone's best interests to work with the families to keep them in their home. Early intervention is essential to saving a person's tenancy. There are proposals in place to have early notifications etc. however will there be additional resource available to support the early intervention work? This resource/support will be key to the success of early intervention approach.	The Homelessness Reduction Act is going to see earlier and better interventions, and a plan will be agreed outlining what accommodation would be suitable and what support is needed to help keep or obtain accommodation. (Strategy, p.8)  A restructure has been carried out to address any uplift in demand and additional staff will be recruited.
More attention on domestic abuse as it is one of the main causes of homelessness	Improvements have been made to the section on Domestic Abuse

**Question: Are there other issues which should be prioritised in 2018?**

Comment	Response
There are C&YP who are rough sleeping / sofa surfing who we are not supporting enough. This is a safeguarding and care issue.	During a recent estimate of rough sleeping 2 of the people identified were aged under 25. There is no evidence of any children sleeping rough. There is a national lack of data about young people sofa surfing, and the Government intends to increase enhanced monitoring of numbers.
As previously stated better training for officers	The Strategy aim is to promote the Housing Options Team (p.28). Officers have already received training on

	domestic abuse and on the Homelessness Reduction Act.
The table on page 38 not 37 Better use of accommodation - what does this mean Options for single homeless and complex needs - this is broad and what is the aim  I think this table needs to be explained in more detail and be more specific The homeless prevention fund is generally not used to pay peoples debts off (p37), it is usually used as a tool to fund rent in advance and suchlike to enable people to access a tenancy rather than paying off debts - this may give the wrong impression.	More detail will be available in the completed monitoring plans which will be SMART.
I don't think that the council should rely upon the private rented sector for any assistance with prevention of homelessness after reading their reluctance to accept tenants under 35 years old. Housing benefit and Universal credit should not pay landlords "buy to let mortgages". CE needs to invest in council housing for the vulnerable I can see that CE owns a lot of land that could be developed for mixed housing. The priority for 2018 should not be measuring and collating data it should be to get all the empty buildings occupied and build more homes.	The number of empty homes is reducing Cheshire East are working with owners of empty properties to bring them back into use.  Cheshire East Council work closely with housing providers within the Borough to provide affordable social housing. People may contact CE about buying or renting land or property that belongs to the Council.
Getting Crewe back to a thriving Town once again	CE continues to help shape the masterplan vision and, in particular, the associated land strategy to help ensure the deliverability of the HS2 Hub Station and the benefits outlined in the emerging masterplan. This will see new housing developments along with a renewed retail sector and leisure industry making Crewe a dynamic place to live, work, and relax. (p.6, Housing Strategy, wellbeing and quality of life)
I feel more 'Actions' need to be made clear - there is a lot of text in the report, lots of numbers etc, which are probably well understood by the team writing it, but for the average lay person reading it, it is clunky and cumbersome and doesn't leave me really understanding what actions are being taken and what is really on offer for the rough sleepers especially - I don't have any experience of knowing anyone about to be made homeless / sustaining accommodation, so can't comment on that side of the report.	More detail will be available in the completed monitoring plans which will be SMART.
Emergency shelters and social care to remove people off the streets within one year	When the weather is cold the SWEP is used, as is the WHAM initiative. NSNO in 2016/2017 assisted 50 people and prevented them from sleeping rough.(p.31)
Not at the expense of the ones listed. While this is a strategy document it would be good to see some action plans on the key areas. Maybe next step?	More detail will be available in the completed monitoring plans which will be SMART.
Re item 9 - above - that is a repeat. The central	When the weather is especially cold the SWEP is

<p>questions is again a 'suspect' question. What does 'Provide interventions to prevent rough sleeping' actually mean? Does it jail people who try to sleep in teh streets ebcause they ahve nowhere to go? Does it stealbedding and tents, kindly provided by caring community? What does it mean? Why should anyone answer so ambiguous question, when we know what is going onjust down the road in Stoke-on-Trent? This Government is deliberately responsible for many many deaths, as a result of its draconian policies. Don't let us make it any worse, please.</p>	<p>used, as is the WHAM initiative. NSNO in 2016/2017 assisted 50 people and prevented them from sleeping rough.(p.31) These ensure that no one need die on the streets.</p> <p>CE has no input into the activities of other local authorities.</p>
<p>you need to be referring people who are struggling with budgeting to the cheshire neighbourhood credit union, this way people can learn to budget prooperly, the rent is paid and so is the council tax and helps in preventing people becoming homeless due to arrears.</p>	<p>The Strategy aims to improve communication and timely and accurate referrals to relevant services such as the Credit Union and CAB. (p.14) A money advice contract is held with the CAB.</p>

**Question: Do you have any further observations on the Strategy as a whole?**

Comment	Response
<p>Very hard to decipher content of report . trust money to be spent on helping the vulnerable and homeless ,not on administration</p>	<p>The Strategy aims to deliver improvements to vulnerable households using existing budgets. (p.38)</p>
<p>More needs to be done and maybe Cheshire could secure some money to help the Salvation Army with the work they do for the homeless.</p>	<p>Additional funding for homelessness services may be allocated by Government and CE will ensure that bids are submitted, in partnership with local providers and Third Sector agencies when appropriate. (p.38)</p>
<p>It is acknowledged that rough sleeping is the 'public face' of homelessness. It is also one of the most acute and vulnerable facets of homelessness. Rural homelessness is often 'hidden' as people use pop-up tents or other forms of shelter in more remote places in warmer months but they then migrate to urban areas in colder weather. I'm not convinced that the strategy fully understands or appreciates the levels of homelessness and the 'migratory' effects. This must be considered in your evaluation of rural homelessness - you will find that some people do not acquire homes in Spring - thy simply move back into the countryside.</p>	<p>The Strategy acknowledges that CE has no specific information about rural homelessness and that this issue is going to be addressed as a priority. (p.21)</p>
<p>It is to be hoped that the CEC..listen to the people for a change..because they dont in many consultations</p>	<p>CE has stated publically that people can expect that CE will listen to what they have to say. Being involved in the consultation process will allow people to have some real influence over future strategic direction.</p>
<p>I think it would be wise to proof read it and make it more succinct and snappier to read. worth checking statements such as 'rent cap ' (I think this is meant to read benefits cap) 'In Cheshire East a total of 50 Clients have used No Second Night Out ' - this is not accurate, please speak to YMCA for more accurate figures - it is higher. We need to focus more on children, intervention</p>	<p>The figure of 50 was provided by Crewe YMCA.</p> <p>The Strategy aims to identify triggers for social workers, welfare officers, and Benefits staff to identify households at risk of homelessness. Families are placed into TA only as a last resort</p>

<p>jointly with social services, ensuring social care are highlighting families at risk of homelessness and making referrals at an earlier stage and carrying out their duties in the law. We need to ensure families are prevented from going into temporary accommodation where possible and work to highlight the damage to children caused by this.</p> <p>we need to ensure we capture data (do not currently) relating to homeless young people (non care-leavers age 16-24) and lack of provision in North of the Borough e.g. what was formerly provided by Watermill and Beech House. These homeless groups are 'hidden' in Macclesfield and Congleton.</p>	<p>and appropriate measures are in place, with Bed and Breakfast rarely, if ever, used for families. Where it is needed it is only for a matter of nights. (p.37, reduce the use of B&amp;B)</p>
<p>CE should not be relying on Charities and private landlords to look after its residents. The Council needs to integrate; hospitals, prisons, youth care homes etc. so "customers" aren't released without having secure accommodation to move into and the skills to maintain the tenancies.</p> <p>The Strategy doesn't seem to mention building new Council Houses which perplexes me as they seem to be the solution especially in rural areas where locals are priced out of the housing market.</p>	<p>There is a strong role to play for charities and private landlords as strands in a joined up approach to homelessness.</p> <p>People should not be discharged from hospital without a discharge plan and peoples' prison release date is known in advance and so Housing Options should be notified via Shelter.</p> <p>The Council does not build Council Homes but ensures that affordable housing is brought forward as part of new developments. (p.7)</p>
<p>Doesn't address the underlying cause of homelessness which is the government's policy to withhold benefit as 'punishment' resulting in the default payment of rent and eviction.</p>	<p>There is no one cause of homelessness and CE is working to reduce the most prevalent causes of homelessness locally, with 67% being due to asked to leave by family and friends, domestic abuse, and the end of an AST.</p> <p>One of the aims of the Strategy is to work to identify the main reasons for RP evictions. Affordability / Debt / Welfare Reform, and mortgage arrears averaged 19 repossession each over 2015 / 2016.</p>
<p>I think it is a good document. Some metrics would be helpful and aspirational targets</p>	<p>Targets will be included in the completed monitoring plans which will be SMART.</p>
<p>We need a reliably caring Local Authority first. without the current top end shambles and Tory byline, which harms so many people. Please sort out the Council top end, and begin a more humanitarian, series of policies on housing and homelessness, starvation of those still living (usually with children) in homes where they must pay the rent, and that starves the children.</p>	<p>Foodbanks are available for those households in need and this will assist especially households with children. (p.23)</p>
<p>It doesn't go far enough.</p>	<p>The Foreword states that the Strategy is robust, and will work with partners to deliver significantly improved outcomes. (p.3)</p>
<p>I believe there is a strong desire by the Council to reduce/prevent homelessness in the Borough</p>	<p>The Strategy Forward commits to preventing and alleviating homelessness. (p.3)</p>
<p>it was overly complicated, and the pages did not contain the expected information</p>	<p>Consultation feedback has said that the Strategy contains a good range of information which is easy to locate and there is a good range of links. The Strategy is relevant and up to date.</p>
<p>more on prevention,you also need to stop placing</p>	<p>Cheshire East attempt to place people as near to</p>

those in emergency accommodation in other areas across the county, leaving them miles away from family surroundings, families, schools etc.	their area as choice as possible but accommodation is not always available where the person/household wishes to be placed. (p.37 Reduce the use of B and B)
absolutely fascinated to read through the background information. There are huge challenges for the council on this issue and with limited resources. It has certainly opened my eyes to the work going on behind the scenes and the action planning that is taking place to provide for people in the future. Good luck!	A wide range of people from Cheshire East officers to external partners, stakeholders, and local people have been involved in producing this Strategy and care has been taken to ensure that the Strategy and its actions reflect their priorities.
The four threads of the strategy reflect the needs of the area. My observations are around the reducing amount of agencies to provide the support needed to families / people in need. If the strategy is to work then there needs to be sufficient resource and funds to provide the appropriate levels of service needed. This area will be intensive so will mean that more people and hours available will be needed. Hopefully sufficient consideration and funding can be awarded to ensure this is adequately resourced.	The Strategy highlights a need for the development of strategic partnerships (p.37)  The Strategy aims to deliver improvements to vulnerable households using existing budgets and staff resources. (p.38)

#### Macclesfield Workshop Consultation Comments and Cheshire East response

Comment	Response
Provision needed in Macclesfield. It's always in Crewe	Exploring with WHAM options for NSNO and SWEP in Macclesfield.
Problems are faced with accommodating female rough sleepers	The Strategy includes text on entrenched rough sleepers (p.32)
50% of WHAM clients have substance misuse issues	A Hard to House panel is to be trialled, similar to Care Leaver Ignition meetings. Joint meetings with services and with the individual have been seen to work elsewhere.

#### Cheshire Without Abuse Consultation Comments and Cheshire East Response

Difficulties in getting Health and Wellbeing and Public Health to engage. Trying to increase involvement with Mental health and Substance Misuse Services.	The section on DA in the Strategy has been developed.
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#### Crewe Alexandra Consultation Event Comments and Cheshire East Response

Some clients are repeat presenters	Housing pathways devised for each client will help by addressing what has failed to work previously.
Some landlords won't accommodate due to ASB and property damage	Private Sector Liaison officers can access the Prevention Fund for clean ups and Landlord Forum can look into this. An approach of something for something to be adopted, such as support in return for a 12 month tenancy.
Will private landlords be expected to take clients	Officers give assurances and the CE scheme

with arrears?	works well and has been seen as an example of good practice.
How to get the message across to the public?	Options are to be explored around CE-wide services to attend homeless drop ins and to share that information. Cheshire East Communication Team can provide support in highlighting the Strategy and work being done by the Council and its partners.
Wider links are needed to the wider community, including Faith and voluntary groups	The Strategy positively endorses support for partnerships with voluntary sector stakeholders and other local partners to address the support, education, employment and training needs (including bespoke training around partnerships and operational working). The Homelessness Strategy Steering Group will prioritise this in 2018 and recruit Faith and voluntary groups as appropriate.
Budgeting skills are needed by many clients	Credit Union help and CAB budgeting advice will be promoted, along with training and support, contact with the DWP / Job Centre, and Emergency Assistance.
Organisations should work in collaboration not competition	Options will be explored around a memorandum of understanding or a compact enabling an understanding of roles and responsibilities and to share information.
Social Services, Mental Health, Substance Misuse, Health, etc. have shared clients	These services are represented on the Homelessness Strategy Steering Group. Membership will be reviewed to ensure a multi-agency approach is maintained.
Anecdotally the situation is deteriorating with more clients falling into this bracket.	The Strategy will look at what levels of homelessness originate from social and private rented accommodation as a result of substance misuse and clarify if households were known to services.
The link between substance misuse, mental health, and homelessness need to be explored as they will be causes of DA in many cases.	The Strategy seeks to accommodate a complex range of customer needs including those with additional needs such as mental ill health and/or substance misuse and homeless due to relationship breakdown
CAB said that they are seeing the same issues as usual but that they are becoming more complicated: benefits-debt-housing-employment-relationships	The contributory factor of these issues to homelessness has been noted in the Strategy.

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## **Cheshire East Homelessness Strategy**

**2018 – 2021**



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## Councillor Ainsley Arnold

This is the new Cheshire East Homelessness Strategy, and it provides us and our partners with a clear plan and a strong vision for preventing and alleviating homelessness.

Over the lifetime of the Cheshire East 2014-17 Homelessness Strategy the main causes of homelessness were being asked to leave by family or friends, domestic abuse, and the end of an assured shorthold tenancy. These 3 causes added up to 67% of all our homeless acceptances. This is an indication of where we need to target our resources going forward.

The number of successful preventions has increased year on year, with 2,261 households assisted during 2014 to 2016. Good levels of prevention have been recorded with 1,813 (82%) households assisted to find alternative accommodation, rather than remain in their own home. Total cases of prevention and relief have increased from 577 in 2014 to 878 in 2016 (an increase of 52%). A priority for the new Homelessness Strategy will be to explore new ways to help more households to remain in their own home.

Rough sleeping is the most visible face of homelessness. Cheshire East has typically recorded low levels of rough sleeping. We don't want anyone to have to sleep rough in Cheshire East and we are committed to ending rough sleeping in collaboration with our partners. In Cheshire East a total of 50 clients used our No Second Night Out scheme in 2016/17 and so were prevented from having to sleep on the streets. Almost half of them then moved into supported housing where they received accommodation with support to prevent them from becoming homeless again.

We are working towards achieving the Gold Standard. This is designed to help deliver more efficient and cost effective homelessness prevention services. We expect to have achieved all 10 steps and achieved the Gold Standard by March 2018.

Above are just some examples of the excellent work being done and it shows that the Council and its partners are making good progress in ending homelessness in Cheshire East. A lot is still to be done though, and we are not complacent.

The new Homeless Reduction Act places a strong focus on early prevention work and the lifetime of this Strategy will see that Act introduced then fully embedded in Cheshire East practices. It is imperative that our focus remains on early identification of and intervention with individuals whose accommodation is not settled, as this will result in significantly improved outcomes for those affected.

This new Homelessness Strategy highlights where resources need to be focused and where truly joined up work can make a real difference to the housing pathway that residents of Cheshire East will experience. I am confident that this Strategy is robust in outlining how we will engage with households as early as possible, and how we will work with others to deliver interventions.

Once again, we have worked alongside a vast range of people: Cheshire East officers, external partners, stakeholders, and local people to ensure that the Strategy and its actions reflect their priorities. I would like to thank them for their contributions and for being involved in delivering homelessness solutions, and I look forward to continued partnership working as we implement this new Strategy.

## **Background**

### **Purpose:**

This Homelessness Strategy sets out the priorities for Cheshire East over the next 3 years.

It outlines the Strategic Priorities and options for delivery of a reduction in homelessness levels and improved housing outcomes for vulnerable residents.

The term 'homelessness' is often considered to apply only to people 'sleeping rough', or to those 'street sleeping'. However most homelessness issues involve households threatened with the loss of their home, or else are unable to remain in their current accommodation.

**Vision:** To give residents of Cheshire East access to appropriate affordable housing and improved quality of life.

### **Priorities:**

To prevent homelessness we will:

- Enable more people to remain in their home and prevent them from becoming homeless
- Help people who are homeless to secure appropriate affordable accommodation
- Provide interventions so no-one has to sleep rough in Cheshire East
- Ensure adequate support is in place to help people maintain and sustain accommodation

This Strategy uses information which may be found in the Homelessness Strategy Review 2017 document.

## **Introduction**

The section above outlines the priorities for the new Homelessness Strategy.

What follows sets out the key national policy drivers which are already directly or indirectly influencing housing and homelessness services. This is against the backdrop of the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA), the biggest piece of homelessness legislation in over a decade.

This Strategy outlines a series of homeless interventions which will reduce homelessness levels in Cheshire East. The problem of homelessness is multi-faceted, requiring a range of co-ordinated activity. Each of these interventions will have short-term resource implications for the Council, either directly or indirectly. As the new Homelessness Reduction Act is embedded, numbers will eventually start to decrease as earlier interventions take effect. This has the potential to contribute to economic growth through supporting more households to financial independence.

The Homelessness Strategy 2018-2021 will set the framework for activity to deliver homelessness reductions in the short to medium term, and will both support, and be supported by, emerging strategic documents such as the new Housing Strategy and Tenancy Strategy, and work on an enhanced private rented sector interface.

The Council is working towards this objective through this Strategy, as it ties together the strategic priorities for improving services to communities. This can be illustrated as follows:



One of the priorities of the Cheshire East Sustainable Community Strategy 2010 – 2025 is to ‘articulate the aspirations, needs and priorities of the people of Cheshire East and the places they live in’ through:

- Planning for a range of housing to meet the needs of older people, families and young people, and developing suitable types of housing and tenures to ensure that residents have a choice of accommodation to meet their current and future needs, and
- Working in partnership to provide specialist accommodation and housing support for those residents who have complex needs and requirements

The Cheshire East Housing Strategy’s aim is “that all residents in Cheshire East are able to access affordable, appropriate and decent accommodation.” The key priorities are:

- Growth and Quality of Place and Health, and
- Wellbeing and Quality of Life

There are identified actions aimed at stimulating the housing market and preventing homelessness.

The Homelessness Strategy section called ‘Strategic Priorities’ details the strategic context and each Priority then sets out:

1. The issue
2. The Cheshire East position
3. Current activity, and
4. Future intentions

The aim is to set out a broad rationale for the Priorities, and to enable discussion and development of new ideas as the Homelessness Strategy is implemented.

During the lifespan of the last Homelessness Strategy, the Council reviewed strategic outputs through consultations with service providers, commissioners of services, and with service – users. The Homelessness Strategy Steering Group has played a major role in monitoring the Strategy’s action plan. The Steering Group is made up of people from a range of partner organisations, and meets quarterly. The Strategy has been reviewed using new priorities, which were in line with the Gold Standard (a Government initiative for Local Authority Housing Options Services aimed at improving

front line housing services), and the Homelessness Reduction Act, due to come into force in April 2018. The ambition is to prevent homelessness, and deliver homelessness prevention services which are more efficient and provide better value for money.

The four Strategic Priorities outline how homelessness will be prevented, as shown below. The Priorities incorporate tasks from the 2014-2017 Homelessness Strategy which have been carried forward, as well as current and emerging issues as identified in the Homelessness Strategy Review.

The 4 Priorities are:



## National Context

### **Fixing our broken housing market (Housing White Paper)**

The Government's aim is to build more homes, of the type people want to live in, in the places they want to live.

The Nation needs to build homes faster and invest in making the planning system more open and accessible, tackling unnecessary delays.

However, development is about far more than just building homes. Communities need roads, rail links, schools, shops, GP surgeries, parks, playgrounds and a sustainable natural environment. Without the right infrastructure new communities cannot thrive – and no existing community will welcome new housing if it places further strain on already stretched local resources.

The housing market needs to diversify, opening up to smaller builders and those who embrace innovative and efficient methods. Housing associations will be supported to build more, exploring options to encourage local authorities to build again, encouraging institutional investment in the private rented sector, and promotion of more modular and factory built homes. It will be easier for people who want to build their own homes.

Cheshire East has a 5 year supply target, using a standard formula of build rates and lead-in times which are applied to all housing sites. This is part of the Local Plan. The next table shows how the delivery of affordable housing units only goes some of the way to meeting housing need.

**Table: Housing completions 2014 – 2016**

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Net completions	713	1,236	1,473
Affordable completions	180	640	360
Additional social rented	40	70	29
Additional affordable rented	60	430	253
Additional intermediate	80	140	78

### **Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA)**

When the Cheshire East Homelessness Strategy 2014-17 was written big changes were being introduced by the Government, such as the Localism Act and the introduction of Welfare Reform. This new Cheshire East Homelessness Strategy has also been written as big change is taking place, that is, the Homelessness Reduction Act, and continuing Welfare Reform, such as the introduction of rent caps and Universal Credit, and changes to funding for supported housing.

The HRA makes provision about new measures for reducing homelessness. It applies to local housing and social care services authorities, who are required to have regard to the guidance in exercising their functions in relation to homelessness. A new Code of Guidance will also be issued to provide guidance on how local housing authorities should exercise their homelessness functions and apply the new statutory criteria in practice.

Currently the threat of homelessness is defined as beginning 28 days before a person is likely to become homeless. The HRA extends that period to 56 days, giving people a longer period of time to receive help from their local authority. The categories of people eligible for Council support have been expanded, in a move away from the previous focus on ‘priority need’, based on applicants’ vulnerabilities.

Cheshire East will now have to help people threatened with homelessness when:

- A person is threatened with homelessness if it is likely that they will become homeless within 56 days  
A person is also threatened with homelessness if:
  - A valid section 21 notice (orders for possession on the expiry or termination of an assured shorthold tenancy in the private rented sector) has been given to the person in respect of the only accommodation the person has that is available for their occupation; and
  - That notice will expire within 56 days

Additionally, Cheshire East now has a duty to assess all eligible applicants’ cases and agree a plan for each. If a customer is homeless / threatened with homelessness and eligible, then Housing Options must:

- Assess why they are becoming homeless
- What accommodation would be suitable
- What support is needed to help keep or obtain accommodation
- Notify the applicant of this, in writing

There is a new legislative duty to assess every eligible applicant’s case, and agree a plan, or a ‘pathway’ for the following groups:

- a) Persons released from prison or youth detention accommodation
- b) Care leavers
- c) Former members of the regular armed forces
- d) Victims of domestic abuse
- e) Persons leaving hospital
- f) Persons suffering from a mental illness or impairment
- g) Any other group that the authority identifies as being at particular risk of homelessness in the district (Cheshire East considers at risk large families, people with a learning disability, and people who have substance misuse issues, as identified through the Homelessness Review).

There will also be a general duty from October 2018 on all public authorities to refer anyone who is homeless or threatened with homelessness to Housing Options, with that person's permission.

Cheshire East is already well along the way of preparing for the introduction of the HRA, with pathways being prepared for the identified groups at risk of homelessness. This is looked at in more detail in Strategic Priority 2: Enable more people to remain in their home and prevent homelessness.

### Action Plan 1.a: Ensure that the new duty is used effectively and lawfully, minimising legal challenges

#### **Welfare Reform**

There have been major changes to the benefits system over the last few years, including the Benefit Cap, the Under Occupancy Charge or Spare Room Subsidy (also known as the 'bedroom tax'), and the roll out of Universal Credit. How this might contribute to homelessness and what Cheshire East is doing to address the issue are explored in Strategic Priority 2: Enable more people to remain in their home and prevent them from becoming homeless.

#### **Rough Sleeping Programme 2016 - 2019**

The Government has embarked on an ambitious programme, working with local areas and across Government, to fundamentally reform the response to homelessness. The aim is to put prevention at the heart of this approach to reduce the number of people who face a homelessness crisis in the first place.

A rough sleeping programme has been launched, which includes a £10 million rough sleeping grant fund, running in 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19, to help new rough sleepers or people at imminent risk of sleeping rough, get the rapid support they need. The aim is to reduce the flow of new rough sleepers to the street through more targeted prevention activity aimed at those at imminent risk of sleeping rough, to ensure they get the help they need before spending a single night on the streets and to recover and move-on from their homelessness. This will build on the No First Night Out pilot being delivered in London.

Local data from services (commissioned and non-commissioned) across the sub-region in the last 12 months have identified 137 different rough sleepers. Cheshire East continues to monitor levels of rough sleeping. One aspect of monitoring is to prevent as far as possible the issue of double counting. This is when the same person contacts 2 services who then record 2 rough sleepers.

Government funding has been awarded for 'Upstream', a sub-regional scheme to prevent rough sleeping across Cheshire West and Chester, Cheshire East and Warrington. Upstream seeks to identify the small number of people who will sleep rough if they do not get additional assistance among a much wider cohort of people with housing problems. It is expected that 200 people will be assisted across Cheshire over the next 2 years.

In Cheshire East a total of 50 Clients have used No Second Night Out over 2015 - 2016 and were prevented from having to sleep on the streets. Additionally, 92 people at risk of either sleeping rough or who would have had to sleep rough that night if accommodation wasn't provided were assisted in

2015/16. Some people will have been included in more than one cohort and have been counted twice. This is addressed in Strategic Priority 3: reducing rough sleeping.

## **Complex Dependencies**

The Government has provided funding through the national Transformation Challenge Award scheme. The Cheshire and Warrington Complex Dependency Programme was set up in 2015 following a successful bid.

Across the Pan-Cheshire sub-region there are 10,000 individuals affected by complex dependencies. This programme established a new, integrated model across agencies and services that tackle the causes of crisis for children, families and individuals across a range of related and complex issues. It ensures that there is more support available for families and individuals that are already in a state of crisis.

A Programme Team for the sub-region has been put into place and this will lead on delivering the aims of the programme across the sub-region, both as a whole and working individually with each area and partner agency as appropriate.

The expected outcomes are

- Better outcomes for children, individuals and families affected by complex dependencies
- The model being an exemplar that can be adopted in other areas across the country
- Reduced costs for agencies and services
- Estimated savings over five years across agencies of £93.4m are achieved and exceeded

Through this programme, Cheshire East aims to reduce the number of people leaving mental health care who are homeless when discharged. 2 Link Workers will refer these clients into one of 4 beds until a longer-term housing solution can be found. There has also been a Complex Dependency Housing Officer embedded with the Early Help Brokerage Service for the last 12 months as a pilot. Housing Options has supplemented the funding to extend the scheme until March 2018 to ensure that learning from the pilot can be embedded into normal practice. Additionally, Cheshire East has been awarded funding for 2 years for accommodation and support for households experiencing domestic abuse who also have additional, complex, needs.

## **Human Trafficking / Human Slavery**

Cheshire East under the Care Act has a statutory duty for Adult Safeguarding. The types of abuse include categories for human trafficking, and therefore, Cheshire East has a statutory duty to identify, report, and support victims of human trafficking as well as the duty as first responders.

Although local services are only aware of 2 individual cases between 2014 and 2016, Cheshire East may need to respond to an incidence of the uncovering of mass human trafficking in the Borough.

Given the seriousness of trafficking there is a need for joined up working between departments and local agencies, to promote a strategic response and good practice in supporting people in need. The Council's Emergency Response Plan will assist with the management of an incident, and Housing Services in attendance will establish how much temporary accommodation will be needed.

## **LOCAL CONTEXT**

### **Housing costs, income, and poverty in Cheshire East**

More and more attention is being paid to evidence showing that the main factor in homelessness in most regions is poverty, with links to under-employment (in London this is outweighed by the extreme

pressure on the housing market). Poverty is seen as the most important driver of homelessness in all its forms, and features strongly in all of the statistics in use.

Researchers in a recent project looked into the common argument that homelessness is a random event which can happen to anybody. The belief is that homelessness is caused by many different things and so is complex. However, causes have been identified, which are often preventable.

After looking at data from the British Cohort Study, it was seen that childhood poverty is the most powerful predictor of homelessness in young adulthood. This research shows that for some systematically disadvantaged groups, the probability of homelessness is so high that it comes close to being a *norm*. The research suggests that:

1. A Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) lone mother, who was poor as a child, living in rented accommodation when aged 26, and who has been unemployed, has a predicted probability of homelessness of **71.2%** by the age of 30.
2. This is contrasted with a white male, a university graduate from a financially secure background in the rural south of England, living at home with parents when aged 26, had a **0.6%** probability of being homeless by the age of 30.

National household surveys show that younger people who are single, a lone parent, or from a BME background and who live in poverty have an increased chance of homelessness. Research also shows that if poverty is removed from the situation the increased likelihood of homelessness massively reduces. Although substance misuse in adulthood may be a contributing factor, this is seen as less important than the poverty.

The research suggests that it is not being young, single, a lone parent or BME that makes someone vulnerable to homelessness, but the fact that the person is more likely to be poor.

The statistics also show that lone parents (usually mothers with young children) account for 47% of households accepted as homeless by English local authorities, despite making up only 6.3% of all households. In Cheshire East the figure is 29%. Couples with and without children, and older people – both more widespread in the general population – are significantly under-represented among statutorily homeless households.

Cheshire East research has shown that lower quartile (entry level) open market housing costs are:

Lower quartile house price	Lower quartile rental cost
£135,000	£475

(HM Land Registry © Crown copyright 2017)

#### Required income levels to meet housing costs

Nationally, original income and final income by quintile group data for households from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) says that a household's income can rise through tax and benefit assistance. The 2<sup>nd</sup> quintile is included in the next table showing original income of less than £15,000 which only rises above £20,000 via market intervention such as benefit payments. This can change between households or within the same household over time as circumstances change. There is a ratio of 15 to 1 between the lowest and the highest quintile. Those households in the bottom and 2<sup>nd</sup> quintiles are the most at risk of homelessness. The next table shows national quintiles.

	Original income (£'s)	(Final income £'s)
Bottom	5,521	15,504
2nd	13,731	23,173
3rd	24,842	28,358
4th	40,880	36,401

Top	80,803	60,027
All households average	33,155	32,692

The affordability ratios are calculated using ONS House Prices Statistics (based on Land Registry data) and earnings from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings. The earnings relate to the respondent's place of residence rather than place of work. This means that affordability in commuter areas reflects the earning power of commuters.

Traditionally households have needed at least the average income to purchase a property. Those on less than average have been encouraged to take up sub-prime mortgage offers. The level of debt caused by households being overstretched contributed to the recent recession and led to extreme hardship for households, in many cases resulting in repossession. Similarly, working households have needed an average income which enabled access to private rented homes.

Estimates of income required to access purchased or rented accommodation in Cheshire East

Required household income to purchase lower quartile housing (x3.5 times income)	Required income to rent lower quartile housing (third of monthly earnings)
£38,571	£1,440 (or £17,280 per year)

The average household income in Crewe, for example, is £20,960, which gives a lower quartile house price to earnings ratio of 6.4.

Many tenants on benefit in the private rented sector encounter 3 main difficulties: (i) LHA which doesn't cover all the rental costs, (ii) a shortage of affordable properties, and (iii) landlords unwilling to rent to benefit-reliant households.

The Cheshire East 'Local Welfare Safety Net' report says that there are currently almost 25,000 households in Cheshire East in receipt of one or more welfare benefit.

Benefit - reliant households:

Total households	Benefit reliant households*	% of households
171,170	25,000	14.6

\*Job seekers, ESA and incapacity benefits, lone parents and others on income related benefits

### Empty properties in Cheshire East

The number of empty residential properties in Cheshire East has decreased by -36% between 2010 and 2016, and empty property levels are currently the lowest they have been since 2009 (since records began).

The next table shows the number of empty properties in Cheshire East.

	2014	2015	2016
All vacant dwellings	4,163	4,036	2,686
Empty for 6 months or more	1,736	1,540	1,451
Private registered provider vacant	228	323	231
Private registered provider vacant for 6 months or more	43	54	57

Although empty properties are not the solution to homelessness they may help to reduce it.

As properties are bought and sold, or re-let, there will be a period of vacancy in between the changes in occupation. Such 'transactional vacancies' are not usually the cause of problems, but are a normal part of the operation of the housing market. Household flows exist which affect both the number of households in an area and the number of properties which are occupied, as seen in the next table:

**Table: The impact of household movement on the number of households and properties in Cheshire East**

<b>Household flow</b>	<b>Number of</b>	
	<b>Households</b>	<b>Properties occupied</b>
1. HH moving into Cheshire East and into an empty property	Increases	Increases
2. HH moving into Cheshire East and into an occupied property	Unchanged	Unchanged
3. HH moving within Cheshire East, leaving empty and entering empty	Unchanged	Unchanged
4. Whole HH moving within Cheshire East, leaving empty and entering occupied	Decreases	Unchanged
5. Whole HH leaves Cheshire East	Decreases	Decreases
6. Splitting HH, person leaving enters vacant	Increases	Increases
7. Splitting HH, person leaving enters occupied	Unchanged	Unchanged
8. Splitting HH, person leaving leaves Cheshire East	Unchanged	Unchanged
9. Household Dissolution	Decreases	Decreases

A number of empty properties are necessary for a healthy housing market and to allow household flows 1, 3, and 6 above. It may be possible for some empty properties to be brought back into use which may accommodate homeless households via leasing schemes or nominations.

Commercial properties are typically unsuitable for habitation.

Action Plan 2.c: Better use of available accommodation for the benefit of homelessness households
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### **Main Themes Arising from the Homelessness Strategy Review**

Cheshire East's Homelessness Strategy 2014-2017 has been reviewed. Between March and June 2017 the Council's Housing Service carried out a review to:

- Identify the main reasons for homelessness, and present and future levels of homelessness and housing need
- Look at services in place to prevent homelessness and to provide accommodation and support to those in need
- Identify resources available to provide support for homeless people through prevention activity, and to divert people away from becoming homeless
- Identify gaps in provision

Engagement with a range of partners has increased understanding around local pressures, and how services could work better together to prevent and reduce homelessness.

Specifically the review has uncovered issues around young people / young adults (especially those who are single), and those who have complex needs, including chaotic behaviour. People leaving mental health care with no home is an increasing problem, as is the link between homelessness and substance misuse issues.

#### *Rough sleepers*

The Homelessness Review has identified that people sleeping rough in the north of Cheshire East receive a more limited service to those in the south. Cheshire East has secured £100k in rough sleeping funding, with an innovative model of service delivery which will make a real difference to local people at risk of sleeping rough.

#### *Welfare reform*

The impact is continuing and is impacting in new cohorts. How the impact on vulnerable households can be mitigated is a major theme, as is the impact of the new Homelessness Reduction Act. Welfare Reform is discussed more in the Strategic Priority 4: Ensure adequate support is in place to help maintain and sustain accommodation.

#### *Housing-related support*

How to make better use of existing service provision to be more effective is being addressed through the new Housing Related Support contracts. As services bed down, performance and outputs are eagerly anticipated.

#### *Referrals*

Better communication and timely and accurate referrals to relevant services is an area needing more work. How the Cheshire East Housing Options 'offer' is promoted is something which requires looking into, as residents have different requirements. There is a lack of broader knowledge about services and appropriate referrals for customers, and also a lack of access to affordable settled accommodation.

#### *Move on*

There is a lack of suitable 'move-on' accommodation from supported and other forms of accommodation, thereby creating logjams, with people stuck where they don't need to be.

#### *Private rented*

Access to the private rented sector is a challenge but some improvements have been seen. Cheshire East needs to work with other agencies and private landlords to develop initiatives to address this gap in provision. Different options are currently being considered.

#### *Partnership working*

The information gathering events demonstrated that there is a real commitment from agencies and providers in Cheshire East to achieve positive outcomes for people who are homeless or who are at risk of homelessness. New solutions are being developed.

#### *Acceptances*

Homelessness acceptances have increased between 2014 and 2017 by 31%, with the main causes of homelessness out by family and friends, domestic abuse, and the end of assured shorthold tenancy (between them being 67% of acceptances).

#### *Preventions*

The number of successful preventions has increased year on year between 2014 and 2017 with 2,261 households assisted. Preventions data shows a good rate of successful prevention. The balance is weighted in favour of outcomes where assistance was given to obtain alternative accommodation.

#### *Improvements*

As already said, better partnership working between, for example, mental health, probation, housing, and social services will be needed to deliver identified outcomes for service users. As resources are

limited, innovation and good practice will deliver improvements and savings. It is essential to avoid duplication of work and of services.

Two issues to be carried over from the last Homelessness Strategy to this one are

- clients with complex needs, who are repeat service users, and
- lack of affordable accommodation for young single people.

Whilst work is being done to deliver improvements, such as a new Housing Related Support project, and increased provision for mental health, the Homelessness Strategy Review shows that more needs to be done.

Several key issues require more attention and are addressed in the Homelessness Strategy:

- Holistic advice for single homeless
- Offenders and links to Probation
- Homeless from social landlords
- Relationship breakdown
- A protocol for 'frequent flyers' or repeat presenters
- New Psychoactive Substances (formerly Legal Highs)
- Welfare Reform and partnership working between the CAB, Job Centres, DWP, and Housing
- Referrals to the Single Point of Access (SPA)
- Adapted Registered Provider (RP) properties and recording where they are located
- Move on from supported accommodation into the private rented sector, and how to improve offer options
- A commitment to preventing mortgage reposessions
- A commitment to limiting the use of B&B accommodation for all client groups, justified by a 'spend to save' approach

More information is available in the Homelessness Strategy Review 2017.

## **Key Achievements**

Since 2014 the Council has made measurable progress in reducing homelessness in Cheshire East. What follows are just some examples, which include, under the old Homelessness Strategy's 4 priorities:

<b>Strategic Priority</b>	<b>What has been achieved</b>
Providing effective early interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Worked with Registered Providers (RPs) to prepare for the introduction of Universal Credit</li> <li>- Provided information to partners on how Welfare Reform may affect their clients</li> <li>- Worked with health services to reduce the number of unplanned discharges, especially from mental health services</li> <li>- Developed a mental health discharge protocol and provided support through 2 link workers and bed spaces of emergency accommodation</li> <li>- Prevented rough sleeping, and secured over £100,000 DCLG Rough Sleeping Grant Funding to assist over 100 people over 3 years as part of a cross-Cheshire initiative</li> <li>- Developed a private sector landlord offer. Accreditation is on-going. There has been an 18% increase, with 11 landlords reaching the Council's Landlord 'Gold Standard'. This shows an increase in landlords willing to engage with Cheshire East.</li> <li>- Total cases of prevention and relief have increased from 577 to 878 (an increase of 52%)</li> <li>- Achieved the Bronze level in the Gold Standard having shown evidence that Cheshire East have adopted a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has buy in across all local authority services.</li> </ul>
Complex needs and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explored options for substance misuse clients</li> </ul>

crisis management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provided advice and training for partner agencies about assisting clients with no recourse to public funds</li> </ul>
Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Developed an Enhanced Housing Options Service, along with improved use of the SPA by increasing awareness of the service amongst stakeholders</li> <li>- Reduced households in temporary accommodation by 30%</li> </ul>
Accommodation and affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enabled move on from supported accommodation to PRS for high risk tenancies which would have been homeless otherwise.</li> <li>- Reviewed the Allocations Policy with a Review of Homechoice and IT carried out</li> <li>- In partnership with Registered Providers and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) new affordable units have been delivered, and set to meet a 3 year target of 1,050 units</li> </ul>

Task and Finish Groups have met and tasks in the old Homelessness Strategy action plan have been designated Red, Amber, or Green, and assessed as an ‘improvement’, ‘deterioration’, or as ‘stable’.

The groups have identified those tasks which have been achieved over the course of 2014-2017, and those which will be included in the new Homelessness Strategy for 2018-2021. More specific details on what has been achieved, what issues are still current, along with emerging themes can be found in the Homelessness Strategy Review.

### **Gold Standard**

Cheshire East is on track to achieve the Gold Standard. This is a process of self assessment, benchmarking and diagnostic peer review (DPR) with the ultimate aim of ensuring that services offered by Housing Options Teams are robust, fit for purpose and respond effectively to residents with a housing need. The DPR, carried out by a neighboring local authority and an external assessor, gave Cheshire East one of the highest scores achieved nationally, meaning that Cheshire East has a good foundation in place. A Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP), tailored to Cheshire East, with contents taken from the results of the DPR, highlights areas for improvement.

Cheshire East has already achieved Bronze, with Silver due to be achieved soon, with the aim of achieving the Gold Standard by the end of 2017 / 18. This will ensure that there is continuous improvement in service delivery and outcomes for vulnerable people in Cheshire East.

The Gold Standard entails achieving key objectives around each of 10 challenges:

#### **► BRONZE STANDARD ◄**

- Anywhere between 1 and 4 Local Challenges achieved

#### **► SILVER STANDARD ◄**

- Anywhere between 5 and 9 Local Challenges achieved

#### **► GOLD STANDARD ◄**

- All 10 Local Challenges achieved

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has established the National Practitioner Support Service (NPSS) with the priority of developing the Gold Standard to assist local authorities to deliver the best possible homeless and prevention services. The NPSS have therefore

developed this structured process of self assessment. Through the process of working towards the Gold Standard, Cheshire East will have the opportunity to:

- Refine and improve our Housing Options Service
- Deliver improvements in social, health and economic outcomes for Cheshire East residents
- Reduce the use and cost of Bed & Breakfast
- Reduce levels of rough sleeping
- Improve our relationship with Cheshire East landlords
- Improve access for Cheshire East residents to affordable private rented accommodation
- Prevent mortgage reposessions
- Provide more consistent and robust housing advice
- Reduce levels of homelessness acceptances

### **The 10 Challenges and the current position**

The Housing Options Service believes it is in an excellent position to have submitted all its evidence and receive the Gold Award by the end of 2017/18. The 10 Challenges and the current position are outlined in the table below.

	<b>Challenge</b>	<b>Progress made</b>
1	Adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness	The Homeless Strategy and associated action plan has visible corporate support from Children's Services, Adult Services, Health colleagues and Communities teams. Engagement ongoing via the Strategy Steering Group is vital.
2	Partnerships in place to address support, training, education & employment	Partnerships internally and externally in relation to support, training and employment are effective with some work to be done in broadening those and making those links resilient.
3	Offer a Housing Options and homeless prevention service	Cheshire East has a structure in place to deliver this challenge and has strong evidence of high achievement in preventing homelessness.
4	Adopt a No Second Night Out (NSNO) model	A No Second Night Out Model has been in place in CEC for 3 years. A review of that period and any areas to develop are underway.
5	Housing Pathways are in place with a provision of accommodation and support	Cheshire East set an excellent example in relation to this challenge, with a single point of access and strong contracts for supported service provision. The movement of contract management to Housing Options will be seen as a benefit and the challenge of delivering services with a reduced budget will be evidenced through the need analysis already carried out.
6	A private rented sector offer is in place	Our 3 tier Private Landlord Offer was signed off by Cabinet in September 2015. It's a strong and innovative offer and has been positively received by Private Sector landlords.
7	A scheme is in place to prevent mortgage reposessions	There is a clear process that can be used to comprehensively evidence this challenge coupled with high success rate of the Money Advisor role.
8	A homeless strategy is in place	The current Homelessness Strategy 2014-2017 has already been approved at Cabinet and meets all the legal requirements, including a process of regular review.
9	No 16-17 years olds are placed in B&B	The Housing Options Service has procedures and measures in place to prevent 16-17 year olds from being placed in B&B. A challenge and review method is already established between Housing and Children's Services in relation to the 16-17 year old protocol.
10	Families spend no longer than 6 weeks in B&B accommodation	Cheshire East has a good record and excellent provision for families. Appropriate measures are in place and B&B is rarely, if ever, used for families. Where it is a requirement it is only for a matter of nights. This challenge will be quickly and easily evidenced.

### The Housing Options Team

The Gold Standard Diagnostic Peer Review (a peer assessment) of Housing Options interviews observed the following:

- Excellent engagement with the customer throughout the interview
- Very detailed and clear advice given, with a particular focus on affordability and support to access the PRS
- The officer took the time to confirm the customers understanding of specific issues at various points in the interview
- Clear and appropriate next steps discussed with the customer
- Hand written confirmation of advice given at close of interview

The Housing Options Team has been assessed as being sympathetic and with a good understanding of the issues faced by services. However, Housing Options sometimes struggles with understanding the support levels available in some services.

## **Strategic Aim - Prevent homelessness**

### The issue

DCLG statistics suggest that homelessness levels nationally are going up. Increasing numbers of people are unable to find a home and the loss of a private sector tenancy is now the most common cause of homelessness nationally.

However the scale of homelessness is greater than that captured in the statistics. The scale of hidden homelessness is unknown, and people are homeless but have not approached local authorities for help, and some who do seek help but are turned away before a formal application is made are still homeless and should be taken into account in national statistics. The DCLG is giving consideration to how these groups can be captured effectively in the data it collects.

### The Cheshire East position

Homelessness acceptances during 2014 – 2016 have increased by 31%, with the main causes of homelessness eviction by family and friends (38%), domestic abuse (20.5%), and the end of assured shorthold tenancy (9%), between them being 67% of acceptances.

**Table: Homelessness Decisions 2014 - 2016**

2014			2015			2016		
Decisions	No in B&B	No in Temp Accom	Decisions	No in B&B	No in Temp Accom	Decisions	No in B&B	No in Temp Accom
181	155	47	293	166	75	468	132	94

**Table: Homelessness Acceptances 2014 - 2016**

	2014	2015	2016	Total
Decisions	181	293	468	942
Of which Acceptances	114	84	110	308

**Table: Main causes of homelessness in Cheshire East 2014 – 2016**

Year	In priority need and unintentionally homeless	Main causes of homelessness:				Total
		Out family or friends	by or	Domestic abuse	End of Assured Shorthold Tenancy	
2014	114	48		23	7	78
2015	84	24		18	9	51
2016	110	44		22	12	78
<b>Total</b>	<b>308</b>		<b>116 (37.6%)</b>	<b>63 (20.4%)</b>	<b>28 (9%)</b>	<b>207 (67.2%)</b>

**Table: Total households on Homechoice on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 - 2017**

Year	Total
2014	8,846
2015	7,368
2016	6,868
2017	6,180

The number of successful preventions has increased year on year, with 2,261 households assisted between 2014 and 2016. The extent to which Cheshire East employs the full range of prevention measures will have a strong influence on homeless acceptances and thereby on the extent of use of Temporary Accommodation (TA).

The use of TA is a sensitive barometer of local pressure and is reflected in the levels of different forms of homelessness, including rough sleeping and 'sofa-surfing'.

#### **Current activity**

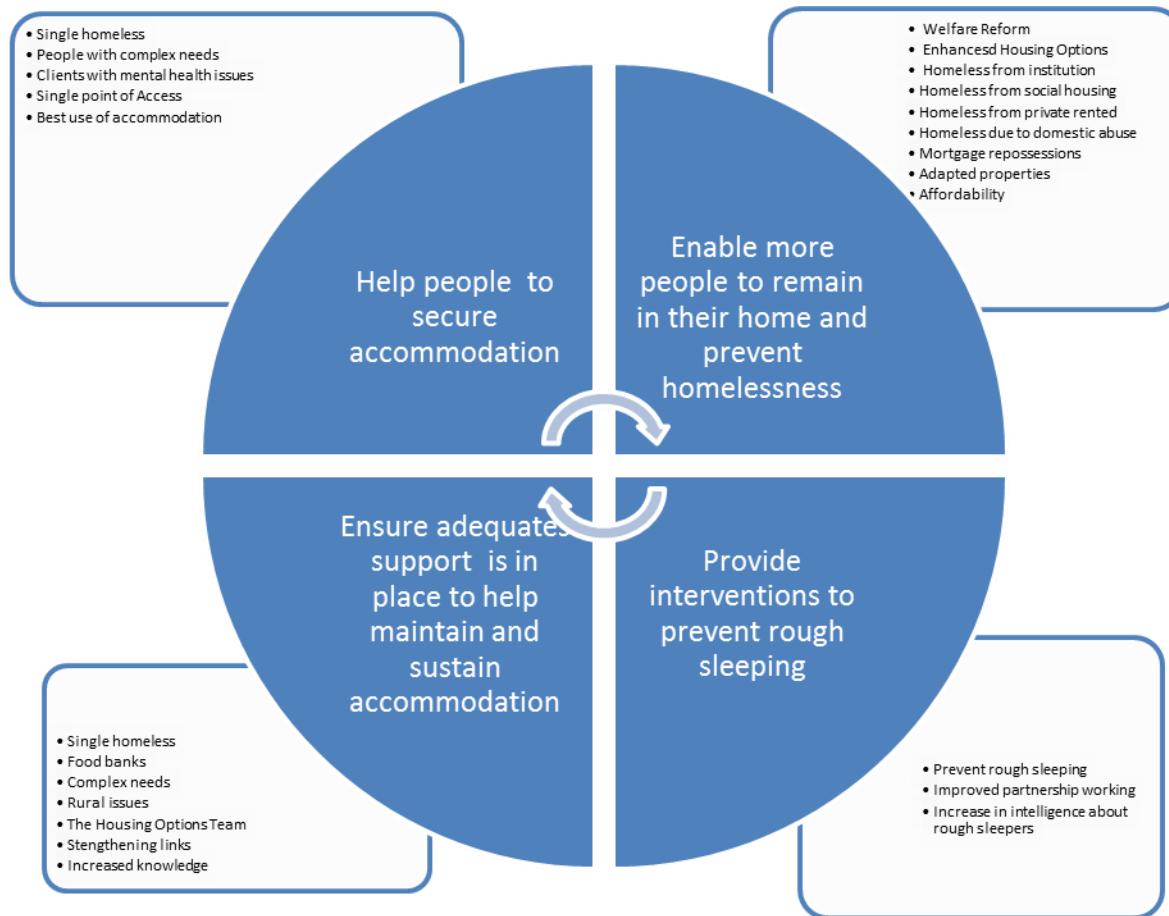
Since 2014 the Council has made measurable progress in reducing homelessness in Cheshire East. There are many examples of:

- Effective early interventions
- Management of complex needs and crisis situations
- Increased levels of support, and
- Provision of additional affordable accommodation

A study of the likely impact of Welfare Reform on eligible cohorts has been carried out. An updated Tenancy Strategy is being drafted with the aim of making the best use of affordable housing to meet local housing need.

There are several issues in need of attention, which are addressed in this Homelessness Strategy. The outcomes of the Review have been incorporated into the new Homelessness Strategy. This will ensure that as far as possible service-provider and service-user views have been captured.

The chart below shows the 4 Strategic Priorities, with the outer boxes showing the main issues to be worked on under each of the Priorities.



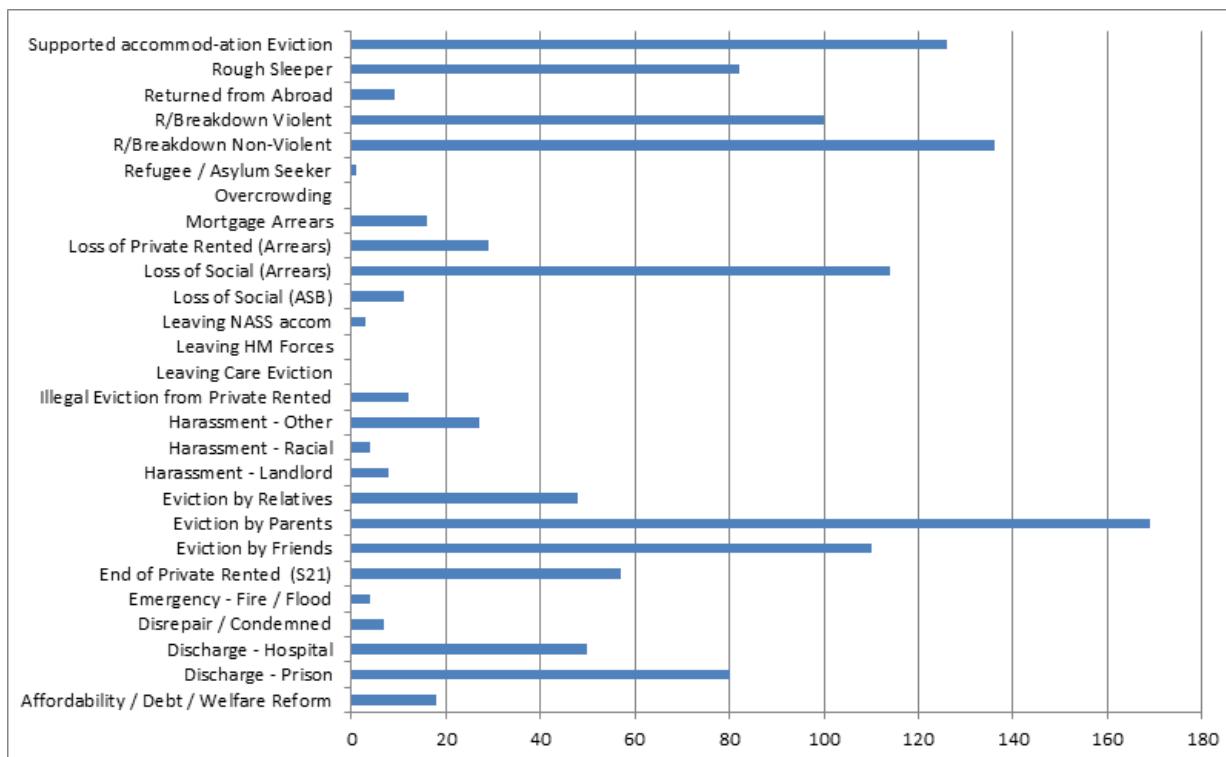
Data does not capture those people helped by more informal methods by Cheshire East or by family members before they are classed as homeless. National statistics attempt to outline whether councils are taking action to stop someone becoming homeless (prevention) or stepping in to offer assistance afterwards (relief). This can be recorded in different ways.

Homelessness applications and acceptance figures may misrepresent the amount of demand Cheshire East is facing at a local level.

For example, 50 people left hospital and approached Housing Options as homeless or wanting assistance. 7 were accepted as homeless with the remaining 43 receiving other forms of assistance after being assessed as lacking one or more of the '5 tests for homelessness' (being homeless, eligible, in priority need, unintentionally homeless, and with a local connection).

This can be seen in many similar situations, with more people assisted by Housing Options than are accepted as homeless, in the next 2 tables.

**Chart: Reasons for clients approaching Housing Options in 2015 / 2016**



Asked to leave by family or friends, and domestic abuse both feature above with high numbers of approaches. However, there are many more approaches from households evicted from social housing than from those evicted from private rented accommodation, even though that is one of the 3 main categories of homelessness acceptances in Cheshire East (almost 10%).

Crewe & Macclesfield		Main reason for loss of last settled home for applicant households found to be eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need
	Total	
Discharge - Prison	80	0
Discharge - Hospital	50	7
Eviction by Friends or relatives	158	15
Eviction by Parents	169	12
Harassment - Other	27	9
Leaving National Asylum Seeker Support accommodation	3	1
Loss of Social (Arrears)	114	1
Mortgage Arrears	16	3
Refugee / Asylum Seeker	1	0
R/Breakdown Violent	100	22

## Rural homelessness

About 50% of Cheshire East residents live in rural locations. There are significant levels of inequality and deprivation to which rural communities are vulnerable. Often there are limited transport options. Circumstances in rural areas can make delivering services to prevent and relieve homelessness particularly difficult.

Recent research by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) has said that central to addressing homelessness in rural areas is making sure rural housing markets work for their resident populations by providing affordable accommodation across a range of tenures and types of home.

Cheshire East has no specific information about homelessness in local rural settlements. Cheshire East will address this issue as a priority in the Homelessness Strategy, and if evidence suggests this is a significant problem, then a number of things could be pursued, such as a rural-specific homelessness strategy, new models of partnership working, and improved monitoring.

Action Plan 4.b: Explore homelessness issues in rural communities

## Future intentions

The Housing Service will explore new ways to help more households to remain in their own home. This will be done through an efficient process to pick up homelessness triggers from contact via the new Homechoice and Single Point of Access, and an understanding of the triggers of homelessness through the new 56 days run in through the HRA.

More details about these and other issues, and what Cheshire East is doing and will do to prevent homelessness is covered next under the 4 Strategic Priorities.

## Strategic Priorities

### **Strategic Priority 1: Enable more people to remain in their home and prevent them from becoming homeless**

#### The issue

The DCLG collects data on prevention and relief efforts by local authorities, which are now included in the same statistical release as statutory homeless figures. Homelessness prevention involves councils helping people to avoid homelessness through measures such as helping them to secure alternative accommodation or to stay in their current home. Homelessness relief is when an authority has been unable to prevent homelessness but has helped someone to secure accommodation, even though it was not under a legal obligation to do so.

According to a 2016 data release, an estimated 212,600 cases of homelessness prevention or relief took place outside the statutory framework in England in 2014/15 - of these 198,100 were estimated to be preventions, and 14,400 cases of relief. The total number of cases of homelessness prevention and relief increased by 38% between 2009/10 and 2013/14, from 165,200 to 228,400, before falling back to 212,600 in 2015/16.

More is needed to prevent homelessness by supporting households at risk before they reach crisis point, as well as reducing rough sleeping.

#### The Cheshire East position

The number of successful preventions has increased year on year, with 2,261 households assisted between 2014 and 2016.

Good levels of prevention have been recorded which shows a preference for prevention. Between 2014 – 2016, 2,114 (90.6%) were assisted to find alternative accommodation, rather than remain in their own home (406). A priority for the new Homelessness Strategy will be to explore new ways to help more households to remain in their own home.

#### Action Plan 1.a: Homelessness Reduction Act

Early intervention can help prevent households from losing their homes. 49.2% (200) of cases had homelessness prevented through a resolution of rent or service charge issues.

Homelessness prevention involves providing people with the ways and means to address their housing and other needs to avoid homelessness.

Homelessness prevention data accounts for cases previously at risk of homelessness, for which homelessness was prevented through positive action (either allowing the household to remain in their existing home, or assisting the household to obtain alternative accommodation).

Homelessness relief data accounts for cases that had become homeless (but were not accepted as owed a main duty), for which homelessness was relieved through positive action (assistance in securing accommodation)

Homelessness relief occurs when an authority has made a negative homeless decision, that is, that a household is either intentionally homeless or is non-priority as defined within part VII of the Housing Act 1996 (amended 2002), but helps someone to secure alternative accommodation, even though it is under no statutory obligation to do so.

Prevention and relief work is carried out with partner agencies such as the Citizens Advice Bureaux, floating support providers, etc.

The number of successful prevention cases has increased year on year for the past 3 years, with just a decrease of 1.6% between 2015 and 2016. The majority of the households have been assisted to move into social housing via Homechoice, evidence that Cheshire East allocations policy gives 'reasonable preference' to those households threatened with homelessness. This includes ex - members of HM Armed Forces who are awarded the appropriate banding and local connection. The numbers being assisted to remain in their own homes has remained static, with an average of 128 per year over the last 3 years.

**Table: total number of cases of homelessness prevention and relief by outcome**

Number of cases where positive action was successful in preventing homelessness of which household				Cases where positive action was successful in relieving homelessness	Total cases of prevention and relief
	Able to remain in existing home	Assisted to obtain alternative accommodation	Total		
<b>2014</b>	135	436	571	6	577
<b>2015</b>	122	663	856	21	877

<b>2016</b>	128	714	842	36	878
<b>Total</b>	385	1,813	2,269	63	2,332

421 family / couple households were prevented from becoming homeless during 2015/2016

### **Welfare Reform**

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) figures show in July 2017 that almost half of households affected by the benefit cap are losing £50 a week or more, which is likely to make it difficult for people to afford their bills, rent and potentially even basic necessities.

Nearly 75% are single parent families, many with very young children – these are people who may find it incredibly difficult to escape the cap by finding work, given the cost of childcare and lack of flexible employment options. Closer working with Third Sector community initiatives, such as foodbanks for example, will be explored to find out why people need their services.

Indications are that the same issues as usual are presenting themselves but that they are becoming more complicated: benefits problems leading to debt, which leads to threatened homelessness, and employment problems, all of which may lead to relationship breakdown. These issues impact on family life and on children, on an individual's physical and mental health, including possible loss of self-esteem and confidence. This then, may lead to unemployment, or homelessness, which impacts on the local economy.

#### **Action Plan 4.a: Third Sector Community Initiatives**

Cheshire East's continued competitive economic offer continues to present employment opportunities. Ensuring that more of the population are able to benefit from economic growth through gaining employment remains a priority.

Working together with local partners to address employment and training needs will ensure that households have the opportunity to obtain higher value employment opportunities, therefore increasing their ability to sustain a tenancy, and to exercise more choice in the housing market. Cheshire East wants to make sure that people have sufficient skills to enter the job market through careers advice and support - an important step in households being able to gain independence.

The provision of employment, financial and housing advice will:

- (1) Increase the number of adults moving off 'out of work' benefits and into continuous employment, and
- (2) Increase the number of individuals not claiming unemployment benefit over 6 months and who are on a pathway to work.

Ideally they will be positioned to respond to new employment opportunities in Cheshire East.

Cheshire East will positively support partnerships with voluntary sector stakeholders and other local partners to address the support, education, employment and training needs (including bespoke training around partnerships and operational working).

#### **Action Plan 1.e: Work in partnership to provide support for the acquiring of skills and knowledge, and increase opportunities to access work**

Steps have been taken in this direction already when Cheshire East recently invited colleagues from a range of partners (providers of housing, support, advice and training) to an event intended to facilitate

an open discussion about the current housing climate, and joint challenges and opportunities going into the future.

One clearly identified need which was highlighted was for a database of services and options available via website with free access for all. This would be useful and connect up services across geographical areas and overcome poor connectivity issues. 'Live Well Cheshire East' has been launched, an information and advice service, on a range of subjects, with an easy to use directory of over 3,000 services and activities in Cheshire East. This database will be reviewed and updated every 6 months so that the information is always up to date and accurate.

Cheshire East is currently exploring options with the DWP for working on joint local initiatives aimed at reducing homelessness and unemployment.

#### **Action Plan 4.d: Access to free information**

Discharges of people from prison and hospital are sometimes untimely and short notice. 50% of prison discharges are unplanned, as are discharges from mental health services. Increased engagement with the Probation Service has been agreed, and work is being done by Link Workers to support those leaving mental health services who may be homeless.

#### **Action Plan 2.e: Homeless from institutions**

##### **Current activity**

Successful interventions are carried out, through means such as mortgage arrears interventions, family mediation, the Emergency AssistanCE Fund, and support at Court via the Money Advisor.

Over 60% of preventions have involved resolving money problems with 50% rent or service charge problems, and 13% Housing Benefit problems.

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) are used to prevent homelessness to assist with a range of issues including benefit cap cases, the under occupancy charge or the Spare Room Subsidy ('bedroom tax'), short-term rent shortfalls, when, for example, a baby is due, and for rent in advance.

The DHP fund is administered by the Housing Benefit Service. Private sector liaison officers work closely with Benefits staff to maximise the chance of successful outcomes. Payments from the Discretionary Housing Payments and the Emergency AssistanCE Fund may be offered to eligible households.

The largest single prevention action (almost 50%) concerns rent or service charge arrears in social housing, followed by Housing benefit problems and mortgage arrears.

**Table: Homelessness prevented - household able to remain in existing home as a result of:**

	2014	2015	2016	Total
Mediation using external or internal trained family mediators	13	5	4	22
Conciliation including home visits for family/friend threatened exclusions	10	4	2	16
Financial payments from a homeless prevention fund	7	12	8	27
Debt advice	1	2	3	6

Resolving Housing Benefit problems	18	16	19	53
Resolving rent or service charge arrears in the social or private rented sector	66	62	72	200
Sanctuary scheme measures for domestic violence	1	0	0	1
Crisis intervention - providing emergency support	3	1	0	4
Negotiation or legal advocacy to ensure that someone can remain in accommodation in the private rented sector	7	1	5	13
Providing other assistance that will enable someone to remain in accommodation in the private or social rented sector	8	13	6	27
Mortgage arrears interventions or mortgage rescue	18	5	16	39
Other	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>406</b>

Mortgage arrears and rent arrears in Cheshire East have remained at low levels as the causes of loss of accommodation. The Mortgage Pre-Action Protocol (MPAP) has led to a reduction in the number of repossession. These findings suggest that steps taken by Cheshire East to reduce homelessness have been effective, such as:

- Participating in and funding court desks in Macclesfield and Crewe which assists in representing the resident in court in cases of mortgage and rent arrears
- Promoting the work of the money advice officer and monitoring referrals to the service to assessing the impact of any increases in mortgage interest rates on owner-occupiers

The data for Cheshire East is static, although the repossession activity by social landlords is something which will need specific work in order to establish why this is the case, and what can be done to produce reductions to match those seen in the private landlord and mortgage sectors.

Gold Standard challenge number seven is aimed at actively engaging in preventing mortgage repossession.

#### Action Plan 1.d: Mortgage Repossessions

The CAB has been contracted to provide debt advice to households facing financial hardships. Money advice is a key homelessness prevention tool.

#### Action Plan 1.b: Welfare Reform

##### Future intentions

Prevention work will see an increase once the Homeless Reduction Act is enforced, with people assisted 56 days before they are likely to become homeless. A new Section 195 inserted into the 1996 Act requires Cheshire East to take steps to help prevent homelessness for any eligible households threatened with homelessness. Steps to be taken will be informed by the assessment set out in the new duty to assess and agree a personalised plan. This will include things such as mediation to help keep families together, or financial payments.

There will be a demonstrable focus on delivering proactive advice and support to enable clients to sustain their existing accommodation wherever practicable and appropriate, or, to access alternative accommodation.

A pathways model will be devised to connect young people with appropriate services such as supported accommodation leading to self contained sustainable accommodation.

Work is being done to reduce homelessness from mental health hospital through a discharge protocol signed up to by Cheshire East and the Cheshire and Wirral Partnership / NHS, which outlines key roles and responsibilities of each service and what each can expect from the others. 2 Link Workers will assist people leaving hospital, with no home to go to, into one of 4 commissioned bed spaces, for a short duration, as the Link Worker finds a more permanent housing solution.

## Action Plan 2.b: Clients with mental health problems

## **Strategic Priority 2: Help people who are homeless to secure appropriate affordable accommodation**

### The issue

Homeless households found to be unintentionally homeless and in priority need are owed the full housing duty. Section 208 of the Housing Act 1996 requires that where it is ‘reasonably practicable’, local authorities should secure accommodation within their administrative boundary. However, the combination of a limited supply of social housing and rising costs in many areas means that some authorities are increasingly struggling to accommodate homeless households in their locality.

### The Cheshire East position

The largest interventions across both prevention and relief have been 49.3% (1,043) nominations to RP partners and 27% (570) referred to supported housing. Very detailed and clear advice is given, with a particular focus on affordability and support to access the Private Rented Sector (PRS). Cheshire East are developing a private sector landlord offer. Accreditation of landlords is on-going. There has been an 18% increase in those accredited, with more landlords reaching the Council's 'Gold Standard'. This shows an increase in landlords willing to engage. The Scheme aims to recognise private landlords who operate good management practices and maintain good property standards. Cheshire East Private Landlord Liaison Officers provide support and advice to private landlords. The Cheshire East scheme works well and has been seen as an example of good practice

### Current activity

The number of successful prevention cases has increased year on year for the past 3 years, with just a decrease of 1.6% between 2015 and 2016. The majority of the households have been assisted to move into social housing via Homechoice. The numbers being assisted to remain in their own homes has remained static, with an average of 128 per year over the last 3 years.

Since 2013/14 no homeless households have had their homelessness addressed through the use of low cost home ownership housing products (at the point of homelessness relief, although as household circumstances improved some may have entered shared ownership, for example), but 38 have had homelessness prevented through social housing for rent.

A new housing-related support contract began in Cheshire East in April 2017. It has split services into 3 areas: Cheshire East North, Central, and South. There is a requirement to link this into tenancy sustainment as a key element of prevention work.

The Single Point of Access (SPA) received 888 referrals during 2016 – 2017. 44% of referrals were made by the Housing Options team, of which, 89% came from the Homelessness Team, with the remainder from enhanced housing options or Homechoice. Referrals to the SPA are high, but often services available are not always appropriate for those with complex needs. It is necessary to improve use of the SPA by increasing awareness of the service amongst partners and stakeholders.

## Action Plan 2.d: Single Point of Access

Typically, clients who left services in a negative or an unplanned way are more likely to return, needing more support than clients that leave services in a positive or a planned way.

One of the largest causes of homelessness (over 20% of all homeless cases over the last 3 years) is domestic abuse. In the last year alone over 2,500 referrals were made to local specialist domestic abuse services, with an additional 344 to the commissioned sexual violence support provider.

Domestic abuse is one of the 3 biggest causes of homelessness.

Responses to domestic abuse, including housing need, are specifically co-ordinated through the work of the Cheshire East Domestic and Sexual Abuse Partnership (CEDSAP). CEDSAP has the prevention of homelessness as a key priority, working to keep people safe in their homes where possible, and only sending people out of the area as a last resort. This is done by, amongst other things:

- Support for victims to remain in their accommodation where it is safe to do so
- Target hardening of properties
- Support for victims to use Council services to get help with accommodation problems

The CEDSAP hub service has seen an increase in 2016 in the number of people seeking support (over 20%) including accommodation, and provides quality services to respond to need, including housing.

The CEDSAP Strategy aims at strengthening joint working with recently commissioned providers of 14 units of local accommodation for those with additional needs across Cheshire East.

More information can be accessed via the Homelessness Strategy Review 2017.

## Action Plan 2.a: Homeless due to relationship breakdown

### Care Leavers

Cheshire East Council has a legal Corporate Parenting Responsibility for all children and young people who are cared for and care leavers from 0 - 25. The Care Leavers Service Plan 2016/17 says that there should be sufficiency and choice of accommodation for care leavers, where they can feel safe. Social Work Reform now requires local authorities to issue a local offer to care leavers to set out specifically what the local authority will provide with due weight attached to housing options. During information gathering events for the Homelessness Strategy Review, care leavers were highlighted as a vulnerable group who may struggle to identify and sustain appropriate accommodation.

Pathway Plans and Ignition panel are some of the ways in which 16 – 25 year olds can achieve permanence within their own homes. Young people are central to the formation of these plans. Cheshire East has a number of ways to prepare care leavers to transition to their own accommodation such as tenancy readiness courses, training flats, and the use of guarantors and council tax exemptions. Whilst the offer is good, Cheshire East remain aspirational in aiming work toward the

extension of the options available and specifically a tolerance and 'can do' attitude when care leavers experience difficulty in maintaining their own properties and tenancies.

This strategy aim to identify care leavers as a vulnerable group within Cheshire East and to specifically reduction the number of young people presenting as homeless with less young people experiencing disruption as a consequence of their care leaver journey. The Homelessness Reduction Act says that councils must take specific account of care leavers. Any homeless pathways will work in conjunction with the Care Leaver Service to prioritise the needs of care leavers. Options for joint training opportunities and joint meetings will be developed.

## Action Plan: 2.e: Reduce homelessness from leaving Care

### Gypsies and Travellers

Cheshire East assesses the accommodation needs of all residents, including vulnerable groups such as Gypsies and Travellers. Gypsies and Travellers are protected by Law from discrimination and unfair treatment.

Cheshire East has recently in partnership with other Cheshire local authorities commissioned a Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA), due to be published in early 2018.

Cheshire East currently manages 1 socially run site and is also responsible for licensing all private Gypsy and Traveller caravan sites, known as authorised sites. Sometimes unauthorised encampments may be established on Cheshire East land or private land and this may be an indication that the Gypsies and Travellers have nowhere legal to place their caravans. At all encampments on Council land a welfare assessment is undertaken covering health and welfare issues, as well as addressing issues around permanent accommodation.

Gypsies and Travellers can contact Cheshire East Council and ask to make a homeless application if they have nowhere to stay, if, for example, there is nowhere safe to legally park a caravan or a mobile home. The Council has a 24-hour emergency number to call if households become homeless out of office hours.

## Action Plan 2.a: Single Homeless

Mental health support is a major issue, with a gap between Housing Options and the bottom end of Adult Social Care and mental health support. How to manage and understand mental health thresholds and accommodation requirements has been a problem, especially for those clients not engaging with mental health services.

## Action Plan 4.e: Support the 3rd sector in strengthening links with Adult Social Care.

The Housing Discharge Protocol outlines what 'capacity' is, and what the roles and responsibilities are of Health services and Housing services. The Housing Options Service will communicate with partners on a regular basis. One way of doing this is through a regular newsletter, or e-mail update, which can collate information from other organisations or services. This will then be circulated to contacts and strategic partners.

## Action Plan 4.c: Housing Options Team

### Future intentions

The design of the new housing related support services are outcome focused, allowing families and single people the opportunity to access the support they need. This approach will ensure that those with complex needs, such as substance misuse and mental health, will be supported into

independence where this is achievable, or will have a suitable service in place to support them to maintain accommodation and prevent homelessness.

The service providers are bringing innovative approaches to the programme of early intervention and prevention, which will provide significant value for money to Cheshire East, with a reduction in demand to front line services.

## Action Plan 2.c: Better use of accommodation

Work is being done to develop an enhanced PRS offer. This will see increased access to the PRS, especially for homeless and vulnerable households. It may also include incentives offered to private landlords to rent out their properties to nominated households, and the creation of a social lettings company.

## Action Plan 2.f: Increased knowledge of the local PRS

Commissioners are currently working with key stakeholders to re-commission the Cheshire East Substance Misuse Service. A core value and key principle of the re-commissioning process has been engagement, co-production and co-design with service users. Priorities include the aim of reducing homelessness and the risk of homelessness related to alcohol-related crime, anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse. One aim is to examine what levels of homelessness originate from social and private rented accommodation as a result of substance misuse, and clarify if households were known to services.

## Action Plan 2.e: Substance Misuse

Younger people will have more difficulty finding rented accommodation in coming months as a substantial proportion of private landlords actively cut back on renting to under-35s.

Although nearly all landlords are willing to rent to under-35s, nearly a third are changing their letting strategy, mostly to ensure that they have security of rent payment.

National Research by the Residential Landlord Association (RLA) states that under-35s provide a rich source of demand for landlords, and comprise a significant proportion of their tenants. Nationally, nearly all landlords consider renting to under-35s, but there are particular sub-groups to whom they are less willing to let to. Two-thirds of landlords (68%) are not willing to let to under-35s on Housing Benefit/Universal Credit (HB/UC). More than two-fifths of landlords (44%) are not willing to let to students. The most common reasons why landlords were not willing to let to particular groups of under-35s tend to fall into two categories – difficulty in managing the accommodation, and fears about financial loss.

This supports evidence that students and HB/UC claimants are viewed as relatively distinct sub-markets which some landlords specialise in and others avoid. There was some regional variation in the willingness to let to both these groups. Recent migrants represented the third largest group that landlords were not willing to rent to. It would be worth exploring the extent to which this has been influenced by the introduction of 'Right to Rent' legislation which means that landlords have a legal obligation to check the immigration status of tenants.

## Action Plan 1.c: Homeless from the private rented sector

Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester and Warrington Borough Councils have launched a Cheshire Landlord Accreditation Scheme.

The Scheme aims to recognise private landlords who operate good management practices and maintain good property standards. Private landlords play an essential role in the provision of accommodations across Cheshire. It is acknowledged and appreciated that many private landlords manage their tenancies well, and provide and maintain properties to a good standard, often above the

standard required by the law. It is important to recognise these landlords and encourage and support others to achieve this higher standard.

The Scheme has a focus on developing private landlords, through access to support on tenancy and property issues, and professional development courses.

The benefit for landlords of being a member of an accreditation scheme includes public recognition of the good standards that they deliver, as well as access to initiatives that will be developed for the Scheme. Tenants also benefit from accreditation schemes through the knowledge that properties are safe and in good repair, and the confidence that their landlord is professional and reputable.

#### Action Plan 2.f: Develop an enhanced private sector landlord offer

##### **Repossessions**

715 households across all 3 tenures have been the subject of repossession and have therefore lost their home.

This is not reflected in the reasons for approaches to the Council's Homelessness Service, or in the cause of homelessness data, with 42 households accepted as homeless due to repossession.

Of the 3 tenures, claims and repossession by social landlords are the highest.

	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
Mortgage claims	362	263	101	117	843
Mortgage possessions	131	110	23	28	292
Private landlord claims	73	69	56	61	259
Private landlord possessions	16	18	13	15	62
Social landlord claims	429	423	418	331	1,601
Social landlord possessions	79	102	86	94	361

Locally, up to 20% of new tenancies are failing within the first 12 months. The reasons why RPs are evicting so many households is something requiring investigation. For example, are the high numbers due to anti-social behaviour, or rent arrears? If rent arrears, is that due to delays in Benefit receipts, or a tenant's unwillingness or inability to pay rent due? The causes and determinants will be unpicked.

#### Action Plan 1.c: Work with RSLs to provide timely advice to households in rent arrears

### **Strategic Priority 3: Provide interventions to prevent rough sleeping**

#### The issue

Rough sleeping is the most visible face of homelessness. According to the latest figures, collected in the autumn of 2016 and published in January 2017, 4,134 people are estimated to be sleeping rough on any one night. There was an increase of 16% from 2015 to 2016, while since 2010 national rough sleeping estimates show an increase of 134%.

The East of England has seen the biggest percentage increase in rough sleeping since last year (44%). This is followed by the North West (42%), the East Midlands (23%) and the North East (18%), all of which have seen increases in rough sleeping above the national average.

#### The Cheshire East position

The number of rough sleepers is continuously monitored by the Council, through information from partners, who also provide an estimate of rough sleeping on one night each year chosen between 1st October and 30th November. This is a snapshot on a single night, and not an assessment of the total number of rough sleepers over the whole year.

**Table: Rough sleeping recorded on a single night each year**

2014	2015	2016
12	0	4

The Housing Options Team is committed to tackling rough sleeping and has a range of solutions available to people who find themselves sleeping on the streets. These efforts are ramped up in the cold months in close collaboration with local faith groups / churches and third sector organisations.

There is no outreach service available in Cheshire East, but when a report of a person sleeping rough comes in from Streetlink, a rough sleeping hotline, attempts are made within 24 hours to find the individual and offer an intervention

#### **Current activity**

Cheshire East data from services (commissioned and non-commissioned) across the sub-region in the last 12 months have identified 137 different rough sleepers. Of these some are known to services and have been seen up to 8 times rough sleeping, but the majority are new to the streets or have slept rough for 5 days or less.

Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) - 10 verified rough sleepers were recorded during the recent SWEP during the Winter of 2016/17. The SWEP is triggered when night time temperatures between November and March will fall below 0 Celsius for 3 consecutive nights, therefore increasing the likelihood of a death.

Additionally, 92 people at risk of either sleeping rough, or who would have had to sleep rough if accommodation wasn't provided, were assisted in 2015/16 through SWEP.

No Second Night Out (NSNO) – A total of 50 Clients have used NSNO over the past 12 months and were prevented from having to sleep on the streets.

Winter Hope Accommodation Macclesfield (WHAM) - Local churches organise the WHAM winter weekend shelters. During the latest shelter period, 22 people were given at least one night's shelter, with 104 nights of accommodation provided in total.

Cheshire East has been awarded funding from the DCLG as part of a pan-Cheshire bid. £100K will be spent in Cheshire East over 3 years to assist, via the 'Upstream' Project, about 120 people who will be at risk of sleeping rough.

This project is in its early days and is working with the limited evidence base that currently exists to identify pre-rough sleepers. However, triggers have been identified to raise concerns for people within the targeted client groups:

- leaving institutional care aged 16 plus
- new rough sleepers of 3 days or less
- people at assessed and imminent risk of rough sleeping
- individuals with no recourse to public funds
- mental health/substance misuse issues
- relationship and parental breakdown
- the end of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy

Clients will be assessed based on a range of risk and protective factors including:

- resilience
- motivation
- capacity
- mental health
- housing circumstances
- drug and alcohol, and
- social networks

Clients will be assessed within a maximum of 2 hours' (during normal office hours) notification and be signposted to appropriate services for accommodation and support.

### **Future intentions**

Rough sleeping numbers continue to be monitored. More information is known about entrenched rough sleepers. A specific action plan, as an appendix to the Strategy with a protocol and linked to a 'hard to house' panel is to be produced early in 2018. A separate action plan to deliver a suitable reconnection service and a CE-wide single service offer will be developed to assist rough sleepers. Those who are more entrenched may be assisted by the 'hard to house' panel which will explore solutions for those who have exhausted all housing options.

It will map further options available for people with complex needs and look at housing demand, identify gaps in provision and services, and develop a menu of options.

It is intended to develop further links with partners and local churches / Faith groups to provide an enhanced service to rough sleepers.

#### **3b) Development of options for entrenched rough sleepers assisted by the 'hard to house' panel**

As well as a co-ordinated pan-Cheshire approach via the Upstream Project, Cheshire East will continue to implement and support the SWEP, NSNO and the WHAM provision. Cheshire East is exploring opportunities for partnership working with voluntary groups to reduce rough sleeping in Macclesfield.

Cheshire East is currently monitoring the level of rough sleeping cases in the authority, through information from partners, and an estimate of rough sleeping on one night, or a physical count, will be undertaken each year.

#### **Action Plan 3.c: Improved intelligence about rough sleepers**

To remedy rough sleepers being counted twice by different services or organisation (double counting), the new Homelessness Strategy will look at improvements to the monitoring and recording of rough sleepers. This may include use of a multi-agency form to ensure that double counting is avoided.

Improved reporting options will be explored, apart from Streetlink, through things like wider links being established with street-based services, such as community and parking enforcement, and local businesses, which may come across people sleeping rough.

## **Strategic Priority 4: Ensure adequate support is in place to help maintain and sustain accommodation**

### **The issue**

Supported housing is housing for vulnerable people to maintain their dignity and be part of a community.

Schemes provide both housing and support to help vulnerable people live as independently as possible in their community and maintain their tenancies, so preventing homelessness and poverty. These schemes are designed for client groups such as people with mental health issues, learning or physical disabilities, substance misuse issues, victims of, or at risk of domestic violence, teenage parents, ex-offenders, or older people.

More than 700,000 people in the UK benefit from the support and supervision provided within the supported housing sector. The vast majority of provision is sheltered accommodation for older people.

In September 2016, the Government announced proposals for a new funding model for supported housing, which would operate from April 2019. Under the new model, core rent and service charges would be funded through Housing Benefit or Universal Credit up to the level of the applicable Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate. For costs above the LHA rate, the Government would devolve ring-fenced top-up funding for disbursement by local authorities.

Supported housing transforms lives and importantly makes a vital contribution to relieving pressure from our strained health and social services. More details are expected to be announced in the Supported Housing Green Paper later in 2017. However, it seems likely that under the new financial system Cheshire East will need to work within a specific budget. Work will be done with the administrators of the budget to ensure sustainability of services.

### **The Cheshire East position**

A new housing-related support contract began in Cheshire East in April 2017. It has split services into 3 areas: Cheshire East North, Central, and South, as shown in the tables below.

This will be linked into tenancy sustainment as a key part of homeless prevention.

#### **North**

<b>Bed spaces</b>	<b>Client group</b>
45	Non-statutory homeless, mixed gender, 16 or over, low-medium complexity.
49	Floating support (increased from 25). This was resettlement, but is now housing related.
10	Women only and to include single parents.

#### **Centre**

<b>Bed spaces</b>	<b>Client group</b>
20	Non-statutory homeless, generic, 16 or over, low – medium complexities.
8	Vulnerable women (including pregnant, or with dependent children)
37	Floating support

#### **South**

<b>Bed spaces</b>	<b>Client group</b>
62	77, including 5 bed spaces for statutory homeless
10	Vulnerable women (including pregnant, or with dependent children)
69	Floating support (up from 25)

#### **Single Point of Access**

Housing related support applications are received and processed by the Single Point of Access (SPA), which is contracted by and managed by the Housing Options Service. The SPA is a secure web-based application system. It is set up for referral agencies to make referrals for people with housing related support needs.

An analysis of 234 clients leaving services between September 2015 and April 2016 was carried out in December 2016 (8 months plus from leaving service) to help inform how successful services have been in helping clients to move on in a positive and sustainable way. Research was completed using SPA and Homechoice data to help inform whether clients had continued to live independently and manage their own tenancy, or if they had returned needing further support.

6% of referrals were made by Children and Families Services. Some ongoing work is needed with Children's Services regarding a joint working protocol for 16/17 year olds.

## Action Plan 2.d: Single Point of Access

One issue to be considered is how priority is awarded to care leavers / young people within a revised Cheshire East Allocations Policy. The Policy underpins the ability to move people who are in housing need to appropriate social housing. With approximately 6,500 registered for housing needs each year and only an average of 1,300 properties available annually it is vital the policy strikes the balance between supporting sustainable, settled neighbourhoods whilst giving priority to those people who are in urgent housing need.

The Policy is being reviewed to:

- ensure that the Policy is Homelessness Reduction Act compliant
- respond to customers' comments
- respond to Elected Members' comments
- tackle under-occupation to make best use of housing stock

An improved understanding and awareness of the SPA needs to be developed, as some providers are making referrals via the SPA for clients with welfare reform issues and rent arrears. This may lead to evictions from social housing. Increased awareness of the SPA amongst partners such as the Prison Service and Young Offender's Institutions is also required to ensure that clients are aware of where to go access services. A re - branding event will be held to promote and re-launch the SPA to partners and stakeholders.

## Action Plan 1.c: Homeless from the social rented sector

### Current activity

#### **Emergency AssistanCE scheme**

Emergency AssistanCE is a scheme introduced by Cheshire East following the changes to the Social Fund by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) from April 2013. Following the abolition of Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans, the Council has developed this policy to provide support for the most vulnerable households facing immediate short-term needs in an emergency, or as a consequence of a disaster, to prevent a serious risk to the health and safety of themselves or their family.

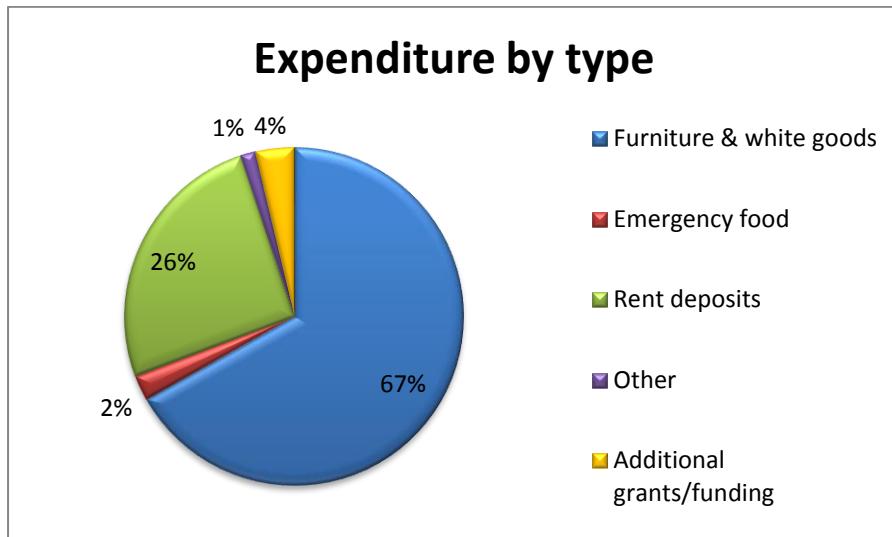
Any award is intended to:

- support vulnerable people facing immediate hardship, following a crisis or disaster
- prevent homelessness, in conjunction with support from the Housing Options Team
- keep families together and safeguard vulnerable people

The Emergency AssistanCE scheme is available to vulnerable people who are in receipt of state benefits. In exceptional circumstances awards may be allowed to those on a low wage.

The majority of funding has helped households to purchase essential items for the home such as fridges and washing machines, and furniture. The next largest funding allocation was for rent deposits.

The Emergency AssistanCE scheme is due to be reviewed in 2018 when funding options will be explored.



### **The Homeless Prevention Fund**

The Homeless Prevention Fund is used for anything that would stop someone from being homeless and this can be adapted to be a personalised approach for someone who is sleeping rough. Rough sleepers have a variety of needs to get them back into accommodation and for some financial support is needed to start a new tenancy or to clear off debts which make it difficult to be able to move into a property.

This scheme has limits, but the approach of the service attempts to be open minded and flexible so that applications can be received to cover individual and exceptional circumstances. The Fund is retained fully within the Housing Options Service, with a case for its retention based on the quality of the service and the value for money it provides, especially in 'spend to save' scenarios.

Financial assistance and advice is also available at the Credit Union and Citizens' Advice Bureau.

### **Website and information**

Cheshire East meets the standard for public websites. There is a good range of information which is easy to locate. The information is clear on the main areas required, with a good range of links. There is also a good range of telephone numbers for customers to contact for help. It also makes best use of the template available.

The website offers effective and relevant housing advice and information at the earliest possible stage which enables a customer to make choices about which option is best for them. It enables an exploration of possible tenure options and a tailoring to their individual circumstances, such as information about social rented housing from housing associations, or the private rented sector.

The website will be kept up to date with good quality information and useful links.

Information sharing and drop-in sessions, newsletters and increased understanding of roles and responsibilities of organisations and agencies will be developed.

Action Plan 4.d: Access to free information

**Future intentions**

The Housing Options Team during the recent DPR was assessed as being sympathetic to the customer's needs, and to have a clear methodical approach in one to one contact with clients. There are excellent levels of engagement with customers, with detailed clear advice given, with a particular focus on affordability and support to access the PRS. Clear and appropriate next steps are discussed with the customer.

However, information sharing has been identified as an issue. Third sector (voluntary sector, the economic sector consisting of non-governmental organisations and other non-profit organisations) services are used by Housing Options but information is sometimes erratic.

Action Plan 2.d: Single Point of Access

Under the forthcoming HRA there will be a significant number of new proposed opportunities for applicants to request a Section 202 review (concerning the decision about someone's eligibility for assistance or the offer of accommodation). More cases are likely to be reviewed due to the number of clients that this new duty will affect. There will also be increased legal costs.

Action Plan 4.f: Develop a better understanding of the housing options service through customer feedback

## **Delivering the Homelessness Strategy 2018 – 2021**

Strategic Priority	1. Enable more people to remain in their home and prevent homelessness	2. Help people who are homeless to secure appropriate affordable accommodation	3. Provide interventions to end rough sleeping	4. Ensure adequate support is in place to help people maintain and sustain accommodation
Aims	a) Successfully deliver change via the Homelessness Reduction Act b) Mitigate the impact of Welfare Reform c) Provide a range of advice and guidance for tenants and homeowners who are experiencing financial difficulties d) Evidence	a) Options for single homeless and complex needs b) Reduced homelessness of customers with mental health issues c) Better use of accommodation e) Housing pathways for all i) single ii) complex iii) mental health iv) large families f) Develop an	a) Increased interventions to prevent rough sleeping b) Development of options for entrenched rough sleepers assisted by the 'hard to house' panel c) Develop further links with partners and local churches / Faith groups to provide an enhanced service to rough	a) Joint work with Third Sector Community Initiatives b) Explore rural homelessness c) Promote the Housing Options Team d) Promotion of the SPA and housing related support d) Provide access to free information e) Develop the

	<p>early intervention in rent arrears and mortgage reposessions</p> <p>e) Reduce the 3 main causes of homelessness</p> <p>f) Provide support for employment training and education</p>	<p>enhanced private rented sector</p> <p>g) Reduce use of B and B</p> <p>h) See less large families homeless</p>	<p>sleepers.</p> <p>d) Increased knowledge about rough sleepers</p>	<p>Steering Group and Strategic Partnerships</p> <p>f) Develop a better understanding of the service through customer feedback</p>
<b>Key targets for 2018</b>	HRA embedded into services / No one homeless as the result of welfare reform	Reduced homelessness from hospital / Reduced B and B use	<p>0 rough sleepers</p> <p>Homelessness prevented for 60% of all homelessness applications</p>	Promotion of the Housing Options Team / Dissemination of advice and information in appropriate formats
<b>Key actions for 2018</b>	Reduce rent arrears homeless cases	Promotion of the SPA	<p>Expand use of SWEP accommodation during winter months to all year round provision</p>	Achieve the Gold Standard

### A strategic approach

Improved partnership working will help to deliver identified outcomes for service users. With limited resources and reductions in funding, innovation and good practice will deliver improvements and savings. It is essential to avoid duplication of work and of services within, and between, services.

Cheshire East has already adopted a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has buy in across all *Cheshire East* services (this is Local Challenge 1 in the Gold Standard). However, strategically important external partners may be unable, through pressures on their service, to meet demand. In this case funding arrangements may be reviewed, or the partners may be supported in exploring funding streams or shared services with other partner organisations. Budget holders and decision makers would be made aware of a lack of capacity in strategically relevant services.

Action Plan 4.e: Review the role of partners in delivering the strategic priorities
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### Monitoring

The Strategy will be monitored in partnership, with accountability for delivery resting with identified leads to support performance management of the Strategy. The Homelessness Strategy Steering Group will monitor the overall action plan, and monitoring plans for each strategic priority, and be responsible for driving forward the delivery of the action plan. It is intended that the Steering Group will be a strong and effective partnership. Membership will be reviewed to ensure that it is as inclusive as necessary, with a wider role for voluntary, third sector, and Faith groups.

Task and Finish groups will support the work of the Steering Group, focusing on specific projects and will report back to the Steering Group on progress and on any areas of concern.

## Action Plan 4.d: Access to free information

### Risk Assessment

#### *Access to resources*

The aims of this Homelessness Strategy will be addressed using existing budgets and staff resources. Government has stated that local authorities will have made available various funding sources. For example, almost £3 million is to be allocated to local authorities to support the costs of implementing welfare reform changes in 2017/18. Job Centre Plus's 'Flexible Support Fund' (FSF) will be available to local partnerships to address barriers to work. The 'flexible homelessness support grant', a new grant for council homelessness services gives freedom to support the full range of homelessness services as part of £550 million of Government funding up to 2020 to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping. Funding will also be made available to local authorities to help with the added work involved in delivering the HRA. These funding streams are or will be available to CE Housing Options and it will be important that Cheshire East support the Housing Service to retain those budgets in order to help deliver the Homelessness Strategy and contribute to homelessness prevention.

Additional one-off funding payments for homelessness services may be allocated by Government and Cheshire East will ensure bids are submitted for any relevant funding, and actively seek out sources of investment funding for Cheshire East, especially ensuring Value for Money.

#### *Housing Options*

The new requirements for service delivery imposed by the HRA will place significant pressures on staffing and resources. It is imperative that the Housing Service adequately prepares itself and its partners in advance of the legislation becoming working practice. The Housing Service will also need to reflect upon the impact of the HRA within a reasonable time frame after the legislation is launched, in order to assess whether the resources are in the right place and proportionate to the demand.

#### *Welfare Reform*

The Welfare Reform and Work Act takes forward Government commitments to achieving full employment and a target of three million apprenticeships in England. The Act also addresses the effect of certain support for troubled families and provision for social mobility, the benefit cap, social security and tax credits, loans for mortgage interest, and social housing rents. Cheshire East will continue to work with partners in addressing the challenges raised by continuing welfare reform.

#### *Lack of affordable housing*

Cheshire East and its partners have been successful in attracting funding to the area, with most recently £10million received to fund the delivery of 334 affordable homes. More affordable homes are needed. However there has been a period of rapid change, with tighter budgets, development viability issues for developers, and changes in Government policy. They have all contributed to a climate of heightened risk and uncertainty. Cheshire East will regularly review the approaches being used to increase affordable housing provision, being creative and flexible. This will produce 355 affordable housing units per year, with 30% of all planning policy as affordable housing.

#### *Changes to social housing*

The economic climate has fallen significantly as a key risk but it has been replaced by the EU Referendum/Brexit. The uncertainties in the housing market have increased concern. Access to finance has become easier for Registered Providers (RPs). Welfare reform remains a major concern for social housing providers, with the Government demand to reduce the rent they charge by 1% per year for 4 years identified as a problem.

Government policy and Regulation are seen by RPs as a continuing risk. Cheshire East will explore opportunities available to work with our RP partners and find new and imaginative ways to inform and influence successful outcomes. This will include continued provision of good quality affordable homes and support for those households in need.

This Homelessness Strategy has tried to limit the impact of these changes through the 4 Strategic Priorities.

## **The Delivery Plans**

Cheshire East knows our priority areas to focus on and the Council has identified the major gaps that need to be addressed. Cheshire East knows that it is essential that it works in partnership to achieve the shared vision of preventing homelessness, and have produced an action plan with tasks clustered under the 4 key priorities.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Glossary**

**Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA)** The Homelessness Reduction Act makes changes to legislation contained in Part 7 of the Housing Act of 1996. The HRA places a duty on Cheshire East to intervene earlier to prevent homelessness, and to take reasonable steps to help homeless people to find accommodation. It also requires Cheshire East to expand the category of people who we have to help to find accommodation.

**Gold Standard** The DCLG has established the National Practitioner Support Service (NPSS) with the priority of developing the Gold Standard to assist local authorities to deliver the best possible homeless and prevention service. The ultimate aim is to ensure that services offered by Housing Options Teams are robust, fit for purpose, and respond effectively to residents with a housing need. Cheshire East has made the pledge to strive for continuous improvement through the Gold Standard.

This involves a structured process of self assessment, benchmarking and peer review. The challenge follows a 10-step continuous improvement approach designed to help local authorities deliver more efficient and cost effective homelessness prevention services. 10 challenges are answered in three stages: Bronze, Silver and Gold. We have already achieved the 'Bronze' award, and intend throughout 2017 to achieve the 'Silver' award, finally achieving the 'Gold' Standard.

**Black and Minority Ethnic (BME)** Black Minority Ethnic, term used to describe minority groups recognised as falling under the Race Relations Act 1976.

**Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)** Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) is an extra amount of money that the Council can give someone already receiving some Housing Benefit to help them pay their rent (it cannot be awarded to help pay for non-rent charges like water rates and service charges). It is not a benefit, and there is no automatic right to it. It is awarded at the discretion of Cheshire East. There is no fixed amount and the amount to be paid is assessed.

**Emergency AssistanCE** This policy has been created to provide support for the most vulnerable households facing immediate short-term needs in an emergency, or as a consequence of a disaster, or to prevent a serious risk to the health and safety of themselves or their family.

**Local Housing Allowance (LHA)** The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) arrangements are a way of working out Housing Benefit (HB) for people who rent from a private landlord. Local authorities use LHA rates based on the size of household and the area in which a person lives to work out the amount of rent which can be met with HB. HB paid under the LHA arrangements is normally paid to the tenant, who will then pay the landlord.

**Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)** The Government department that sets policy on supporting local government: communities and neighbourhoods, regeneration, housing, planning, building and the environment, and fire.

**Single Point of Access (SPA)** Housing related support applications are received and processed by the Single Point of Access (SPA), which is contracted by and managed by the Housing Options Service. The SPA is a secure web-based application system. It is set up for referral agencies to make referrals for people with housing related support needs

**Homechoice** Cheshire East does not have any council housing of its own and does not operate its own council housing waiting list. However, it is partnered with Guinness, Plus Dane and Cheshire Peaks and Plains Housing Trusts, who advertise affordable, rented properties (referred to as 'social housing') via a website called Cheshire Homechoice. Housing applications can be made through the Homechoice website.

**Streetlink** StreetLink is a website that enables the public to alert local authorities in England and Wales about people sleeping rough in their area. This service offers the public a means to act when they see someone sleeping rough, and is the first step someone can take to ensure rough sleepers are connected to the local services and support available to them. The service is funded by Government as part of its commitment to end rough sleeping.

**Rough sleepers / street homeless** Households who find themselves with no support networks such as friends or family who are able to offer short term accommodation will likely end up street homeless (rough sleeping). Anyone who is sleeping rough or street homeless is the most visible sign of homelessness.

**No Second Night Out (NSNO)** NSNO helps to identify where rough sleepers are coming from and improve prevention and recovery services so that they don't have to sleep rough.

**Registered Provider (RP)** A registered provider is defined as providing social housing. Social housing includes low cost rental (such as affordable rent properties) and low cost home ownership. Registered providers include local authority landlords and private registered providers (such as not-for-profit housing associations and for-profit organizations).

**Universal Credit** A monthly payment for people who are on low income or who are unemployed. It is being rolled out in stages across the UK and is replacing other benefits. How much is paid depends on the customer's circumstances, including their income and how many children they have.

## Appendix 2

### Statutory Duties under Homelessness legislation

What Cheshire East must do (its duties) for people at risk of homelessness or homeless are mostly to be found in:

Housing Act 1996, including:

Section 179: Duty to provide advisory services

Section 184: Duty to make enquiries in respect of eligibility and duties owed

Section 188: Interim duty to accommodate in cases of apparent priority need

Section 192: Duties to people found not to be in priority need and not homeless intentionally.

Section 193: Duties to people found to be in priority need and not homeless intentionally.

Section 195: Duties to those threatened with homelessness

The 2002 Homelessness Act introduced a requirement on Local Authorities to take a strategic approach to dealing with homelessness. This is done by:

Carrying out a review of homelessness in their area, and then

Based on the findings of the review, developing and publishing a strategy to tackle and prevent homelessness

The Homelessness Reduction Act of 2018 now includes

An amendment to S175 of the Housing Act 1996, which the definition of prevention duty and threatened with homelessness now say:

that a person threatened with homelessness within 56 days or if a valid Section 21 notice (orders for possession at the end of an AST) has been given (175(5))

S189A: Cheshire East must carry out an assessment in all cases where an eligible applicant is homeless, or threatened with homelessness. This is regardless of whether the applicant is in priority need or possibly intentionally homeless.

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## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

Equality impact assessment is a requirement for all strategies, plans, functions, policies, procedures and services under the Equalities Act 2010. We are also required to publish assessments so that we can demonstrate how we have considered the impact of proposals.

### Section 1: Description

Department	Housing Strategy and Development		Lead officer responsible for assessment	Homechoice and Homelessness Manager		
Service	Place		Other members of team undertaking assessment	Housing Policy Officer Citizens' Advice Bureau colleague		
Date	15 <sup>th</sup> February 2018		Version 1			
Type of document (mark as appropriate)	Strategy	Plan	Function	Policy	Procedure	Service
Is this a new/existing/revision of an existing document (mark as appropriate)	New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Existing		Revision	
Title and subject of the impact assessment (include a brief description of the aims, outcomes , operational issues as appropriate and how it fits in with the wider aims of the organisation)	Homelessness Strategy 2018-2021 Homelessness Strategy, to tackle and prevent homelessness in collaboration with partners and customers. To identify housing needs and put in place initiatives to address these needs. The Strategy links in to other corporate strategies, including Housing Strategy and Vulnerable and Older Person's Strategy, and contributes to the delivery of the Council's priorities to the residents of the Borough.					
Please attach a copy of the strategy/plan/function/policy/procedure/service	 Homelessness Strategy FV.pdf					
Who are the main stakeholders? (eg general public, employees, Councillors, partners, specific audiences)	General public, service-users, partner agencies, internal colleagues, and Elected Members.					

**EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM**

**Section 2: Initial screening**

<b>Who is affected? (This may or may not include the stakeholders listed above)</b>	The policy will impact on all residents of the Borough and people referred from outside the Borough and will form a basis for the working relationships and practices with both internal colleagues and external agencies.
<b>Who is intended to benefit and how?</b>	Resources targeted at the right time and place will enable vulnerable people facing homelessness to receive appropriate advice and guidance to enable an improvement in their housing situation. External agencies and internal colleagues will benefit from improved working relationships and pathways.
<b>Could there be a different impact or outcome for some groups?</b>	None identified.
<b>Does it include making decisions based on individual characteristics, needs or circumstances?</b>	The Strategy allows for flexibility and thinking outside the box by providing pathways suited to individual characteristics.
<b>Are relations between different groups or communities likely to be affected? (eg will it favour one particular group or deny opportunities for others?)</b>	No, as the Strategy will ensure equality in service provision for all Cheshire East residents and people from outside the area who access our services.
<b>Is there any specific targeted action to promote equality? Is there a history of unequal outcomes (do you have enough evidence to prove otherwise)?</b>	Not at the moment but this can be monitored by the Homelessness Strategy Steering Group who meets about 4 times a year.

**Is there an actual or potential negative impact on these specific characteristics? (Please tick)**

Age	Y	N √	Marriage & civil partnership	Y	N √	Religion & belief	Y	N √	Carers	Y	N √
Disability	Y	N √	Pregnancy & maternity	Y	N √	Sex	Y	N √	Socio-economic status	Y	N √
Gender reassignment	Y	N √	Race	Y	N √	Sexual orientation	Y	N √			

**EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM**

<b>What evidence do you have to support your findings? (quantitative and qualitative) Please provide additional information that you wish to include as appendices to this document, i.e., graphs, tables, charts</b>		<b>Consultation/involvement carried out</b>	
		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Age</b>	There will be negative and positive impacts dependent on age , as seen in Homechoice data, P1E homelessness data, prevention and relief statistics, and information from partners and stakeholders	✓	
<b>Disability</b>	Work is being done to identify adapted properties, such as around adapted properties, and to Improve knowledge of adapted Registered Provider properties and record where they are located to make better use of resources and Homelessness Services are Disability Discrimination Act compliant	✓	
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	We expect partner providers at all times to carry out a risk assessment of the existing clients and the service to ensure the individual presenting is safeguarded.	✓	
<b>Marriage &amp; civil partnership</b>	No specific impact.	✓	
<b>Pregnancy &amp; maternity</b>	Positive impact as evidenced as priority under homelessness legislation. We will ensure adequate support is in place to help maintain and sustain accommodation, and support where required for pregnant women.	✓	
<b>Race</b>	No specific impact.	✓	
<b>Religion &amp; belief</b>	No specific impact.	✓	
<b>Sex</b>	No specific impact.	✓	
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	No specific impact.	✓	
<b>Carers</b>	No specific impact	✓	
<b>Socio-economic status</b>	No specific impact. However, affordability is taken into account when looking at the suitability of accommodation.	✓	



EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

Proceed to full impact assessment? (Please tick)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No ✓	Date 15 <sup>th</sup> February 2018
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If yes, please proceed to Section 3. If no, please publish the initial screening as part of the suite of documents relating to this issue

## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

### Section 3: Identifying impacts and evidence

This section identifies if there are impacts on equality, diversity and cohesion, what evidence there is to support the conclusion and what further action is needed

Protected characteristics	Is the policy (function etc....) likely to have an adverse impact on any of the groups?  Please include evidence (qualitative & quantitative) and consultations	Are there any positive impacts of the policy (function etc....) on any of the groups?  Please include evidence (qualitative & quantitative) and consultations	Please rate the impact taking into account any measures already in place to reduce the impacts identified  <b>High:</b> Significant potential impact; history of complaints; no mitigating measures in place; need for consultation <b>Medium:</b> Some potential impact; some mitigating measures in place, lack of evidence to show effectiveness of measures <b>Low:</b> Little/no identified impacts; heavily legislation-led; limited public facing aspect	Further action (only an outline needs to be included here. A full action plan can be included at Section 4)
Age				
Disability				
Gender reassignment				
Marriage & civil partnership				

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

Pregnancy and maternity				
Race				
Religion & belief				
Sex				
Sexual orientation				
Carers				
Socio-economics				
<b>Is this project due to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors? If yes, please indicate how you have ensured that the partner organisation complies with equality legislation (e.g. tendering, awards process, contract, monitoring and performance measures)</b>				

## Section 4: Review and conclusion

**Summary: provide a brief overview including impact, changes, improvement, any gaps in evidence and additional data that is needed**

The Strategy promotes a positive impact and addresses both the causes and consequences of homelessness. This will raise quality of life, respecting individual characteristics.

Specific actions to be taken to reduce, justify or remove any adverse impacts	How will this be monitored?	Officer responsible	Target date
Identification of adapted properties	Homelessness Strategy Steering Group	Homechoice and Homelessness Manager	March 2019
<b>Please provide details and link to full action plan for actions</b>	Actions in the Vulnerable and Older Person's Strategy are to address physical and sensory disabilities.		
<b>When will this assessment be reviewed?</b>	March 2019		
<b>Are there any additional assessments that need to be undertaken in relation to this assessment?</b>	No		
<b>Lead officer signoff</b>	Lynn Glendenning, Homechoice and Homelessness Manager	<b>Date 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2018</b>	
<b>Head of service signoff</b>	Karen Carsberg, Strategic Housing Manager	<b>Date 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2018</b>	



## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

**Cheshire East  
Council**

**Please publish this completed EIA form on your website**



## Cabinet Report

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**Date of Meeting:** 10 April 2018

**Report Title:** Accommodation with Care: Care Fees Review

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Janet Clowes, Adult Social Care and Integration

**Senior Officer:** Mark Palethorpe, Acting Executive Director of People

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### 1. Report Summary

- 1.1. The Care Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to “promote the efficient and effective operation of a market in services for meeting care and support needs.” In delivering this obligation, councils must ensure the sustainability of the market and that there are sufficient high quality services available to meet the care and support needs of adults in the area.
- 1.2. The Council spends approximately £49 million on Accommodation with Care (residential and nursing care) services. Care fees were last reviewed in 2015/16 when they were uplifted to the current levels.
- 1.3. In November 2017, the Council commissioned an independent review of care fees for Accommodation with Care (residential care) sectors. The review was undertaken by independent care consultancy C.Co which is a subsidiary of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy.
- 1.4. At its meeting of 5th December 2017 Cabinet approved the commissioning of Accommodation with Care services in collaboration with East and South Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Groups supported by a review of Care Fees for the sector.
- 1.5. The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of the findings of the review for Accommodation with Care. The report will present an outline of the review undertaken by C.Co, their findings and the impact of those findings both in terms of financial considerations for the Council and on the sustainability of the market.

## 2. Recommendation/s

That Cabinet:

- 2.1. Note the findings of the Care Fee Review for Accommodation with Care.
- 2.2. Endorse a 6% increased contract rate for Accommodation with Care at an estimated increased gross cost of £1.5m per annum. It is intended that the proposed fee increase would be met from the Improved Better Care Fund for 2018/19 and 2019/20.
- 2.3. Approve the approach to fund the forecast financial implications on the Adult Services Commissioning Budget through the allocation of Adult Social Care Support Grant (held within the Transforming Services Earmarked Reserve) in 2018/19 and from the Improved Better Care Fund in 2018/19 and 2019/20.
- 2.4. Note that the financial implications of this report present a risk to the current estimates for the 2020/21 Budget, as contained within Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018/19 to 2020/21.

## 3. Reasons for Recommendation/s

- 3.1. It is recommended that the Accommodation with Care fees are uplifted by a **maximum of 6% from the current contract rates at an estimated cost of £1.5m per annum**. The following table illustrates the impact for each placement/ bed type. It should be noted that these rates do not include the Funded Nursing Care element paid to the homes by the Clinical Commissioning Groups. This rate is £155 per week in addition to the below.

Table 2 – Current and proposed contract rates for Accommodation with Care

Care Type	Current rate (per week)	Uplift by 6% (rate per week proposed)
Nursing Dementia	£489.86	£519.25
Nursing Standard	£474.53	£503.00
Residential Dementia	£515.34	£546.26
Residential Standard	£435.68	£461.82

- 3.2. The recommendation to uplift the fees by 6% aligns to the above if the fees had been uplifted for 2016/2017 and 17/18. It is proposed that the fee increase is applied to all current placements that are below the new proposed rates for Accommodation with Care and future placements.

- 3.3 As part of the recommissioning options and development of the new terms and conditions for the Accommodation with Care options are being explored in relation to a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) within the E-Brokerage system. The Dynamic Purchasing System acts as an electronic framework that providers are able to join at any time subject to meeting minimum requirements. It is envisaged that the new rates above will be published as a guide within this system and Accommodation with Care providers will be invited to submit bids for placements that include their costs. This will allow for increased transparency and accountability, support market competition and sustainability as well as increased choice and control for service users. Within this, an option currently being explored is whether service users can be asked to provide a “top up” payment if they chose a care home which exceeds the lowest bid.
- 3.4 Officers have considered in full the information contained within the report presented by C.Co and described under Section 5 of this report. It is clear that there is a need to increase the level of fees for Accommodation with Care services for the reasons outlined below.
  - 3.4.1 Accommodation with Care providers report that current fee levels are not sustainable and a number of existing providers have indicated concerns in relation to financial viability and sustainability to meet on-going costs of service delivery.
  - 3.4.2 Insufficient fee levels can have an impact on the quality of care provided to residents and can lead to poor CQC ratings. This has implications for the authority in terms of costs associated with intensive contract management support, the need to deploy in-house staff, commissioning of emergency care often at higher rates as well as an increase in safeguarding risks and referrals.
- 3.5 In establishing recommended fee uplift for Accommodation with Care that is both affordable for the Council while providing a greater degree of financial viability for providers and therefore greater market stability, the following has been taken into account.
  - 3.5.1 The benchmarking exercise undertaken by C.co indicates that current contract fee levels paid by the Council are lower than the average paid by comparator statistical neighbours and neighbouring authorities.
  - 3.5.2 The actual cost of fees paid by the council for more recent placements in care home settings is on average higher than the current contract rate levels offered by the council. Over 50% of care providers do not currently accept the Council's contract rates and some providers are already paid

more than the proposed new rates. The fee increase would not affect rates for providers who are currently paid more than the proposed new rates.

- 3.5.3 A significant number of Accommodation with Care providers have approached the council requesting annual uplifts for both 2016/17 and 2017/18. The uplift requests have ranged from over 2% up to 7% for each financial period to be applied year on year.
- 3.5.4 Feedback in the cost of care fee review for Accommodation with Care indicates an average annual 5.51% uplift requested by the providers who did engage with the process. (16 responses were received in relation to this question and responses ranged from 3% to 10% for annual uplifts as part of contract terms).
- 3.5.5 The number of council placements within the Accommodation with Care settings across the borough is not high at only 33% of the total number of beds. This means that many providers are not reliant on the local authority as an income source due to a high number of self funders across the local population. Notably self funder placements that have been arranged by the individual/family are usually at a much higher cost to that of a council placement.
- 3.5.6 Providers with low or no self funders have raised significant concerns in relation to their financial viability and sustainability if current contract rates remain in place.
- 3.5.7 The level of funding necessary to implement the proposed fee uplift is available to reinvest in Accommodation with Care services via the Improved Better Care Fund.
- 3.5.8 The current contract terms include a clause to uplift fees in line with inflation on an annual basis (to be considered at the council's discretion annually). The proposal to increase the standard contract rate fees by 6% is in accordance with this clause and allows for a consistent approach.
- 3.5.9 Accommodation with Care fees were reviewed in 2015 and uplifted in April 2016 with no further uplift since. One option, in recognition of the continued increased costs associated with staffing (including the national minimum wage, pension costs and apprenticeship levy) alongside the core business infrastructure and building costs, is to include an option within the contract of an annual uplift in line with inflation (at the discretion of the council). This will be considered as part of the recommissioning process for the new contract terms and conditions.

## 4 Other Options Considered

- 4.1 An alternative option would be to maintain current fee levels. However this carries a risk in terms of provider financial viability and quality of care as outlined in the report.
- 4.2 The impacts and financial cost of implementing the report findings from the local cost of care exercise have been considered. This would result in an additional cost to the authority of £18 million per annum. Officers have concluded that this option is not affordable for the local authority and that the services can be commissioned more effectively to provide better value for money.

## 5 Background

### 5.1 Local context

- 5.1.1 There are 96 Care Quality Commission registered care homes within Cheshire East Council. The Council has pre-placement agreements in place with 95 of these care homes, 49 of these homes are registered to provide residential care and 47 are registered to provide nursing care. Of the 31 July 2017 Cheshire East Council had placements in 88 of these care homes. The accommodation with care market in Cheshire East is composed of a good mix of small and medium sized providers (SMEs) as well as a number of large, national organisations.
- 5.1.2 Currently Accommodation with Care providers are signed up to standard terms and conditions called a 'Pre Placement Agreement' and receive individual placement agreements for each resident placed by Cheshire East Council.
- 5.1.3 The current contractual arrangement has been in place since 2013 and is a joint contract with Cheshire East Council and Eastern and South Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Groups. There is one standard service specification covering all types of regulated activities undertaken within care homes and care homes with nursing.
- 5.1.4 The Council's current approach to commissioning Accommodation with Care is very traditional. Cheshire East Council currently offer four levels of care and support within a care home setting: residential, residential dementia, nursing and nursing dementia. The recommissioning will explore the use of accommodation with care providers delivering a range of short term as well as long term care provision such as discharge to assess, step up, step down beds and rehabilitation services.

## 5.2 Methodology

5.2.1 C.Co was commissioned to undertake an independent analysis which adopted a collaborative approach with providers and a consistent approach across all provision. Specifically, the brief was to:

- Establish a means to arrive at an understanding of the local cost of care;
  - Undertake cost modelling that is locally informed, based on the actual costs incurred;
  - Lead a collaborative approach that engages providers in the design and data collection;
  - Ensure a consistent approach across all services;
  - Support providers in undertaking the exercise;
  - Ensure the approach supports the Council on its journey towards open book accounting;
  - Undertake benchmarking analysis with comparator authorities and North West councils;
  - Develop, for consideration by the Council, appropriate local cost of care that will support internal decision making and modelling of future care fees.
- 5.2.2 The main focus of the review was to produce a local cost of care which reflects the actual costs of delivering care within Cheshire East from a provider perspective. As such engagement with providers was essential to arrive at this figure. The input of operational teams and service users was not sought at the review stage although there will be additional engagement with social workers, operational teams, service users and carers on the proposed fee increase as part of the ongoing communication and engagement activity on the commissioning process.
- 5.2.3 The approach taken by C.Co was to give providers the opportunity to be involved in all aspects of the project including the design of a questionnaire through a number of co-design sessions which would then be sent to all providers for completion and returned to C.Co for analysis. A total of 9 providers attended a co-design session on 15<sup>th</sup> November at Macclesfield Town Hall. Two previous planned sessions were cancelled due to limited bookings and providers who had booked attended the session on 15<sup>th</sup>.
- 5.2.4 All care home providers were given the opportunity to engage in the exercise and a variety of methods were used to encourage engagement and boost response rates including briefings, reminder emails, telephone calls from C.co and Council and letters distributed to care homes by Quality Assurance Officers as part of their regular visits to care homes. These attempts helped to improve engagement but, unfortunately response rates

remained below anticipated levels, particularly from those care homes who have a low proportion of self funders.

- 5.2.5 The questionnaire was sent to providers on 13th December 2017 with an initial return date of 26th January 2018. A six week period was given for responses due to the intervening Christmas period. During this period two reminder emails were sent and providers were contacted by telephone to remind them to complete and return the questionnaire. At the request of providers the return date was extended for a further week.
- 5.2.6 The methodology for Accommodation with Care services was supported by property assessments to assess the quality of property. Some providers participated in the property assessments but did not return the questionnaire, some questionnaires were incorrectly completed and others did not give a full breakdown of percentage of type of care provided and/or the hourly rate as indicated in the table below.

Table 3 – Response rate to Care fee review

Questionnaires issued	88
Property surveys conducted	31
Property survey with no questionnaire return	14
Questionnaire returns	27
Void (empty or incorrect format)	3
Returns including breakdown of the %type care provided	12
Returns including hourly rate % breakdown for type of care	5

- 5.2.7 The types of care provided by respondents to the questionnaire are:

Table 4 – Types of care provided by respondents

Type of Care	Number of respondents who deliver this type of care
Residential	21
Residential nursing	18
Residential EMI	9
Nursing EMI	4
Palliative	0

- 5.2.8 C.co report that only those providers who have council commissioned clients engaged in the exercise. Where Accommodation with Care providers are not reliant on the council the engagement was limited.

- 5.2.9 For all services the response rate to the questionnaire was low despite numerous attempts to engage providers in the exercise and C.co advise that

it cannot be concluded that responses are reflective of the entire provider market in Cheshire East.

5.2.10 Only 5 care home providers responded with a breakdown of the care provided across the five categories in the table above. This allows for limited analysis across categories, although no analysis is available on the Palliative category as the data received was insufficient to draw robust conclusions.

### 5.3 Benchmarking

- 5.3.1 In addition to the methodologies set out above, C.Co undertook a benchmarking exercise with comparator and neighbouring authorities to provide further context and understanding of the cost of care.
- 5.3.2 C.Co benchmarked costs for residential and nursing care with CIPFA statistical neighbours.
- 5.3.3 Cheshire East is currently in the lower range of costs for both residential and nursing care when compared to our statistical neighbours.

## **Implications of the Recommendations**

### **6.1 Legal Implications**

- 6.1.1 The Care Act places a duty on local authorities to facilitate and shape the whole publically-funded and self-funded care and support market. The legislation also requires authorities to provide choice that delivers outcomes and improves wellbeing. Relevant features of the Act include obligations on Councils to:
  - Promote the efficient and effective operation of a market in services for meeting care and support needs;
  - Ensure sustainability of the market;
  - Ensure that sufficient services are available for meeting the care and support of adults in its area.
  - When commissioning services councils must assure themselves and have evidence that the contract terms, conditions and fee levels for care and support services are appropriate to provide the delivery of the agreed care packages with agreed quality of care.
  - Understand the business environment of providers offering services in their area and seek to work with providers facing challenges and understand their risks.”
  - Not undertake any actions which may threaten the sustainability of the market as a whole, for example, by setting fees below an amount which is not sustainable for the provider in the long term

- 6.1.2 The Care Act places an expectation on the Council that the fees for all types of care should take account of both the actual cost of good quality care and the need to ensure a diverse provider market. It is clear that fees need to be set at such a level to allow providers to recover reasonable costs and remain competitive.
- 6.1.3 The sustainability duty created by the Care Act sits alongside other statutory duties and is summarised as follows: -
- a) Local Authorities are under a general duty to implement preventative services that reduce the need in adults for care and support and the need for support to carers (Section 2 Care Act 2014). Whilst there is no statutory duty within the Care Act, supporting people to live as independently as possible for as long as possible is a guiding principle of the Care Act (paragraph 1.19, Revised Statutory Guidance).
  - b) Statutory guidance accompanying the Care Act 2014 is clear that the way services are commissioned has a direct impact upon 'shaping the market' (Paragraph 4.4) and requires that Local Authorities must 'consider how to ensure that there is still a reasonable choice for people who need care and support' (Paragraph 4.39) and to ensure that their fee levels do not compromise the service providers' ability to employ people on at least minimum wage with sufficient training (Paragraph 4.31).
  - c) Section 9 of the Care Act places a duty on the Council to assess adults triggered by the appearance of need. It then places a duty to meet the needs of adults meeting the eligibility criteria (Sections 18-20). Detailed Assessment regulations, statutory regulations and case law underpin this duty.
- 6.1.4 In summary therefore, the legal implications of these proposals are likely to contribute to the sustainability of the care market locally. However, the sustainability of the market is not the only duty arising and does not take precedence over other statutory duties. Recent case law confirms this (Care England (R, on the application of) v Essex County Council [2017]).
- 6.1.5 The Council's Public Sector Equality Duty extends beyond service users to residents of Cheshire East, some of whom pay for their own care and who may be impacted by the Council's decision to increase its fees and the level of that increase. Consultation should include all groups potentially effected by the review.
- 6.1.6 It is proposed that the Council will provide Accommodation with care services in conjunction with Eastern and South Cheshire CCGs, that the Council leads on the commission but the CCGs remain in control of their own budgets and call off their own provision. If a closer collaboration (whereby the Council controls the collective budget and commissions services on behalf of the CCGs) then a more formal partnership arrangement would need to be entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to set out the obligations of the parties in relation to the provision of services and confirm the funding contributions and the responsibilities of each party in delivery of such a service. Appropriate

authority to enter into such a partnership would need to be sought in accordance with the Council's Finance Procedure Rules.

- 6.1.7 The aggregate value of the accommodation with care provision is such that a fully OJEU complaint procurement exercise is being carried out. It is proposed that the Council set up a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS). This is an open arrangement which allows providers to join at any stage (or at pre-determined points) of the lifetime of the Contract. The Council can then compete each package of care across the providers on the DPS and select the winning bidder using pre determined criteria (including an element of service user choice).

## **6.2 Finance Implications**

- 6.2.1 The Council spends c.£100m on commissioning services from a range of Adult Social Care providers to provide the best outcomes from adults who need support. This report relates to the commissioning of Accommodation with Care services which includes payments to providers for long term Residential and Nursing Care. The approximate annual spend on commissioning the Accommodation with Care elements of care is £49m, and the proposal is to uplift these costs by £1.5m (full year effect)
- 6.2.2 Based on the modelling assumptions, the recommendation to uplift fees by 6% as part of the recommissioning process is estimated to cost £0.75m in 2018/19 due to a part year impact as the uplift will be effective from 1<sup>st</sup> Oct 18. The full year effect of the uplift will be £1.5m from 2019/20 onwards.
- 6.2.3 Expenditure on Accommodation with Care services is contained within the Adult Social Care – Commissioning budget, but the cost of these increases will be funded from a matched allocation of the Adult Social Care Support Grant (held within the Transforming Services Earmarked Reserve) and the Improved Better Care Fund (IBCF). The IBCF conditions include ensuring that the local social care provider market is supported, and the increase in fees is intended to stabilise the market.
- 6.2.4 There is a separate report that relates to commissioning of Care at Home services which include payments to Domiciliary Agencies, both directly from the Council and via Direct Payment clients. The approximate annual spend on commissioning the Care at Homes elements of care is £18.3m, and the proposal is to uplift these costs by £3.52m (full year effect).
- 6.2.5 The total proposed increase from these two reports is therefore £5.02m full year effect. All increases will be implemented from the 1st October 2018 meaning the total increase in expenditure would be an additional £2.51m in 2018/19 and a further £2.51m in 2019/20.

6.2.6. The net impact of the uplift in fees, on the MTFS, will be nil in 2018/19 & 2019/20 as the costs will be funded from existing balances (either earmarked or IBCF). However the increase in care fees across the sector does present a financial risk to the Council's MTFS. In 2020/21 balances from earmarked reserves or IBCF are not expected to be available and the potential gap in the MTFS would therefore increase by up to £5.02m, compared to the current estimates.

Table 6 – Financial modelling for proposed uplift in fees at 6%

	<b>Proposed new rate</b>	<b>Estimated additional cost per annum</b>
Nursing Dementia	£519.25	£251k
Nursing Standard	£503.00	£362k
Residential Dementia	£546.26	£392k
Residential Standard	£461.82	£462k
Total additional cost		£1,467k

6.2.7 The increase in care fees across the sector does pose a financial risk to the council's overall budget position. Risk mitigation steps include:

- Implementation of the Dynamic Purchasing System. This will allow for increased transparency and accountability, support market competition and sustainability as well as increased choice and control for service users. Within this, an option currently being explored is whether service users can be asked to provide a “top up” payment if they chose a care home which exceeds the lowest bid.
- Improved commissioning and contract arrangements with the Care at Home market to offer increased stability and sustainability. This will provide residents with greater choice and control to remain living as independently as possible within their own home and communities, whilst also ensuring that the market has the required capacity to meet the care demand. This should impact on the number of admissions into Accommodation with Care settings, aligning with the Better Care Fund and Improved Better care Fund national metrics.
- Development of the Homefirst model in partnership with CCG's to ensure that patients are returning home from hospital settings and bed based provision with effective support and reablement. This model is currently being developed as a means of enabling people to be as independent as possible as a result of an expectation that patients are discharged to the place they call home as soon as possible. This should

impact on the number of long term residential and nursing admissions, alongside the level of care required within the home in the longer term.

- Service model requirements that ensure the market supports an outcome focused and enablement approach to care delivery that promotes independence and wellbeing (this is being adopted within the service specification requirements as part of the current recommissioning activities).
- Review of the councils Older people's housing strategy taking into account extra care and other housing options that will support people to remain living for longer independently within their own communities.
- Commissioning of the 'Early Help' framework which aims to co-ordinate support for non personal care within community settings. It is anticipated that this will release capacity within the Care at Home market and lead to positive outcomes for independence which in turn reduces reliance on the Accommodation with Care sector.
- Further embedding of asset based approaches to meeting residents care and support needs, building and on the assets of both the individual as well as the wider network and community to promote independence and reduce reliance on statutory services where appropriate.
- Consideration and development of other transformational and prevention options that offer alternatives to 'traditional care' services and models.

### **6.3 Equality Implications**

- 6.3.1 In considering an appropriate level of fees for Accommodation with Care, the Council has had due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty as set out in S149 of the Equality Act 2010. An Equality Impact Assessment is being completed and will include service users and carer considerations.

### **6.4 Human Resources Implications**

- 6.4.1 While the proposals do not envisage any HR implications for the Council, it is anticipated that the recommended fee uplift will help to sustain recruitment and retention of staff within provider organisations. The new contract will also ensure that the provider is paying staff the national minimum wage.

## **6.5 Risk Management Implications**

- 6.5.1 The proposals seek to mitigate the risk of market failure for Care services and the disruption to continuity of care that this can bring. It also seeks to improve recruitment and retention within the sector.
- 6.5.2 Future changes to national policy such as increases in the National Minimum Wage could impact on provider viability. The Council will continuously monitor market conditions through regular contract management and Provider Forums.
- 6.5.3 Officers meet regularly with Operational teams, Procurement and Legal to anticipate, mitigate and manage risks as part of the mobilisation to the new contracts via a risk register.
- 6.5.4 The commissioning of the new contracts is not a competitive process; however, providers will need to meet minimum standards to be awarded a contract. The main risk to the process is that providers may not apply for a new contract before the anticipated contract start date of 1st October 2018. Provider steering group meetings have been set up but to date these have not been well attended. Officers are in the process of undertaking one to one meetings with providers at their premises to explain and to engage providers in the process. Officers are also planning to provide support for providers in applying for contracts via the Chest e-procurement system through “bidders” days shortly before the dynamic Purchasing System goes live.

## **6.6 Rural Communities Implications**

- 6.6.1 It is expected that the flexible approach to fee setting as set out in this report will ensure market viability and sustainability allowing for varied locations across the borough for Accommodation with Care that meets the preferences of rural residents. The proposal will, therefore improve or maintain access to services for those living in rural communities.

## **6.7 Implications for Children & Young People**

- 6.7.1 The proposal will ensure that the Council is meeting its duty under the Care Act to support families with children.

## **6.8 Public Health Implications**

- 6.8.1 The control of infectious diseases in residential care settings is an important consideration in the quality of care provided. Accommodation with care

providers will be expected to comply with and implement findings of audits undertaken by the Council's commissioned Infection, Prevention and Control provider as well as any CQC recommendations regarding infection control.

**7.0 Ward Members Affected**

- 7.1 All wards affected.

**8.0 Consultation & Engagement**

- 8.1 Providers played an integral role in the Care Fee review. All were given the opportunity to attend questionnaire co-design sessions on the following dates and all providers were sent a copy of the questionnaire for completion.
- 8.2 At the time of writing the report Accommodation with Care providers have yet to be consulted on the proposals. Consultation will begin with a meeting to be held on 27th March 2018.

**9.0 Access to Information**

- 9.1 The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer.
- 9.2 Further supporting information can be found in:

Care Act 2014 - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/enacted>

Cheshire East Joint Strategic Needs Assessment -  
[http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/council\\_and\\_democracy/council\\_information/jspa/jspa.aspx](http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/council_information/jspa/jspa.aspx)

Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Strategy -  
<http://moderngov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/documents/s34638/Health%20and%20Wellbeing%20Strategy%202014%20-%202016%20version%205%20-%20Final.pdf>

Cheshire East Commissioning Plan -  
<http://moderngov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ecminutes/documents/g6580/Public%20reports%20pack%2012th-Sep-2017%2014.00%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10>

Cheshire East Market Position statement -  
<http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/livewell/care-and-support-for-adults/working-in-partnership/market-position-statement-for-adults-social-care.aspx>

Local Government Association/NHS Clinical Commissioners “Integrated Commissioning for Better Outcomes: A Commissioning Framework”

## **10.0 Contact Information**

- 10.1 Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

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## Cabinet Report

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**Date of Meeting:** 10 April 2018

**Report Title:** Care at Home: Care Fees Review

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Janet Clowes, Adult Social Care and Integration

**Senior Officer:** Mark Palethorpe, Acting Executive Director of People

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### 1. Report Summary

- 1.1. The Care Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to “promote the efficient and effective operation of a market in services for meeting care and support needs.” In delivering this obligation, councils must ensure the sustainability of the market and that there are sufficient high quality services available to meet the care and support needs of adults in the area.
- 1.2. Care at Home (domiciliary care) is one of the largest contracted service areas that the Council commissions in the external market, with the Council currently spending in excess of £13.5 million per annum on generic Care at home services commissioned via the Council. In addition Direct payment spend is in excess of £11.6m per year which includes services provided by a Personal Assistant and those which the service user purchases directly from an agency. Care fees were last reviewed in 2015/16 when they were uplifted to the current levels.
- 1.3. In November 2017, the Council commissioned an independent review of care fees for the Care at Home. The review was undertaken by independent care consultancy C.Co which is a subsidiary of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy.
- 1.4. At its meeting of 5th December 2017 Cabinet approved the commissioning of Accommodation with Care and Care at Home services in collaboration with Eastern and South Clinical Commissioning Groups supported by a review of Care Fees for the sector. Authority to enter into a prescribed procurement process to award contracts was delegated to the Executive Director of People in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Adults and Children and Families and in consultation with the Director of Legal Services to enter into contracts with the successful suppliers.

- 1.5. The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of the findings of the review for Care at Home. The report will present an outline of the review undertaken by C.Co, their findings and the impact of those findings both in terms of financial considerations for the Council and on the sustainability of the market.

## **2. Recommendation/s**

That Cabinet:

- 2.1. Note the findings of the Care Fee Review for Care at Home.
- 2.2. Endorse a maximum flat hourly fee rate of £18 per hour for Care at Home services with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018.
- 2.3. Approve the approach to fund the forecast financial implications on the Adult Services Commissioning Budget through the allocation of Adult Social Care Support Grant (held within the Transforming Services Earmarked Reserve) in 2018/19 and from the Improved Better Care Fund in 2018/19 and 2019/20.
- 2.4. Note that the financial implications of this report present a risk to the current estimates for the 2020/21 Budget, as contained within Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018/19 to 2020/21.

## **3. Reasons for Recommendation/s**

- 3.1. Officers have considered in full the information contained within the report presented by C.Co and described under Section 5 of this report. It is clear that there is a need to increase the level of fees for Care at Home services for the reasons outlined below.
- 3.2. Good quality Care at Home services that provide continuity of care are essential to assist vulnerable people to remain in their own home and prevent admissions to more costly residential and nursing care. A recent independent North West study into Market Sustainability commissioned by Association of Directors of Adult Social Services<sup>1</sup> revealed that there is an over-reliance on care homes to support vulnerable, particularly elderly people. An increase in Care at Home fees would help to support the HomeFirst model currently being developed by the Council which is focussed on enabling people to be as independent as possible via an expectation that patients are discharged to the place they call home as soon as possible.
- 3.3. Care at Home providers report that current fee levels are not sustainable due to increasing costs such as increases in the National Minimum and

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<sup>1</sup> *North West Market Sustainability and Oversight Review on the Markets for Residential and Nursing Care and Domiciliary Care for Older People and for Adults with a Learning Disability*, NWADASS, January 2018

Living Wage and pension contributions which in the longer term could impact on their financial viability. This could have a knock on effect on the provision and continuity of care for service users.

- 3.4. The North West Association of Directors of Adult Social Services' report on market sustainability highlights "serious threats to the financial viability of care providers with providers failing, exiting the market and handing back contracts for provision of care services." The report concludes that North West local authorities will have to increase care fees due to unavoidable demographic pressures, fee levels in the North West are low for England and below that which provider organisations say are sustainable. Providers state that they are already struggling to recruit and retain a skilled workforce with wage competition from alternative employers an important factor in this.
- 3.5. The report further highlighted two issues of "critically high importance" in relation to market sustainability and oversight. The two key risks are:

*"Fee levels may become unaffordable for commissioners or unsustainable for providers; and*

*"Provider failure or withdrawal from the market could destabilise the market."*

- 3.6. In establishing a recommended fee uplift for Care at Home that is both affordable for the Council while providing a greater degree of financial viability for providers and therefore greater market stability, the following has been taken into account:
  - 3.6.1 The low response rate to the cost of care exercise (28% of all current providers) and the fact that C.Co can give no assurances that the findings are representative of the local market as a whole;
  - 3.6.2 The fact that providers, locally, regionally and nationally, place importance on the UK Home Care Association Minimum Cost for Care calculation (£18.01) and the similarity between the breakdown of costs (other than profit margin) between this and the local costs of care model;
  - 3.6.3 The high profit margin expected from providers when compared to the profit margin recommended by the UK Home Care Association report (£2.69 vs £0.58 per hour);
  - 3.6.4 The fact that the local cost of care exercise has been undertaken in the context of the existing spot purchase commissioning arrangements. It is anticipated that the new commissioning arrangements will consist of block

contracts with between 2 and 3 “prime providers” per geographical patch (see Appendix A) that deliver a guaranteed minimum hours supported by a framework of providers to pick up packages that Prime Providers are unable to provide for legitimate reasons. This will lead to efficiencies through economies of scale and a greater assurance of guaranteed business for prime providers;

- 3.6.5 The level of funding available to reinvest in Care at Home services via the Improved Better Care Fund;
- 3.6.6 The fact that although the current contract rate is £14.20, the average paid according to the Adult Social Care Finance Return for 2016/17 is £15.42 per hour due to currently having blended half hour calls;
- 3.6.7 As part of the commissioning process, all care packages will be reviewed to ensure that the level of provision matches the needs of individual service users and to ensure that needs can only be met through Care at Home services;
- 3.6.8 It is anticipated that the new contracts will also include incentives and penalties within the contract terms to drive performance and innovation to stem increased demand, for example, incentives or penalties could be included around delayed transfers of care. The exact detail of this is to be worked up.
- 3.7 It is recommended that Care at Home fees are uplifted as part of the recommissioning process to a **maximum flat hourly rate of £18 per hour at a maximum estimated cost of £3.5million per annum**. This rate is in line with newly published (January 2018) UK Home Care Association Minimum cost of care recommended rates for National Minimum wage (as opposed to Voluntary Living Wage) and represents a 19% increase on the current costs. It is proposed that there would be no separate fee for 45 minute calls. The fees would therefore change as follows:

Table 1 – Current and proposed fee rates

	60 minute rate	45 minute rate	30 minute rate
Current fee	£14.20	£10.65	£8.20
Proposed fee	£18 (max)	n/a	£9 (max)
Increase	£3.80 (max)	n/a	£0.80 (max)

- 3.8 As part of the commissioning process it is proposed that Care at Home bidders are invited to submit bids between £14 to £18 per hour for each geographical patch of the Borough they opt to bid for. This approach allows for cost variations between urban and rural/hard to serve areas of the Borough to be taken into account alongside the differing business models of provider organisations.
- 3.9 Currently service users can choose to purchase care directly from a care agency through a direct payment (rather than a service commissioned by the Council). There is a need to review this policy to understand the impact of this on market sustainability and the new commissioning model. Any consequent changes to the policy or the fee structure for Direct Payments will be the subject of the appropriate approval process and will align with the timescales for implementation of the new contracts and fees.
- 3.10 Care at Home providers have been consulted on the proposals above including the proposed fee structure and model and have been given the opportunity to give feedback via a questionnaire.

#### 4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. An alternative option would be to maintain current fee levels as part of the recommissioning of Care at Home services. However, this carries a risk to provider sustainability impacting on the provision and continuity of care for service users.
- 4.2. The impacts and financial cost to the authority of implementing the report finding around the “local cost of care” at £21.62 per hour with a profit margin of £2.68 per hour has been considered. It is estimated that this would cost the authority an additional £7.88 million per year. Officers have concluded that this option is not affordable for the local authority and that the proposed rate of a maximum of £18 per hour will provide better value for money.

## 5. Background

### 5.1 Local context

- 5.1.1 The Council currently commissions care at home services on a spot purchase basis from a high number of care agencies (between 50 and 97 at any one time), most of which are private sector organisations but with some smaller third sector providers. This method of commissioning is not conducive to market sustainability and can impact on providers' ability to recruit and retain care staff, provide continuity of care and impacts on the Council's ability to source care in hard to serve areas.
- 5.1.2 The Council is looking to recommission Care at Home services using a geographically patch based approach with a small number of prime providers and a back up list of providers who can pick up packages of care that prime providers are legitimately unable to deliver. This will provide a much greater level of assurance to prime providers and is a more cost effective way of commissioning care. Care at Home market engagement is currently being undertaken to gather feedback in relation to these proposals.
- 5.1.3 Appendix A to this report provides the detail relating to the proposed geographical patches. These have been developed in partnership with the CCGs and take into account the local community care hub footprints.
- 5.1.4 Care fees for Care at Home services were last reviewed in 2015/16 when they were uplifted to the current levels below with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016.

Table 2 – Current care fees for commissioned and direct payment services

Call Duration	Commissioned Care at Home	Direct Payment Care at Home through an agency	Direct Payment Care at Home through a Personal Assistant
30 minutes	£8.20	£7.10	£5.75
45 minutes	£10.65	£10.65	£8.42
60 minutes	£14.20	£14.20	£11.50

- 5.1.5 The Council currently pays a blended rate for 30 minute calls i.e. the payment for the 30 minute call is not exactly half of the hourly rate for commissioned services but this does not currently apply for Direct Payments provided through an agency for half hour calls. This has resulted in an increase in provider handbacks and difficulty sourcing care for direct payment packages. Rates for direct payments through a Personal Assistant are also lower, however, this reflects the lower cost liabilities and overheads of personal assistants.
- 5.1.6 The majority of care at home providers currently accept the current contract rate. However, under the current system it is sometimes necessary to pay above the contract rate in certain situations where individuals live in a particularly hard to serve or very rural part of the Borough. The higher rates reflect the increased travel time necessary to deliver care in these areas. Consequently, while the contract rate is £14.20 per hour, the actual average rate paid for care, taking into account the blended half hour rate and packages that are delivered above the contract rate, is £15.42 per hour.
- 5.1.7 Officers are working with care at home providers to co-produce the new commissioning model and address issues affecting the sector including recruitment and retention and internal working processes e.g. for sourcing care packages and payments processes. Discussion at these meetings regularly returns to the issue of the level of fees regardless of the topic of discussion, with providers reporting that in their view the current level of fees and increasing costs is impacting upon their ability to attract and retain care workers and affecting the sustainability of their businesses.
- 5.1.8 The approach that we are taking as part of the commissioning process aligns with the objectives set out in the Council's Commissioning Plan to undertake integrated commissioning which aims to move to an outcome focused service rather than a traditional time and task model to ensure that service users are supported to maintain their independence. This will be further developed through joint work with prime providers as part of the mobilisation and implementation phase of the contract.
- 5.1.9 The benefits of an integrated, outcome based commissioning approach are set out in the joint Local Government Association and NHS Clinical Commissioners framework "Integrated Commissioning for Better Outcomes." The framework sets out key principles for integrated commissioning including a focus on the benefits for people, places and populations with the individual person at the heart of the approach, a focus on outcomes rather than "episodes of care" and acknowledgement that commissioning is about more than just procuring services; it is about a wide

variety of activities which improve the outcomes and the lives for people, places and population.

## 5.2 Methodology

5.2.1 C.Co was commissioned to undertake an independent analysis which adopted a collaborative approach with providers and a consistent approach across all provision. Specifically, the brief was to:

- Establish a means to arrive at an understanding of the local cost of care;
- Undertake cost modelling that is locally informed, based on the actual costs incurred;
- Lead a collaborative approach that engages providers in the design and data collection;
- Ensure a consistent approach across all services;
- Support providers in undertaking the exercise;
- Ensure the approach supports the Council on its journey towards open book accounting;
- Undertake benchmarking analysis with comparator authorities and North West councils;
- Develop, for consideration by the Council, appropriate local cost of care that will support internal decision making and modelling of future care fees.

5.2.2 The main focus of the review was to produce a local cost of care which reflects the actual costs of delivering care within Cheshire East from a provider perspective. As such engagement with providers was essential to arrive at this figure. The input of operational teams and service users was not sought at the review stage although there will be additional engagement with social workers, operational teams, service users and carers on the proposed fee increase as part of the ongoing communication and engagement activity on the commissioning process.

5.2.3 The approach taken by C.Co was to give providers the opportunity to be involved in all aspects of the project including the design of a questionnaire through a number of co-design sessions which would then be sent to all providers for completion and returned to C.Co for analysis. The schedule below shows the dates and attendance for each of the co-design sessions.

5.2.4 Attendees at the first session sought to complete the United Kingdom Home Care Association questionnaire as a group rather than a separate questionnaire at a later date. As a result, it was agreed that

the consensus responses by providers at the session on 7<sup>th</sup> November would be submitted as a return for those providers. Other providers who were not in attendance on 7th November were given the option of agreeing with the consensus figure or given the opportunity to submit their own response to the questionnaire. The questionnaire produced as a result of the co-design sessions had additional questions/variations to the UK Home Care Association questionnaire, however, the same categories of cost were maintained to ensure consistency in analysing the collective response.

- 5.2.5 The questionnaire was issued via email to all providers on 21st November 2017 with a return date of 13th December 2017. In addition to the initial invitation to participate in the exercise, two reminders were issued to prompt a return. The return rate was as follows:

Table 3 – Provider questionnaire response rate

Questionnaires issued	57
Providers agreeing with response from 7 <sup>th</sup> Nov co-design session	9
Individual questionnaires received	7
Total responses analysed	16
Response rate	28%

The response rate at 28% is low. While the 16 respondents cover the whole Borough between them, C.co has advised that it cannot be concluded that the responses are reflective of the entire provider market in Cheshire East.

### 5.3 Benchmarking

- 5.3.1 In addition to the provider questionnaire, C.co undertook a benchmarking exercise with CIPFA statistical neighbours to provide further context and understanding of the cost of care.
- 5.3.2 Cheshire East has a comparatively low contract rate paid when compared with statistical comparators. Although the hourly contract rate is £14.20 per hour the average rate paid is £15.42 per hour due to the impact of the half hour blended rate and the need, on occasion, to pay above contract rate in hard to serve areas.

5.3.4 Benchmarking with local authorities revealed differences in commissioning approaches which influenced rates paid, including outcomes based commissioning which links the hourly rate to a resource allocation and personal budgets, individually negotiated rates with each provider and differing rates across the Borough to take account of the impact of varying geographies e.g. urban and rural areas.

5.3.5 The Council's Finance Team has undertaken benchmarking of the actual rates paid for Care at Home (as opposed to the contracted rates) for the North West using the Adult Social Care Finance Return for 2016/17. This shows that Cheshire East's actual rate of £15.42 per hour is currently one of the highest and is similar to the England average rate of £15.52 per hour.

Table 5 – Actual rates paid 2016/17 of North West local authorities

<b>Local authority</b>	<b>Actual rate per hour</b>
Cheshire West and Chester UA	£16.88
<b>Cheshire East UA</b>	<b>£15.42</b>
Cumbria	£15.00
Oldham	£14.02
Sefton	£13.88
Rochdale	£13.83
Wigan	£13.80
St. Helens	£13.80
Tameside	£13.67
Bolton	£13.63
Warrington UA	£13.61
Stockport	£13.60
Trafford	£13.58
Bury	£13.25
Liverpool	£13.10
Salford	£13.08
Manchester	£13.03
Wirral	£12.92
Halton UA	£12.75
Lancashire	£12.75
Blackpool UA	£12.55

Source: Adult Social care Finance Return 2016/17

## 6. Implications of the Recommendations

### 6.1 Legal Implications

6.1.1 The Care Act places a duty on local authorities to facilitate and shape the whole publically-funded and self-funded care and support market. The legislation also requires authorities to provide choice that delivers outcomes and improves wellbeing. Relevant features of the Act include obligations on Councils to:

- Promote the efficient and effective operation of a market in services for meeting care and support needs;
- Ensure sustainability of the market;
- Ensure that sufficient services are available for meeting the care and support of adults in its area.
- When commissioning services councils must assure themselves and have evidence that the contract terms, conditions and fee levels for care and support services are appropriate to provide the delivery of the agreed care packages with agreed quality of care.
- Understand the business environment of providers offering services in their area and seek to work with providers facing challenges and understand their risks.”
- Not undertake any actions which may threaten the sustainability of the market as a whole, for example, by setting fees below an amount which is not sustainable for the provider in the long term

6.1.2 The sustainability duty created by the Care Act sits alongside other statutory duties and is summarised as follows: -

- a) Local Authorities are under a general duty to implement preventative services that reduce the need in adults for care and support and the need for support to carers (Section 2 Care Act 2014). Whilst there is no statutory duty within the Care Act, ‘supporting people to live as independently as possible for as long as possible is a guiding principle of the Care Act’ (paragraph 1.19, Revised Statutory Guidance).
- b) Statutory guidance accompanying the Care Act 2014 is clear that the way services are commissioned has a direct impact upon ‘shaping the market’ (Paragraph 4.4) and requires that Local Authorities must ‘consider how to ensure that there is still a reasonable choice for people who need care and support’ (Paragraph 4.39) and to ensure that their fee levels do not compromise the service providers’ ability to employ people on at least minimum wage with sufficient training (Paragraph 4.31).
- c) Section 9 of the Care Act places a duty on the Council to assess adults triggered by the appearance of need. It then places a duty to meet the needs of adults meeting the eligibility criteria (Sections 18-20). Detailed

Assessment regulations, statutory regulations and case law underpin this duty.

- 6.1.3 In summary therefore, the legal implications of these proposals are likely to contribute to the sustainability of the care at home market locally. However, the sustainability of the market is not the only duty arising and does not take precedence over other statutory duties. Recent case law confirms this (Care England (R, on the application of) v Essex County Council [2017]).
- 6.1.4 The Council's Public Sector Equality Duty extends beyond service users to residents of Cheshire East, some of whom pay for their own home care and who may be impacted by the Council's decision to increase its fees and the level of that increase. Consultation should include all groups potentially affected by the review.

## 6.2 Finance Implications

- 6.2.1 The Council spends c.£100m on commissioning services from a range of Adult Social Care providers to provide the best outcomes for adults who need support. This report relates to the commissioning of Care at Home services which include payments to Domiciliary Agencies, both directly from the Council and via Direct Payment clients. The approximate annual spend on commissioning the Care at Homes elements of care is £18.3m, and the proposal is to uplift these costs by £3.52m (full year effect).
- 6.2.2 Based on the modelling assumptions, the recommendation to uplift fees to a maximum of £18 per hour as part of the recommissioning process is estimated to cost £1.75m in 2018/19 due to a part year impact as the uplift will be effective from 1<sup>st</sup> Oct 2018. The full year effect of the uplift will be £3.52m from 2019/20 onwards. This equates to a 17% increase on the current actual rate paid.
- 6.2.3 Expenditure on Care at Homes services is contained within the Adult Social Care – Commissioning budget, but the cost of these increases will be funded from a matched allocation of the Adult Social Care Support Grant (held within the Transforming Services Earmarked Reserve) and the Improved Better Care Fund (IBCF). The IBCF conditions include ensuring that the local social care provider market is supported, and the increase in fees is intended to stabilise the market.
- 6.2.4 There is a separate report that relates to Accommodation with Care , which includes payments to providers for long term Residential and Nursing care. The approximate annual spend on these elements of care

is £49m. The total proposed increase from these two reports is therefore £5.02m full year effect. All increases will be implemented from the 1st October 2018 meaning the total increase in expenditure would be an additional £2.51m in 2018/19 and a further £2.51m in 2019/20.

6.2.5 The net impact of the uplift in fees, on the MTFS, will be nil in 2018/19 & 2019/20 as the costs will be funded from existing balances (either earmarked or IBCF). However the increase in care fees across the sector does present a financial risk to the Council's MTFS. In 2020/21 balances from earmarked reserves or IBCF are not expected to be available and the potential gap in the MTFS would therefore increase by up to £5.02m, compared to the current estimates.

6.2.6 Risk mitigation steps include:

- Improved commissioning and contract arrangements with the Care at Home market to offer increased stability and sustainability. The recommissioning model will be designed to offer economies of scale that reduce the cost risk element for the care market providers – it is envisioned this will lead to more competitive and cost effective bids within the range of £14-£18 as part of pricing model tender submissions. This will provide residents with greater choice and control to remain living as independently as possible within their own home and communities, whilst also ensuring that the market has the required capacity to meet the care demand. Additionally, this should impact on the number of admissions into Accommodation with Care settings, aligning with the Better Care Fund national metrics.
- Development of the Homefirst model in partnership with CCG's to ensure that patients are returning home from hospital settings and bed based provision with effective support and reablement. This should impact on the number of long term, high level care packages reducing levels of demand and costs. Additionally, this should impact on the number of admissions into Accommodation with Care settings.
- Service model requirements that ensure the market supports an outcome focused and enablement approach to care delivery that promotes independence and wellbeing (this is being adopted within the service specification requirements as part of the current recommissioning activities).
- Timely reviews of those in receipt of Care at Home in readiness for the new contract commencing to ensure choice and control for residents and reduce any risks as part of the transition to new services. This will ensure that the most appropriate levels of care and support are in place to promote wellbeing and outcomes through an asset based approach that considers differing available options.

- Review of the councils older people's housing strategy taking into account extra care and other housing options that will support people to remain living for longer independently within their own communities.
- Commissioning of the 'Early Help' framework which aims to co-ordinate support for non personal care within community settings. This would help relieve pressure from Care at Home services.
- Further embedding of asset based approaches to meeting residents care and support needs, building and on the assets of the individual as well as the wider network and community to promote independence and reduce reliance on statutory services where appropriate.
- Consideration and development of other transformational and prevention options that offer alternatives to 'traditional care' services and models.

6.2.7 The table below sets out the estimated financial implications of the proposed fee increase.

Table 6 – Financial implications (estimated)

	<b>£18 per hour</b>	<b>Funding sourced from</b>
Care at Home costs	£2,233,864	Improved Better care Fund
Direct payment estimate	£1,272,846	Improved Better Care Fund
<b>Total</b>	<b>£3,506,710</b>	

### 6.3 Equality Implications

6.3.1 In considering an appropriate level of fees for Care at Home, the Council has had due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty as set out in S149 of the Equality Act 2010. An Equality Impact Assessment is being completed and will include service users and carer considerations.

### 6.4 Human Resources Implications

6.4.1 While the proposals do not envisage any HR implications for the Council, it is anticipated that the recommended fee uplift will help to sustain recruitment and retention of staff within provider organisations. The new contract will ensure that providers are paying employees the national minimum wage.

6.4.2 TUPE will apply to some existing provider organisations as part of the commissioning process.

## **6.5 Risk Management Implications**

- 6.5.1 The proposals seek to mitigate the risk of market failure for Care at Home services and the disruption to continuity of care that this can bring. It also seeks to improve recruitment and retention within the sector.
- 6.5.2 Future changes to national policy such as increases in the National Minimum Wage could impact on provider viability. The Council will continuously monitor market conditions through regular contract management and Provider Forums. Relevant clauses will be included in the contract terms and conditions that take into account potential changes to legislation that could impact on provider costs allowing for future uplifts if required at the council's discretion.
- 6.5.3 Officers meet regularly with Operational teams, Procurement and Legal to anticipate, mitigate and manage risks as part of the transition and mobilisation of the services. A risk register and transition plan has been developed which is reviewed and updated at these meetings.
- 6.5.4 Funding has been identified to recruit a dedicated team of qualified Social Workers to undertake service user reviews. The transition plan also details communication activity including a dedicated phone line for service users, information posted on the Council's website with Frequently Asked Questions, letters to service users who may be affected by the recommissioning, briefings for operational and front line staff and attendance of Commissioners at Team manager meetings so that staff are able to respond appropriately to any questions or signpost effectively for more information.
- 6.5.5 As part of the transition decommissioning plans will be developed with existing providers who are unsuccessful to ensure that there is a smooth handover for their service users and that data is migrated and transferred safely in line with General Data Protection regulations. This will also include identifying and managing the impacts on the remaining business including the impact on self funders. Officers are working with operational colleagues to identify existing service users and who provides their care so that service users who will need to move to a new provider can be informed in a timely manner.

## **6.6 Rural Communities Implications**

- 6.6.1 It is expected that the flexible approach to fee setting as set out in this report will ensure that packages incurring additional costs for travel e.g.

for residents in rural communities are properly remunerated. The proposal will, therefore improve access to services for those living in rural communities.

### **6.7 Implications for Children & Young People**

- 6.7.1 The proposal will ensure that the Council is meeting its duty under the Care Act to support families with children.

### **6.8 Public Health Implications**

- 6.8.1 Care at home services help maintain service users independence and assist them to remain in their home. They can also have positive outcomes in terms of reducing social isolation for service users.

### **7.0 Ward Members Affected**

- 7.1 All wards affected.

### **8.0 Consultation & Engagement**

- 8.1 Providers played an integral role in the Care Fee review. All were given the opportunity to attend questionnaire co-design sessions on the following dates and all providers were sent a copy of the questionnaire for completion.

Table 7 – provider co-design sessions

<b>Date/time</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
Tuesday 7 <sup>th</sup> Nov 17 12.00-14.30	Sandbach Town Hall	10
Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup> Nov 17 09.00-11.30	Macclesfield Town Hall	5 (including 1 Extra Care provider)
Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup> Nov 17 15.00-17.30	Macclesfield Town Hall	4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>

- 8.2 Care at Home Providers were consulted on the findings from the review and the proposed fee uplift at a meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2018. Questionnaires were distributed at the meeting and providers were given a maximum of two weeks to respond.

## **9.0 Access to Information**

9.1 The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer.

9.2 Further supporting information can be found in:

Care Act 2014 - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/enacted>

Cheshire East Joint Strategic Needs Assessment -  
[http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/council\\_and\\_democracy/council\\_information/jsna/jsna.aspx](http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/council_information/jsna/jsna.aspx)

Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Strategy -  
<http://moderngov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/documents/s34638/Health%20and%20Wellbeing%20Strategy%202014%20-%202016%20version%205%20-%20Final.pdf>

Cheshire East Commissioning Plan -  
<http://moderngov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ecminutes/documents/g6580/Public%20reports%20pack%2012th-Sep-2017%2014.00%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10>

Cheshire East Market Position statement -  
<http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/livewell/care-and-support-for-adults/working-in-partnership/market-position-statement-for-adults-social-care.aspx>

Local Government Association/NHS Clinical Commissioners “Integrated Commissioning for Better Outcomes: A Commissioning Framework”

## **10.0 Contact Information**

10.1 Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

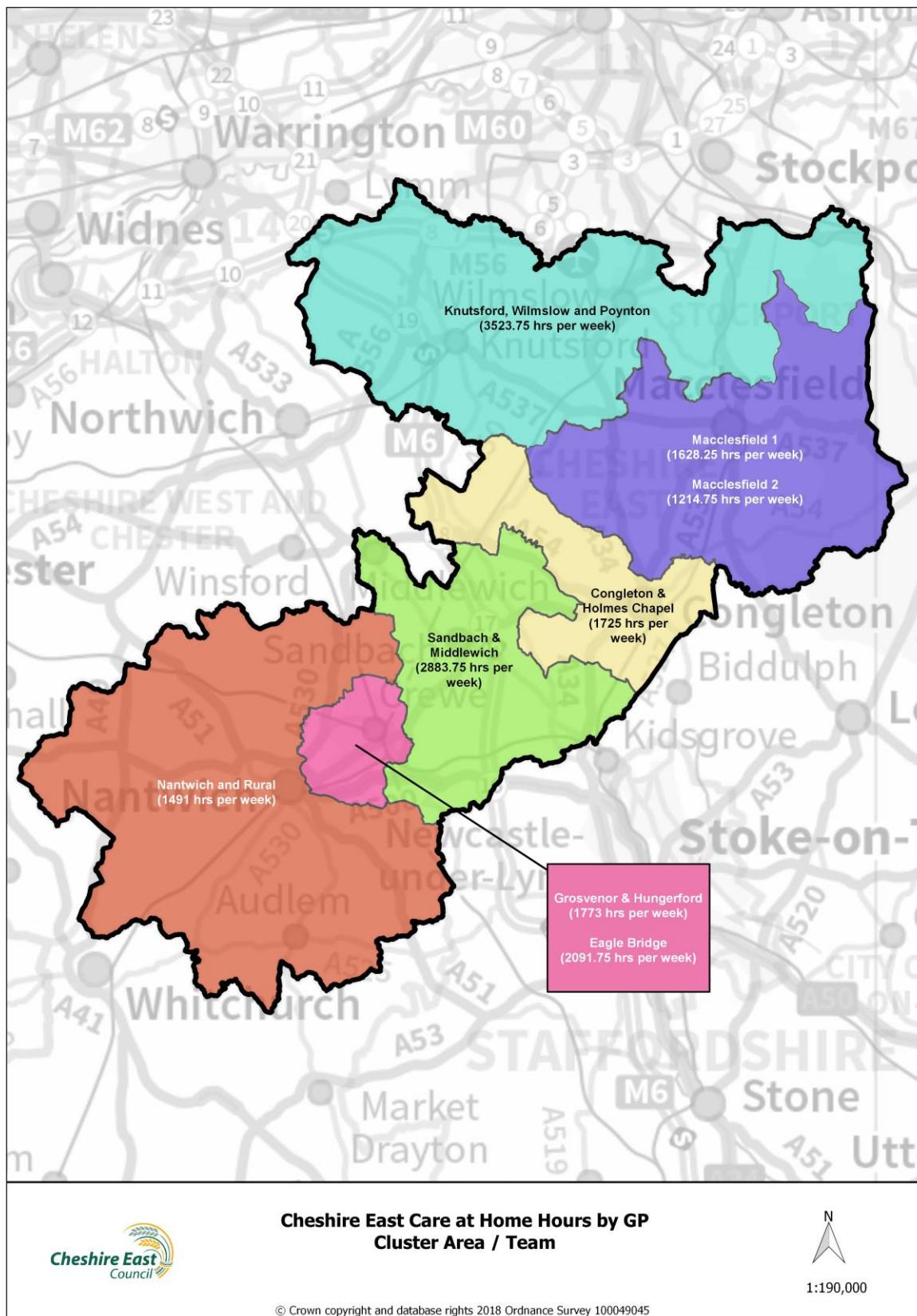
Name: Nichola Glover-Edge

Job Title: Director of Commissioning

Email: nichola.glover-edge@cheshireeast.gov.uk

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APPENDIX A – Proposed Care at Home patches



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## Cabinet

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**Date of Meeting:** 10 April 2018

**Report Title:** West Park Museum; Future Accommodation of Collections

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Don Stockton, Portfolio Holder Environment

**Senior Officer:** Frank Jordan Executive Director Place

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### 1. Report Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for a project to safeguard the future of West Park Museum and its collections.
- 1.2. This paper summarises the current position and presents a recommendation based on an options appraisal undertaken in December 2017. Appendix A provides further background information.
- 1.3. This is in line with the Cheshire East Council's Corporate Plan and in particular Corporate Objectives 2 – Cheshire East has a strong and resilient economy, Objective 3 – People have the life skills and education they need in order to thrive and Outcome 5 – People live well and for longer.

### 2. Recommendation/s

2.1. That Cabinet:

- 2.1.1. Endorse the option to retain the collection within the museum building at West Park and to refurbish the Museum to ensure it is fit for purpose.
- 2.1.2. Note the potential for interim and remedial works, including the temporary relocation, or storage of the collection, during the period until museum refurbishment is complete.

### 3. Reasons for Recommendation/s

- 3.1. Based on the options appraisal (Appendix A), refurbishment of the West Park Museum and retention of collections within the Park (option 1 in the options appraisal) is recommended for approval. This is based on the fact that it is the only option that does not require investment in two buildings and that this option has the potential to attract external funding. The option also retains the integrity of the heritage offer in the wider context of the Park.
- 3.2. The recommended option would still require temporary relocation or storage of the collection, which (subject to negotiation with the Silk Heritage Trust) could be at a Silk Heritage Trust facility, so retaining access in Macclesfield.

Should the Silk Heritage Trust decide that they are unable to house the collection on a temporary basis, other temporary storage options will be investigated.

3.3. Discussions with the Heritage Lottery Fund have ascertained that a broader strategic approach to redevelopment of West Park and Cemetery, including the Museum would be welcomed by them.

#### **4. Other Options Considered**

4.1. The options appraisal (Appendix A) considered three options. Each of the options under consideration carries with it a number of pros and cons as well as inter-related dependencies and impacts. A decision on the future of the museum and the collection is a complex issue which requires all implications to be considered. For this reason the analysis of each of the options is supported by a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis, attached at Appendix B.

4.2. The options that have been considered are:

- Option 1: Retention of the collection within the museum building at West Park including temporary relocation whilst refurbishment works are carried out on the museum building to ensure it is fit for purpose.
- Option 2: Permanent relocation of the collection to the Old Sunday School
- Option 3: Permanent relocation of the collection to the Silk Museum

4.3. In addition a fourth option of 'do nothing' was also considered and dismissed. This is owing to the curatorial and reputational responsibilities of the Council, the liability for the listed building, the potential loss of cultural value and the 'opportunity cost' of being able to improve access to the collection.

4.4. It should be noted that both options 2 and 3 would still require an alternative plan and resources to repurpose the museum building in West Park.

#### **5. Background**

5.1. West Park Museum was donated to the people of Macclesfield by Marianne Brocklehurst (1832-1898) and her brother Peter Pownall Brocklehurst (1821-1903). The object of the benefactors was: *to found a museum to be furnished with a collection of works of Art, Geological specimens Egyptian and other Oriental curios with the view of affording educational advantages and instructive recreation to the people of Macclesfield.* This was accompanied by specific arrangements for the design and layout of the building.

5.2. Professional curatorial advice has been received stating that West Park Museum is no longer fit for purpose. This is particularly in relation to the Museum's environmental conditions, which are not suitable and even damaging to the collections, and also to the lack of sanitary and educational facilities to accommodate school groups. The environment within West Park Museum has been gradually deteriorating for a number of years due to the physical condition of the building. The high level of humidity in the building and the age of the heating system, mean that the environment for the display of important collections is inadequate and will cause them to deteriorate in the future. Particularly sensitive material has already been removed from display and the museum is precluded from borrowing material from elsewhere to enhance the collection. Further details of the building and environmental conditions are included in Appendix A.

5.3. The following actions have since been taken in agreement with the Silk Heritage Trust and the Portfolio Holder:

- Vulnerable items have been identified and moved to either the Old Sunday School or Silk Museum for temporary period.
- New displays have been opened to the public at Old Sunday School and Silk Museum.
- The remaining displays at West Park Museum have been adjusted to minimise impact.
- A Communications plan has been agreed with the Silk Heritage Trust to inform the public about the options; either to retain the collection at West Park Museum or to relocate it to another town centre location.

5.4. The options appraisal which has been conducted by independent specialist consultants (Purcell) recommends that refurbishment of the building should be undertaken.

5.5. The refurbishment of the Museum building will include installation of appropriate heating and environmental control systems, a small extension to provide for sanitary and cloakroom facilities and a more flexible space for education sessions. It will also allow for a complete redisplay of the collections making more sense of the story behind them and how it relates to Macclesfield.

5.6. In order to achieve the recommendation, a strategic plan will be developed which looks holistically at all three areas; the Park, the Museum and the Cemetery. A longer term approach to the Museum, Park and Cemetery together may open up additional opportunities for use of the building that would enhance the visitor offer, providing benefit to visitors to both the Park and the Museum. Financial implications of this are included in the Finance section.

- 5.7. Submission of an expression of interest to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a project to restore both West Park and Macclesfield Cemetery has been held in abeyance while awaiting the options appraisal on the museum and its collections.
- 5.8. In line with the Council's Parks Strategy, a Parks development Fund has been established which could in part, now be used to support the development of an overall strategic plan for the Park, Museum and Cemetery and development related funding bids.

## **6. Implications of the Recommendations**

### **6.1. Legal Implications**

- 6.1.1. There are no specific current legal issues in relation to the museum which arise from the matters set out within this report, other than those relating to a listed building and possible temporary arrangements with the Silk Heritage Trust.
- 6.1.2. If the recommended option is not approved, and rather option 2 or option 3 was selected this would have implications for the future use or disposal of the building and then legal advice would be sought at the relevant time.
- 6.1.3. Legal advice will also be sought in relation to the terms of any grant funding and in relation to the procurement of the works in due course.

### **6.2. Finance Implications**

- 6.2.1. It is proposed that this scheme would be funded from capital funding included on the Addendum to the capital programme under the investment in Heritage Assets line. This is subject to affordability and will require a business case to be submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Communications and the Interim Executive Director of Corporate Services (Section 151 Officer) to seek the additional approval required in order for the scheme to be transferred to the main capital programme.
- 6.2.2. All options all would require capital investment. The likely scale of that requirement has been assessed in the options appraisal as follows:

### Option Costs

- 6.2.3. **Option 1** is the recommended option. This is estimated to cost £675K plus £50K for temporary relocation / storage and redisplay of the collection during refurbishment
- 6.2.4. **Option 2** is not being recommended by Purcells and so no refurbishment costs are given. This option would still require re-use of the museum building at c£425k to £900k depending on use.
- 6.2.5. **Option 3** would cost between £1.8m to £2.3m for building refurbishment, of which at least £192k would be specifically required for the gallery representation. This option would still require re-use of the museum building at c£425k to £900k depending on use.
- 6.2.6. While all options would require capital investment, options 2 and 3 would not only require investment in the redisplay of the collections and potentially in the buildings where the collections would be re-sited, but would also require capital investment in the repair and re-purposing of the West park museum building.
- 6.2.7. The degree to which capital investment would be required to allow redisplay in one of the Silk Heritage Buildings would depend on whether a temporary (while West park museum is refurbished) or a permanent solution was sought. This would need further discussion or negotiation with the Silk Heritage Trust.
- 6.2.8. There is potential to draw down grant funding, although to secure this, the future use of the museum building will need to be considered in the context of the park and cemetery plans, which relies upon use of the Parks Development fund to address this aspect and all related funding application.
- 6.2.9. Heritage buildings in parks are eligible for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund grant programmes. HLF have confirmed that parks will remain a priority for them as part of 'place shaping'. Heritage buildings, redisplay of collections and new interpretation are eligible under HLF Heritage Grants. Other grants (such as the Arts Council and Trusts/foundations) could be explored. The Executive Director, Place will submit all appropriate expressions of interest and funding applications to secure funding for this project.
- 6.2.10. It is not possible to generate a full funding strategy until project funding is available to develop an overall Park plan to include the Museum. The preparation of project plans and grant applications would

in itself require a funding commitment which could be treated as part of a capital project if approved. For guidance, based on comparable projects this is likely to be in the order of £60,000. This will be funded through the Parks Development Fund to prepare external funding applications, including the development of a strategic plan for the redevelopment of the Museum, Park and Cemetery at West Park. This currently has a capital budget of £277k in the main capital programme.

6.2.11. For the recommended option there will be a need to recognise the costs of rehousing and managing the collections on a temporary basis in a revised Service Level Agreement with the Silk Heritage Trust. This would specifically need to address the ongoing management, care and access to the collections during the development and implementation of the project. The future management costs will be determined as part of business case development.

6.2.12. To ensure the conservation of and continuing access to the collection while the options appraisal was progressed, the Council has already committed £13,150 from the Cultural Economy budget, for the temporary relocation and redisplay of vulnerable items. There is likely to be an ongoing requirement for interim remedial actions to secure conservation of and access to the collection until a refurbishment project is completed. This is likely to necessitate further unplanned expenditure.

### **6.3. Equality Implications**

6.3.1. An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and finds there are no negative implications on equality.

### **6.4. Human Resources Implications**

6.4.1. There are no direct implications on Human Resources.

### **6.5. Risk Management Implications**

6.5.1. Premises and operational costs will remain, post restoration and redisplay.

6.5.2. Although visitor numbers could be improved, these are unlikely ever to be above 8,000-10,000.

6.5.3. Changes to HLF programmes increases competition for reducing resources.

6.5.4. Management of the Museum is currently delivered through the Silk Heritage Trust through a service level agreement (SLA) that includes West Park Museum. Until the project is fully developed it is not possible

to ascertain the full running costs, although it may be anticipated that future management costs may be higher than the current position, whichever option is agreed.

6.5.5. The Silk Heritage Trust provides an accredited museum service for all the Macclesfield museums including West Park. Without accreditation no museum can gain access to funding from Arts Council, Heritage Lottery Fund and other funding bodies.

6.5.6. The Silk Heritage Trust have stated that retaining the collection in West Park is likely to prevent them from achieving financial sustainability in accordance with their future business plans. Whilst this could result in a reduction in annual funding to the Trust, the costs of putting in place appropriate museum management and conservation resource by the Council would be greater than any savings made by reducing the grant. The Council does not currently operate a museums service that could take on this operational requirement, maintain accreditation or provide the expertise necessary to care for the collections.

## **6.6. Rural Communities Implications**

6.6.1. There are no direct implications for rural communities.

## **6.7. Implications for Children & Young People**

6.7.1. Approval of this recommendation will enhance facilities for schools groups and provision of education, so benefitting children and young people.

## **6.8. Public Health Implications**

6.8.1. There are no direct implications for public health.

## **7. Ward Members Affected**

7.1. All Macclesfield wards. Ward members have not yet been notified. A briefing will take place prior to a Cabinet decision.

## **8. Consultation & Engagement**

8.1. Public consultation will take place on the strategic plan for the development of the Park, Museum and Cemetery as a whole. In addition, a Friends of West Park community group is being developed who will feed into the process.

8.2. Stakeholders are being updated on a regular basis.

**9. Access to Information**

**The following background documents have been used to prepare this report.**

West Park Museum Feasibility Study – Purcell March 2017

West Park Museum Options Appraisal – Purcell January 2018

West Park and Cemetery Outline Options – Purcell December 2016

Equality Impact Assessment

**10. Contact Information**

- 10.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

Name: Helen Paton

Job Title: Cultural Economy Manager

Email: [Helen.paton@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:Helen.paton@cheshireeast.gov.uk)

## Appendix A: Background and options appraisal

**Building and Environmental conditions:** The last major works to the museum was the replacement of the gallery roof lantern glazing in 2010. This involved new provision of new Pilkington Optilam glazing and gaskets over the existing frame, however the existing glazed timber side frames were not replaced, the glass being painted out. The side frames show evidence of decay to cills, particularly on the Prestbury Road elevation. The same treatment was given to the smaller roof lantern over the staff area.

A quinquennial inspection was carried out by Buttress architects in 2014, and since this date some reactive maintenance has taken place, including redecoration of the two windows, maintenance of rainwater goods and reinstatement of slipped slates as required.

The recommendations identified as 'urgent', such as gutter realignment, replacement of airbricks and repointing to the entrance arch have been addressed. However, items identified as 'necessary' or 'desirable' have not been actioned. These works include addressing water running to outside faces of rainwater pipes, replacement of damaged bricks, and repointing. In addition to the works identified above, there are now signs of deterioration to the lantern cills.

Internally the spaces are tired. The entrance lobby shows signs of damp. The central gallery space is generally in good repair albeit dated. The staff areas are in poor condition.

Following an Environmental Report compiled by Anna Rhodes for the Silk Heritage Trust, a further study was undertaken by Max Fordham as part of the Purcell March 2017 Options Appraisal.

In brief, while the condition of the building fabric itself is not ideal, there is no evidence of water ingress within the building, which is often the cause of poor conditions. Masonry which requires repointing will however hold some moisture. The key cause of degradation of exhibits within West Park Museum appears to be an inadequate heating system causing an unstable temperature resulting in unstable relative humidity (RH). A lack of ventilation is also a contributing factor, while humidifiers and dehumidifiers were either close to or past their useful life. The fluctuating temperatures are outside CIBSE's recommended temperature range for museum display, while relative humidity exceeds guidelines set out by most major museums, including Museum Scotland and the British Museum.

Recommendations were as follows:

- Remove the existing oil-fired boiler and replace with new heat source and heating system infrastructure to ensure the internal temperature meets CIBSE's recommendations and that it is controllable. A gas installation should be considered due to comparably cheaper fuel costs. If this is not feasible, an alternative approach could be to install air-source heat pumps.
- Remove existing humidifiers and dehumidifiers.
- Provide a means to naturally ventilate the main museum space to allow sufficient fresh air into the building.
- Upgrade or replace existing display cases to ensure they are sufficiently sealed from the surrounding environment and are conditioned with moisture sensitive silica (passive buffer).

Other recommendations, not directly related to the environmental conditions included replacement of all electrical infrastructure and light fittings.

**Relationship to the park and town heritage:** It has been noted that decisions on the future of the museum and its collections have a relationship with and dependency on any future plan for the Park and also on the heritage assets regeneration plan for the town centre. Options 2 or 3 have a clear bearing on assets identified through the HARP. In addition the temporary re-housing of the collections and the permanent rehousing of the Tunnicliffe collection (both under option 3) would have benefit for the town centre museum offer (particularly the silk museum).

With regard to the future of the park, the HLF has indicated that a strategic plan that covers the future of the museum building, the Park and the cemetery would be welcomed in order to facilitate a phased programme of work. However, setting the museum building in this strategic context requires the fundamental decision about the future purpose of the building as a 'Museum in the Park' that included the core collections, educational activity, exhibition space and other activity (option 1) or in finding a new use (options 2 and 3) compatible with the strategic future of the park.

## Appendix B: Options Analysis

Each of the options under consideration carries with it a number of pros and cons as well as inter-related dependencies and impacts. A decision on the future of the museum and the collection is a complex issue which requires all implications to be considered. For this reason the analysis of each of the options is shown as a SWOT analysis to present all related issues associated with each one.

The options being considered are:

- 1) Retention of the collection within the museum building at West Park including temporary relocation whilst refurbishment works are carried out on the museum building to ensure it is fit for purpose.
- 2) Permanent relocation of the collection to the Old Sunday School
- 3) Permanent relocation of the collection to the Silk Museum

It should be noted that both options 2 and 3 would still require an alternative plan and resources to repurpose the museum building in West Park.

### Option 1

**Retention of the collection within the museum building at West Park including temporary relocation whilst refurbishment works are carried out on the museum building to ensure it is fit for purpose.**

The option for redisplay of the collection at West Park museum primarily looks at additional space to provide WC and education facilities. However, key to the success of a refurbished museum is also dependent on repair of the building fabric, upgrading of mechanical and electrical systems to improve the environmental conditions of the space, and rationalisation of the collections on display.

This option would involve building a modest extension to the current building to provide Sanitary and education facilities, new heating and electrical systems, repair of building fabric and improved environmental control.

The focus of the displays would be on Marianne Brocklehurst and her travels (including the Egyptology collection). It is proposed that the Tunnicliffe paintings would be relocated to the Silk Museum.

## SWOT Analysis

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully respects the heritage – the museum was built to house the collection. The museum was designed and built to be within the Park.</li> <li>• Quality of some aspects of the collection</li> <li>• Suitability – the building and the core collection are a good match.</li> <li>• Distinctiveness – mini museum in a park and strong ‘sense of place’.</li> <li>• Strong core of support amongst volunteers and other local people.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• West Park Museum requires capital investment to make it fit for purpose (see Purcell proposals).</li> <li>• West Park Museum is remote from the rest of Macclesfield’s museum offer.</li> <li>• Low visit numbers (5,537 in 2016, including learning visits).</li> <li>• Low footfall in the street; extent of crossover between park users and museum visitors has not been tested, but there’s unlikely to be high positive correlation.</li> <li>• Current displays detract from the visitor experience – remediable (see Purcell proposals)</li> <li>Little learning and ancillary space – remediable to some extent (see Purcell proposals)</li> <li>• Separate premises and operational costs, as compared to consolidating with one of the other museums.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To tell the story of the Brocklehursts, particularly Marianne, alongside ‘her’ collection in ‘her’ building.</li> <li>• Visit numbers can be improved and improved facilities will assist this.</li> <li>• Ancient Egypt and local history are now part of school curriculum – this is both.</li> <li>• Once displays and interpretation are improved, creating a charged offer for specialist groups as well as for schools’ visits.</li> <li>• Creation of flexible space.</li> <li>• Relocating the Silk Heritage Trust’s collections would enhance the Silk Museum’s offer. Charles Tunnicliffe studied in the building when it was the School of Art and Design and so would make a fitting repository for his work.</li> <li>• Eligible for HLF funding and potentially Arts Council England. Other Trusts and Foundations could be considered but need to be explored.</li> <li>• Park setting offers greater opportunity for integration of the offer and audience development.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dilapidations to fabric and poor heating: present risks to the building and the collection – remediable (see Purcell proposals).</li> <li>• Premises and operational costs will remain, post restoration and redisplay</li> <li>• Although visit numbers could be improved, these are unlikely ever to be above 8,000-10,000.</li> <li>• Changes to HLF programmes increases competition for reducing resources.</li> </ul>

**Option 2**

**Permanent relocation of the collection to the Old Sunday School**

Currently, the Old Sunday School (Heritage Centre) serves various purposes but it is not utilised to its full potential. The survival of the building is largely dependent on financial support from the Council and voluntary work.

The Silk Heritage Trust is exploring the potential to make an HLF grant for capital and revenue works, which will present significant opportunity; the preparation of an application will require an architectural design, costed capital works together with activity and business plans to demonstrate the financial sustainability of the proposed scheme; this process will focus the project's development.

As part of the ongoing Macclesfield Heritage Asset Regeneration Plan (HARP), it was recognised that there is opportunity to brand the building to maximise its prominent location and increase visibility in the context of the proposed cinema and leisure development off Churchill Way. The opportunities to develop an independent 'food market' offer on the ground floor have been identified and this is currently being explored by the Silk Heritage Trust, with a view to its possible development. The basement and ground floor have recently been advertised for lease with proposals sought from commercial operators.

In November 2017, more vulnerable items from West Park Museum were temporarily relocated to the ground floor of the Old Sunday School. Although the spatial fit can accommodate these items, the addition of the West Park Collection only adds to an already incoherent experience, with neither the Brocklehursts nor Egyptology having any historic links to the building.

**SWOT Analysis**

<b>Strengths</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential operational cost savings as compared to display at West Park Museum.</li> <li>Visit numbers to Old Sunday School higher than to West Park Museum, but purpose for these visits are mixed because the offer is varied.</li> <li>Footfall in this area of the town higher than around West Park.</li> <li>Under current arrangements, there is plenty of learning space in the building, but not adjacent to where the Egyptology is currently displayed.</li> </ul>	<b>Weaknesses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some spaces in Old Sunday School do not lend themselves to display of this collection.</li> <li>Museum elements of Old Sunday School are weak. They require a major refresh and, eventually, relocation to Silk Museum (see below).</li> <li>Content of current displays poor match with this collection.</li> <li>Other uses of Old Sunday School, now and proposed, are not compatible with housing the Brocklehurst collection.</li> <li>Current offer at Old Sunday School confused, needs rationalising rather than being made still more eclectic.</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhances visitor offer in a part of the town with a regeneration focus.</li> </ul>	<b>Threats</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need to repurpose or mothball West Park Museum.</li> <li>Repurposing will require capital investment and, in most situations, continuing running costs.</li> <li>Opposition from volunteers and other locals.</li> <li>The Trust's new plans to seek to let the ground floor and basement of the Old Sunday School would eventually impact on the display of the collection in these areas. However, at this stage we do not know the detail of the Trust's plans, timescales nor how they will progress.</li> </ul>

In the context of the long-term sustainability of the Trust and potential operational changes for Old Sunday School, the Old Sunday School is not recommended as anything more than a temporary location for West Park Museum's artefacts. Other options recommended in the HARP may offer more sustainable solutions with greater regeneration impact.

### Option 3

#### Permanent relocation of the collection to the Silk Museum

The Silk Museum has been used as a museum since 1994 as part of four sites managed by the Macclesfield Silk Museum Trust. The Silk Heritage Trust is currently undertaking public consultation to inform planning for the Silk Museum's future delivery, which presents significant opportunity for the Museum's development. The Silk Heritage Trust has expressed enthusiasm to explore the potential for a Story of Macclesfield Museum to tell the wider story of Macclesfield's heritage. The collection at West Park would be a suitable addition to this.

Some of the more vulnerable items from the West Park Museum collection have already been relocated temporarily to the Silk Museum. However, if this arrangement were to be extended or made permanent, alterations would be required to the space to ensure conditions were suitable. Should relocation remain temporary then these alterations would be minimal. This would involve; the existing mechanical ventilation to the roof be overhauled with new external cowls provided and an automated operating system provided; the existing windows and fire door to the exhibition room be overhauled to include UV protection and that the exhibits be displayed in suitable sealed exhibition cases.

As with the West Park Museum option, it is proposed that the Silk Heritage Trust's collections including the Tunnicliffe and Law and Order exhibitions be displayed separately elsewhere in the museum allowing the Trust to advertise a major temporary exhibition based on the Brocklehurst's prior to its rehousing in the refurbished West Park.

Should this form a permanent relocation, it is proposed that this would take place as part of a major refurbishment of the museum that was recommended in the Macclesfield Heritage Asset Regeneration project. This would involve complete reordering of the museum. In addition, a suitable alternative use for the building at West Park would need to be identified and resourced.

**SWOT Analysis**

<b>Strengths</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First floor gallery, currently used for temporary exhibitions, would provide suitable display space for the Egyptology.</li> <li>• Silk Museum has learning/activity space and other facilities.</li> <li>• Displaying the Brocklehurst collection at the Silk Museum would help to consolidate the overall museum offer.</li> <li>• Displaying the Brocklehurst collection at the Silk Museum would help to diversify the offer at the Silk Museum, which is currently rather specialist.</li> <li>• If the Macclesfield story were also told well at the Silk Museum, rather than poorly at the Old Sunday School, the whole museum offer would be consolidated at the Silk Museum and adjacent Paradise Mill. This would give the Silk Museum broader appeal.</li> <li>• Footfall in this area of the town higher than around West Park.</li> <li>• Potential operational costs savings as compared to display at West Park Museum.</li> </ul>	<b>Weaknesses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Silk Museum offer is currently charged whereas West Park Museum and the Old Sunday School are free to 'drop in' visitors. Displaying the Egyptology at first floor would inevitably place it beyond the pay perimeter. The Macclesfield story would also become charged unless these displays were close to the entrance and the pay perimeter was placed beyond.</li> <li>• The Silk Museum would lose its temporary exhibition space.</li> <li>• The museum would no longer have a specialist focus on the silk industry.</li> <li>• Significant capital investment required to achieve required changes.</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consolidating the museum offer at the Silk Museum, thereby diversifying the offer, has the potential to attract more visitors to the museum. However,..</li> <li>• As the Silk Museum is charged, if the net effect were more visits earned income would rise and improve the Trust's financial sustainability.</li> <li>• Relocating the Macclesfield story to the Silk Museum would open up new options for use of the ground floor of the Old Sunday School with the potential to improve the Trust's financial sustainability (see further HARP report).</li> </ul>	<b>Threats</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The roof at the Silk Museum requires substantial repair; the suitable gallery space is immediately below the roof. The Silk Museum belongs to the Silk Heritage Trust and the Brocklehurst collection to Cheshire East Council.</li> <li>• the loss of the temporary gallery space would impact adversely on visit numbers</li> <li>• Charged entry will deter some visitors.</li> <li>• Silk Museum name/brand will arguably be in-appropriate, but as Macclesfield's heritage is so strongly linked with silk, this is unlikely to be a big issue.</li> <li>• Need to repurpose or mothball West Park Museum.</li> <li>• Repurposing will require capital investment and, in most situations, continuing running costs.</li> <li>• Opposition from volunteers and other members of the local community.</li> </ul>



## Cabinet

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**Date of Meeting:** 10 April 2018

**Report Title:** Sale of Land at Dixon Drive, Chelford

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Ainsley Arnold – Planning, Housing and Regeneration

**Senior Officer:** Frank Jordan – Executive Director, Place

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### 1. Report Summary

- 1.1. This report refers to land located on Dixon Drive, Chelford (referred to as The Site from hereon). The Site comprises a surfaced yard which extends to circa 0.51 ha (1.27 acres). It is vacant and in a dilapidated condition.
- 1.2. The Site was previously leased to Wright Manley LLP (formerly Frank Marshall LLP) to provide car parking for their livestock, horticultural and machinery auctioneering business, and general retail market. The business relocated to Beeston in April 2017 when their lease to the former Chelford Cattle Market site was brought to an end by its owner as part of their plans to dispose of that site for redevelopment. As a result of this action Wright Manley LLP ended their lease of the Council's land.
- 1.3. The adjacent former Cattle Market is currently subject to an undetermined planning application (Ref 18/0171M) for a residential led mixed use redevelopment of 89 residential dwellings and 140 sq m (1,500 sq ft) of business floor space.
- 1.4. With the Cattle Market relocating and lease ended, the Site is considered to provide a development opportunity and it has been marketed by the Council's agents on this basis. This report seeks approval for the disposal of The Site shown edged red in Appendix 1.

### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1. It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1.1. Delegates authority to the Executive Director of Place to dispose of the Site on terms and conditions to be agreed in consultation with the Director of Legal Services and the Section 151 officer.

### 3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1. The Site is vacant and not required for an alternative use by the Council and, therefore, it is considered surplus to operational requirements.

- 3.2 As the Site is vacant, it is considered to be a maintenance liability and health and safety risk to the Council.
- 3.3 It is envisaged that a sale will generate a significant capital receipt. It is expected that any offer accepted will be on a conditional basis.

#### **4. Other Options Considered**

- 4.1. The Council could retain the Site and invite offers to rent the land for open storage purposes or similar. This is not considered to be the highest value use for the Site and would not provide much needed homes in the Borough. Furthermore this would not be a suitable neighbour to the existing residential properties in the locality or the proposed residential use on the former Cattle Market. If the Council does retain the Site it will also retain a liability for the Site.
- 4.2. The Council could look to bring forward a different proposal for the Site such as an affordable housing site. Given the nature of the locality and the changes to the land immediately adjoining the site, residential or mixed use residential appear to be the most appropriate use for the site.

#### **5. Background**

- 5.1 The Site comprises a surfaced yard which extends to circa 0.51 ha (1.27 acres). It is vacant and in a dilapidated condition. It is located in the village of Chelford, circa six miles west of Macclesfield and six miles south-east of Knutsford. The surrounding area is currently mixed use, comprising of residential (terraced, semi-detached and detached dwellings), the former Chelford Cattle Market and Chelford Railway Station. The former Chelford Cattle Market site has been disposed of by its owner for redevelopment.
- 5.2 The adjacent former Cattle Market, extending to 2.72 ha (6.73 acres), is subject to a planning application (Ref 18/0171M) for a residential led mixed use redevelopment of 89 residential dwellings and 140 sq m (1,500 sq ft) of business floor space. Upon request of the Local Planning Authority, the applicant has produced a Masterplan for the former Cattle Market (including the Site) which assigns the Site for residential uses. The Masterplan is enclosed within Appendix 2.
- 5.3 In 2010, an outline planning application (Ref 10/3448M) was submitted for the entirety of the former Cattle Market (including the Site). This involved a mixed-use development of up to 85 residential dwellings and 350 sq m of light industrial starter units and 350 sq m of B1 floorspace. This planning application was recommended for approval and considered by the Council's Planning Committee on 8th December 2010 where a resolution to grant permission was passed subject to the signing of a Section 106 agreement. This Section 106 was not formally signed and the application is pending determination.

- 5.4 Should the site be developed for housing use, it will contribute towards ongoing housing supply. In addition, Chelford is identified as a Local service Centre in the Cheshire East Local plan – and so will be the subject of potential green belt review in part 2 of the Local plan. The more development land that can be identified within the village framework, the more that green belt impacts can be minimised.
- 5.5 With the Cattle Market relocating and requirement for car parking having ceased, the Site is considered to provide a development opportunity and it has been marketed by the Council's agents on this basis.

## **6. Implications of the Recommendations**

### **6.1 Policy Implications**

- 6.1.1 The disposal will bring a redundant site back into economic use. In addition to this it will also reduce the Council corporate risk and liabilities relating to holding a vacant asset.

### **6.2 Legal Implications**

- 6.2.1 The Localism Act 2011 introduced the General Power of Competence, which allows the Council to do anything an individual can do, provided it is not prohibited by other legislation. These powers have replaced the previous wellbeing powers. However, the use of these powers must be in support of a reasonable and accountable decision made in line with public law principles.
- 6.2.2 The Council has the power to dispose of the land pursuant to s123 of The Local Government Act 1972 subject to it being at the best consideration that can reasonably be obtained.
- 6.2.3 The General Disposal Consent 2003 authorises the disposal of land for 7 years or more at less than best consideration if the undervalue is £2 million or less and subject to those powers being exercised in line with public law principles.
- 6.2.4 The Council has a fiduciary duty at all times to the taxpayers and must fulfil this duty in a way which is accountable to local people.

### **6.3 Financial Implications**

- 6.3.1 The sale of land will generate a capital receipt for the Council and dispose of a maintenance liability.
- 6.3.2 Future reactive maintenance costs will cease to be the responsibility of the Council on the completion of the sale.

- 6.3.3 Facilities Management or Assets do not hold a budget for this site given it was previously leased out. An income of £2,500 was received until the lease was terminated.

#### **6.4 Risk Management Implications**

- 6.4.1 There is the normal transactional risk associated with asset disposals. This will be managed through careful monitoring of the disposal process.
- 6.4.2 It is likely that any disposal will be on a conditional basis. Typical conditions relate to planning, technical due diligence (including site investigations), title and S106 or CIL requirements. Although this is focused on reducing the risk for the purchaser it has the benefit to the Council that it will reduce the uncertainty that the site would not be redeveloped on disposal.

#### **7. Ward Members Affected**

- 7.1. Chelford, Cllr George Walton has been consulted on this proposal.

#### **8. Consultation & Engagement**

- 8.1. No consultation or engagement has taken place or is required in respect of this proposal.

#### **9. Access to Information**

- 9.1. The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer.

#### **10. Contact Information**

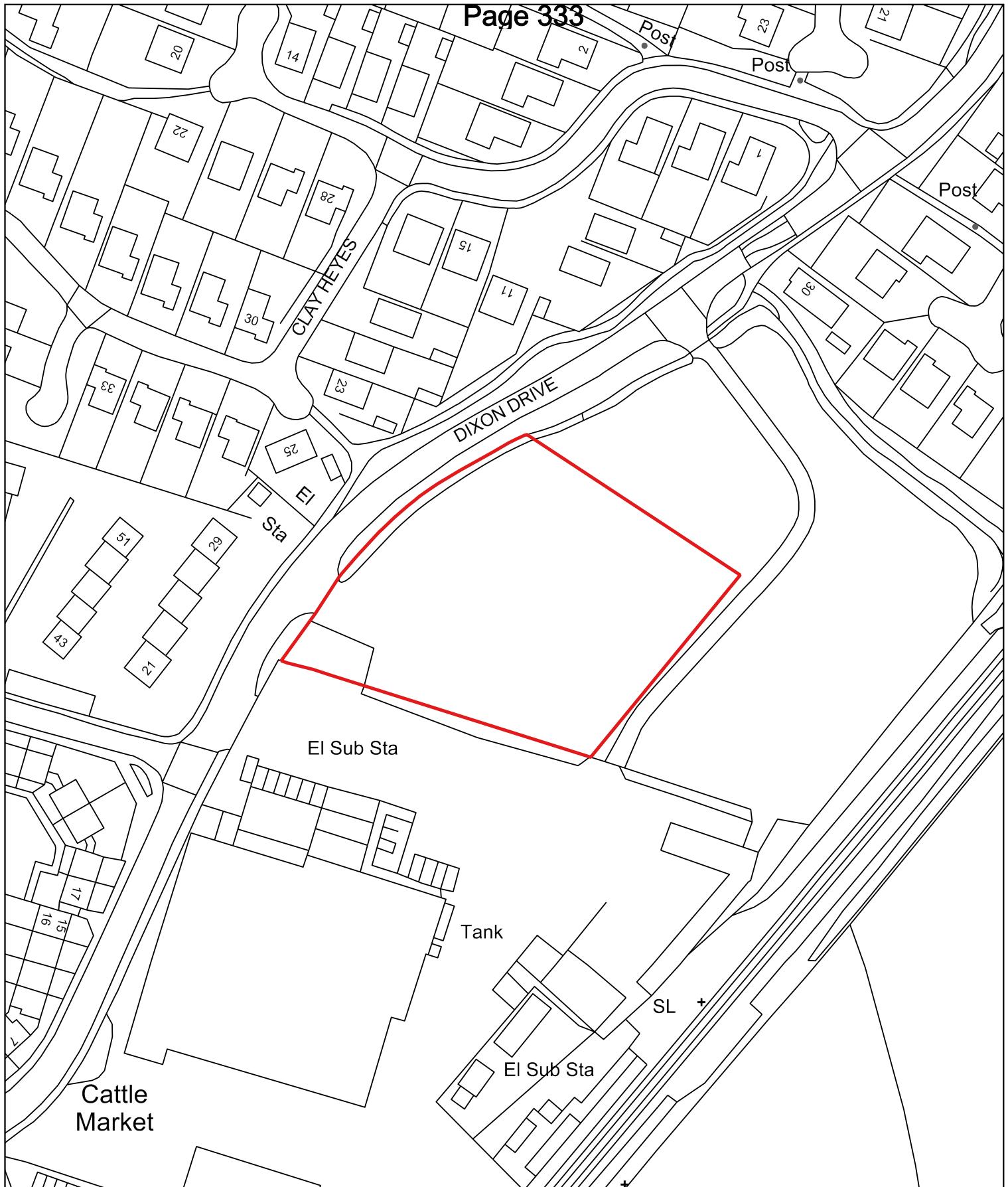
- 10.1 Contact details for this report are as follows:

Name: Frank Jordan

Designation: Executive Director, Place

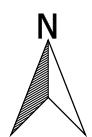
Tel No: 01270 686643

Email: frank.jordan@cheshireeast.gov.uk



## Chelford Cattle Market

Ref: Chelford Cattle Market  
Date: 19/09/17



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Key:


Rev	Amendment	Drawn/Date:


**DAVID WILSON HOMES**  
 WHERE QUALITY LIVES  
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 WA3 6XF  
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Project  
**CATTLE MARKET**  
 DIXON DRIVE  
 CHELFORD

Drawing Title  
**Overall Master plan**

Status  
**For Comment**

Scale  
**1:500 @ A1**

Date  
**29.09.17**

Drawn By  
**JCarman**

Drawing Ref  
**MASTER01**  
 Revision

# DIXON DRIVE, CHELFORD

## Overall Masterplan

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## Cabinet

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**Date of Meeting:** 10 April 2018

**Report Title:** Procurement of the Council's Energy Supply

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Ainsley Arnold; Housing, Planning and Regeneration

**Senior Officer:** Executive Director of Place

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### 1. Report Summary

- 1.1. Cheshire East Council currently contracts with West Mercia Energy (WME) to provide the procurement of the Council's energy (gas and electricity) and the direct provision of associated billing and management services. The contract with WME for the managed service has a value of £50,000 per annum. As part of that service WME competitively procure the Council's energy, which amounts to approximately £6m per annum.
- 1.2. The existing contract is due for renewal on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019.
- 1.3. The Council preferred option is to procure a fully managed service whereby the provider purchases energy for and on behalf of the Council via a compliant framework. This provides a flexible procurement method of purchasing energy and provides an end-to-end billing and management service. This negates the need for the Council to deal directly with the energy providers with the provision of energy bills being administered electronically.

### 2. Recommendation/s

That Cabinet :

- 2.1 Approves the preferred option to continue using a fully managed service.
- 2.2 Notes that the Executive Director of Place will commence procurement to select a preferred bidder.
- 2.3 Delegates authority to the Executive Director of Place to enter into a contract with the successful provider, for a period of 3 years.
- 2.4 Notes that the Council will enter into individual Memoranda of Understanding with such Schools and Academies that indicate they wish to participate in the contract (subject to the Council's contract with the successful provider allowing such participation).

### **3. Reasons for Recommendation/s**

- 3.1 The existing contract is due for renewal on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019. However, selecting a preferred supplier before then will maximise the supplier's ability to include our future energy requirements within their decision process when purchasing volumes on the futures market. Delaying our decision limits the window of opportunity for our future energy usage to be included.
- 3.2 It is important to note that this recommendation complies with the best practice guidance and recommendations from the Pan Government Energy Project, who advise that improved prices can be achieved through adopting a flexible, aggregated, risk managed energy procurement process, which provides economies of scale across the framework.

### **4. Other Options Considered**

- 4.1 The Council could utilise a framework for the supply of energy only, without the managed service elements being included. The disadvantages to this are:
  - 4.1.1 The Council would need to employ additional in-house resources to cover the work currently undertaken by the managed service provider to ensure that all gas and electricity bills were validated and to manage any subsequent billing queries.
  - 4.1.2 There is a risk to budget management as billing queries could take longer to resolve or errors could be missed altogether.
  - 4.1.3 It would not be possible to split those bills that supply schools/academies where there are joint use arrangements in place e.g. for leisure centres or children's centres and additional resources would also be required to manage this process of energy recharges.
- 4.2 The Council could go out to tender detailing specific requirements for Cheshire East. However, it would not be able to attract the same value for money energy rates as could be obtained by the Central Purchasing Organisation (CPO) due to lower economies of scale.

### **5. Background**

- 5.1. Cheshire East Council has opted for a flexible purchasing model, as recommended by the Pan Government Energy Project, since April 2016. This has proven to be successful as the current contract has delivered gas and electricity prices 7.9% lower than the market average during the period of the contract.
- 5.2. The current contract for electricity and gas supply agreements, which have a combined annual value of approximately £6m per annum, are due to expire on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

- 5.3. The Council currently utilises a managed service through a third party (West Mercia Energy) who, in turn, uses a compliant framework for the supply of gas and electricity to the Council. This is the preferred option for future energy procurement, as it brings with it the benefits identified in paragraph 5.4.
- 5.4. The Benefits of a Managed Service are that :
  - 5.4.1 All costs are broken down to include energy prices, pass through costs and management fees. Trading gains made from capturing falls in the energy market are also shown transparently. The management fee is fixed for the duration of the contract.
  - 5.4.2 Each month every site is contacted via email to remind them to read their utility meters which include a link to a central website.
  - 5.4.3 Each month every site is contacted via email to notify them that their bills have been produced and can be viewed on a central website.
  - 5.4.4 Bills are issued by the managed service provider rather than directly from the utility company. A major advantage of this arrangement is that the monthly charges can be split into separate bills, based on a percentage ratio, so that multiple occupants can be billed directly (such as where there is joint use of a site, e.g. a school and a leisure facility). This arrangement eliminates the need for the host site to recharge the tenant.
  - 5.4.5 Every bill has to pass multiple checks before being included in the group bill for the period. Those bills that fail the validation will not be issued until it has been corrected by the supplier.
  - 5.4.6 Technical support is provided regarding industry and legislative changes.
  - 5.4.7 Regular reviews of the whole portfolio's billing queries are undertaken.
  - 5.4.8 An annual consultation regarding the setting of capped prices including a mid term review and the validation of revisions as a result of any adjustments is provided
  - 5.4.9 The service provides budget advice for individual sites and for the portfolio as a whole.
  - 5.4.10 The service includes a dedicated site works coordinator to liaise with builders, contractors and electricians for new connections, meter installations, the upgrade of existing supplies, meter relocations and disconnections.

- 5.5. A managed service also provides the option to collect a customer service delivery oncost element within the annual unit rates of all bills on behalf of the Council.
- 5.6. In summary a Managed Service provides a compliant way of securing the Council's energy requirements using a flexible procurement strategy.

## **6. Implications of the Recommendations**

### **6.1. Legal Implications**

- 6.1.2 The Council may buy works, goods and services from or through a Central Purchasing Organisation (CPO) and in doing so will be deemed to have complied with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (the Regulations) to the extent that CPO has itself complied with Regulations. CPOs supply gas and electricity via separate framework agreements which have been entered into as a result of a competitive process.
- 6.1.3 Whilst the purchase of the energy itself would be compliant (purchasing gas and electricity via a CPO complies with EU regulations and the Council's own internal rules), the purchase of the managed service itself would be a direct award of contract under the Council's own internal rules unless there has been a competition to decide to award this element of the services.
- 6.1.4 Cabinet authority is sought to procure the Council's energy via a flexible procurement approach and award a contract for a maximum of 3 years. The contract value for the managed services is approximately £150,000.
- 6.1.5 Whilst the contract value of the managed service element is below EU threshold, in undertaking any procurement where there is deemed to be cross border interest, a contracting authority must comply with the key principles of proportionality, mutual recognition, transparency, non-discrimination and equal treatment (derived from the Treaty of Rome and the fundamental freedoms of the EU). There are no formal rules governing whether a contract will attract cross-border interest. If the contract is deemed to be of cross-border interest then the opportunity should be advertised in the OJEU. The Commission states that the subject matter of the procurement, the place of performance or delivery and the size and structure of the relevant service market are significant factors.
- 6.1.6 As the value is below the EU Threshold for Services of £181,302 it would be acceptable to undertake a procurement process in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and so to conduct a Request for Quotation exercise via the E-Tendering portal.

## 6.2. Finance Implications

- 6.2.1 Annual expenditure on gas and electricity procured via the contract is approximately £6m covering Corporate Buildings, Street Lighting, Schools and Academies. This is funded both from the Council's revenue budget and those of Schools and Academies.
- 6.2.2 The benefits of utilising this flexible purchasing model have been demonstrated since its adoption by the Council - this has been proven to be successful as the contract has delivered gas and electricity prices 7.9% lower than the market average during the period of the contract since April 2016; a two year performance review has indicated that WME prices have been £195.6k below the market average.

## 6.3. Equality Implications

- 6.3.1 Not applicable

## 6.4. Human Resources Implications

- 6.4.1 Not applicable

## 6.5. Risk Management Implications and overview of Flexible Purchasing

- 6.5.1 Flexible purchasing allows the Council to take advantage of price changes in the energy market. By choosing this purchasing strategy, it spreads its price risk over a number of purchasing decisions throughout the year.
- 6.5.2 The commodity, gas or electricity, is purchased over multiple occasions direct from the wholesale market. Our future energy requirements are split into base load and peak volume blocks for electricity, or into tranches for gas, that can be bought in monthly, quarterly or seasonal periods. Any residual load covering additional volume requirements can be traded separately.
- 6.5.3 In utilizing a fully flexible procurement approach the Council's risk of exposure to market variations can be controlled and monitored as volumes will be aggregated with the ability to take advantage of fluctuating market prices.
- 6.5.4 There is budget certainty for each financial year with the benefit of a capped price that could be reduced within the period. Energy prices/budgets can be determined as the Council will agree on capped 12 month prices so if costs increase, the Council/users will be protected from the increases and will be able to budget sufficiently.

- 6.5.5 If energy costs fall, prices will be monitored and the provider will be able to unlock/unset tranches of energy thus enabling the participating authorities to benefit from the lower market rates. Any such saving facilitates a reduction in the capped price within the specific 12 month period.
- 6.5.6 Because of the nature of flexible purchasing a Capital At Risk fund is established (in the current contract this is equivalent to 5% of the contract value. This fund is held in reserve and will be returned at the end of the agreed contract period).
- 6.5.7 Potential trading gains when prescribed conditions occur which are used to offset unit costs.
- 6.5.8 This trading provides added value over and above the ability to secure competitive market prices.

## **6.6. Rural Communities Implications**

- 6.6.1 There are no direct implications for rural communities.

## **6.7. Implications for Children & Young People**

- 6.7.1 There are no direct implications for children and young people.

## **6.8. Public Health Implications**

- 6.8.1 There are no direct implications for public health.

## **7. Ward Members Affected**

- 7.1. All

## **8. Consultation & Engagement**

- 8.1. Not applicable

## **9. Access to Information**

- 9.1. The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer.

## **10. Contact Information**

- 10.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:  
Name: Colin Farrelly  
Job Title: Energy Manager  
Email: colin.farrelly@cheshireeast.gov.uk



## Cabinet Report

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**Date of Meeting:** 10 April 2018

**Report Title:** 3-year Microsoft Desktop Licence Agreement 2018

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Paul Bates – Finance and Communication

**Senior Officer:** Jan Willis, Interim Executive Director of Corporate Services

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### 1. Report Summary

- 1.1. Both Councils depend on Microsoft® Windows and Office-based software for key ICT and service functions, ranging from desktop provision, authenticating network users to providing employees with critical communication and collaboration tools. Microsoft delivers in Windows, Office (including Office 365) a highly capable set of components that offer an industry leading desktop environment, secure, robust email, calendar, scheduling, task management, desktop productivity, telephony, real-time communications, and collaboration experience. Office 2016 and Office 365 (O365) can be tailored to specific requirements, as well as those of groups of users within both Councils and service areas, alternative service delivery vehicles and to enable more effective partnership working.
- 1.2. This Cabinet report recommends the renewal of the Microsoft Enterprise Desktop Licence Agreement over a 3 year period via a Licence Service Provider. Failure to enter into the agreement by 30th April 2018 would mean that both councils would not benefit from the Cloud Transformation Agreement (CTA) discount, which could lead to an increase of approximately 50% of the licence costs. Both Councils would be in breach of Microsoft Terms and Conditions, which could lead to external audit, reputational damage for both Councils, significant fines and withdrawal of the right to use the software.

### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1. That authority be delegated to the Interim Executive Director of Corporate Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for ICT to undertake the procurement, and agree terms of the necessary contractual arrangements to deliver the required licences for Cheshire East Council and Cheshire West and Chester Council, desktop estate via a Licence Service Provider; with an estimated total cost of £4.00m (excluding VAT) over a 3 year period; funded jointly by the Cheshire East Council and Cheshire West and Chester Council (through programme recharges or staged payments as agreed).

### **3. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1. The next few years will see significant changes across the entire public sector. The shape and size of our Councils will change however the need to provide high levels of service to our residents will remain, and be set against a backdrop of financial austerity.
- 3.2. With these challenges come new opportunities; information and communications technology (ICT) will be able to help both Councils to achieve efficiencies, providing the mechanism to support shared services and most importantly, keep pace with residents' changing needs and expectations.
- 3.3. Because of these changes, Cheshire East Council (CEC) ICT Services will be able to support base operations with improved efficiency and focus more effort to delivering the changes needed for the Councils. Equally by delivering the right levels of desktop services with elements both in-house and within the cloud, ICT will be better placed to support the Councils in reacting to changing circumstances and supporting the working partnerships with other Public and Private Sector organisations particularly health.
- 3.4. Both Councils are reliant on the use of Microsoft Desktop products to carry out day to day tasks. The new Desktop Licence Agreement will ensure that both Councils can continue with their day to day activity, with no impact to service, supported by the latest Microsoft desktop products and services. Desktop licence costs are on the increase (21% in 2017) in line with industry trends. Previous agreements have ensured that we have not been subject to these increases. The new Desktop Licence Agreement affords a level of protection for the next 3 years against future price increases. The agreement comes with planning services, end user and technical training, as well as access to new functionality.

### **4. Other Options Considered**

- 4.1. In order to provide the level of desktop licencing required, whilst ensuring continuity in operations, and in order to benefit from public sector discounts, whilst aligning with the strategic desktop transformation programme currently planned as part of the 5 year Infrastructure Investment Programme no other options have been considered.

## 5. Background

- 5.1. In April 2015 Cheshire East Council entered into the current agreement. Cheshire West and Chester Council took out a separate agreement at this time.
- 5.2. The detailed business case for the full 5-year ICT Infrastructure Investment Programme that will fund the Desktop Licence Agreement has been reviewed through Council corporate governance procedures: Joint Officer Board (9th February 2017), Technical Enablers Group (1st March 2017), Shared Services Joint Committee (23rd March 2017) and Cabinet process (11th April – 9th May 2017). Cheshire West and Chester will seek financial approval through their appropriate internal governance with final sign off by the Section 151 Officer.

## 6. Implications of the Recommendations

### 6.1. Legal Implications

- 6.1.1. The value of this procurement at over £1,000,000 requires compliance with both the Councils Contract Procedures and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (Public Contracts Regulations). The proposed procurement route using The Chest provides a compliant route for procuring desktop licences via a Licence Service Provider. The Chest is Cheshire East Council's e-Business portal where the Council advertises contract opportunities.
- 6.1.2. The maximum duration of this framework agreement is 3 years at which point a procurement exercise should have been undertaken to enter into a new agreement.

### 6.2. Finance Implications

- 6.2.1. There is no option to continue on the current arrangement as this will end on 30th April 2018.
- 6.2.2. Options to purchase Microsoft desktop licences as part of a full desktop roll out or a phased roll out approach have been considered. A phased roll out approach is the preferred option as it enables both councils to exploit the flexibility of the Enterprise Agreement and delivers some cost avoidance over a 3 year period when compared to the full desktop rollout. The tables below highlight this.
- 6.2.3. The delivery of the new Desktop agreement provides the necessary financial flexibility to support the strategic desktop delivery roadmap for both councils. These financial benefits are included in the 2017-20

Medium Term Financial Strategy. By the use of up to date desktop products ICT Services will also be in a better position to prevent threats to customer information via the use of secure desktop products including Windows 10, Office 2017 and O365.

6.2.4. The new Enterprise Agreement will be procured via The Chest utilising the RM3733 lot 2 framework with an indicative price of £4.00m excluding VAT. This has been factored into ICT Shared Services expenditure for the period 2018-2021.

#### Cheshire East Council

Cheshire East Council Phased Rollout	Annual Cost	Cheshire East Council Full Rollout	Annual Cost	Overall Cost Difference
Yr1 - Rollout 50 Users	£633,366.50	Yr1	£721,328.81	£87,962.31
Yr2 - Rollout 1,000 Users	£709,886.47	Yr2	£721,328.81	£11,455.18
Yr3 - Full Rollout	£721,328.81	Yr3	£721,328.81	£0.00
<b>Cheshire East Cost Avoidance over 3 Years</b>			<b>£99,417.49</b>	

#### Joint

Joint Phased Rollout	Annual Cost	Joint Full Rollout	Annual Cost	Overall Cost Difference
Yr1 - Rollout 60 Users	£1,026,517.34	Yr1	£1,186,221.56	£159,704.22
Yr2 - Rollout 2,000 Users	£1,134,400.51	Yr2	£1,186,221.56	£51,821.05
Yr3 - Full Rollout	£1,186,221.56	Yr3	£1,186,221.56	£0.00
<b>Joint Cost Avoidance over 3 Years</b>			<b>£211,538.11</b>	

#### **6.3. Equality Implications**

6.3.1. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed. The Desktop Transformation Programme that is underpinned by these licencing arrangements will impact all stakeholders equally and provide the benefits associated with flexible digital working

#### **6.4. Human Resources Implications**

6.4.1. No implications identified, as this paper relates to the provision of desktop licences in order to enable the compliant delivery of desktop software and services to our users. Resources to procure and implement the solutions will be sourced from ICT Services.

#### **6.5. Risk Management Implications**

6.5.1. If the proposals made in this paper are not approved at the Cabinet meeting on 10th April 2018, failure to enter into a new Enterprise Desktop Licence Agreement by 30th April 2018 would mean that both councils would not benefit from the CTA discount. This could lead to an increase of approximately 50% of the estimated licence costs. Both councils would be in breach of Microsoft Terms and Conditions, which could lead to external audit, significant fines, reputational damage for both councils and withdrawal of the right to use the software.

6.5.2. This paper relates to the provision of desktop licences. The risks relate to the procurement of a new Desktop Licence Agreement

#### **6.6. Rural Communities Implications**

6.6.1. The proposal will support the creation of greater digital choice for those in rural communities.

#### **6.7. Implications for Children & Young People**

6.7.1. The ICT Investment Programme supports the Adults, Children's and Public Health Programme and joint working arrangements with regional health colleagues, and the Digital Programme which enables residents online access to Council services.

#### **6.8. Public Health Implications**

6.8.1. There are no direct implications for public health.

### **7. Ward Members Affected**

7.1. All wards and members will be affected by this proposal.

### **8. Consultation & Engagement**

8.1. Consultation has taken place with our existing Licence Service Provider in order to understand the current Microsoft desktop licencing options, benefits, cost options and variables. The role of the Licence Service Provider is to fully understand the increasingly vital role software plays in the IT environment for both Councils, in order to provide ICT Services with

the correct level of understanding and guidance in order to inform our decision making around the desktop licencing requirements.

- 8.2. Consultation has taken place with Infotech (Consulting Services) to validate assumptions, challenge perceived requirements and confirm direction of travel with latest industry and local government trends.
- 8.3. Consultation has been undertaken with Microsoft Services which is the Professional Services organisation within Microsoft. Their role is to work with both Councils through ICT Services to realise the full value of our investment in the Microsoft technology stack as quickly as possible.

## **9. Access to Information**

- 9.1. Appendix 1 – Further information

## **10. Contact Information**

- 10.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

Name: Gareth Pawlett

Job Title: CIO and Head of ICT Services

Email: [Gareth.pawlett@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:Gareth.pawlett@cheshireeast.gov.uk)



## Appendix 1 Reasons for recommendation – detailed description

- 1.1. ICT is no longer just back office automation; it has become a critical service. If it is unavailable, the Councils cannot deliver services to our service users. ICT Services has the capability of pro-actively contributing to service redesign, which is needed to address the challenges facing the Council. ICT has a pivotal role to play in improving efficiency, reducing costs across both Councils and supporting both as they move away from direct service provision into more sophisticated commissioning models and shared solutions.
- 1.2. Information security is a critical focal point, given the amount of information both Councils hold and the potential damages to individual and businesses should this be inappropriately released. Great emphasis has been placed on protecting our systems against threats and maintaining constant vigilance to protect against any new threat. Internal investment in training and education for our users, to raise awareness of security risks and to promote good data security practice wherever staff handle information runs in tandem with our Desktop Transformation programme across both Councils, enabled by the Desktop Enterprise Agreement.
- 1.3. In addition to supporting the Councils in their mission to deliver high quality services to the residents and people of Cheshire, it is underpinned by the ICT Services Business Plan.
- 1.4. Standardisation will allow both Councils to access cheaper “cloud” services for our core infrastructure requirements and negate the need for future major investment in physical technology assets instead moving to a pay as you go consumption basis. Cloud based services will increasingly be the mechanism of choice for technology services and ICT Services is keen to use these where appropriate. Other Councils, such as Shropshire, Kent and Somerset have also adopted similar strategies. ICT will move basic utility type services away from in-house sourced systems to commodity cloud services. An example would be our email system, this is currently provisioned as a service hosted and run in-house. However, for the great bulk of our email, an external service such as Microsoft Office 365 (O365) would provide a cheaper and more functional service.
- 1.5. The term ‘cloud service’ has been used in technology environments for many years. It is an alternative business model for the delivery of ICT services. It has been proposed by both Councils that rather than buy or own equipment and associated services these are rented on an as required basis from providers with massive capacity.
- 1.6. Until adopted and offered at scale by companies such as Amazon, Google, IBM and Microsoft; early doors ICT press indicated that the economic case for ‘cloud’ solutions was relatively weak and did not offer a good return on investment for any council, when previously assessed. In part this was due to government security standards which restricted how much of our systems infrastructure and



services could be put in the cloud. All the while extensive 'on premise' solutions have not been maintained in parallel, assets have been sweated (as directed by both Councils) and performance indicators could not be realised. This position has changed as the major cloud providers above now offer data tethering with geography, for example, Europe has signed Safe Harbour Agreements and EU Model Clauses acceptable to the UK Government. Other benefits of adopting cloud services are cited as:

- Software that is provisioned as Software as a Service is maintained at the latest version as part of the package: new features are automatically available, and there is no lag whilst ICT prepares the upgrade then implements it. Office 365 is a good example of software as a service
  - Speed (better to say Agility and Flexibility): new services can be brought online quickly and scaled as needed. The speed of cloud provision is often identified as the single most important reason to move to a cloud service model. Included here is the capacity to scale up and down as necessary. Extra capacity can be used at intense periods and then turned off when not in use.
  - Fail Fast, Succeed Faster: try something, get fast feedback and then rapidly inspect and adapt or kill it fast before more money is spent
  - Collaboration: as data and service are not locked inside a data centre it is easier to share these with partners.
  - Integration: cloud services have integration designed in at the start and most vendors expect customers to blend solutions from different places and have setup solutions to integrate across vendor boundaries.
  - Cost: Councils will only pay for what they use, and it runs on a revenue not capital basis. The ability to turn things off when not needed and hence not pay for them can give rise to some savings, but this needs to be balanced with a more intense management of things like the starters, leavers and movers' processes within both Councils and the business hours of service(s) required. In the context of transformation, this also avoids tie in to long term contracts.
  - Security: the major cloud vendors have spent heavily on security and have achieved high levels of certification with UK and US governments, the scale of the operations means that services can afford to implement excellent security at a low unit cost.
  - Resilience: Cloud helps you plan and manage enterprise wide resilience, aiding speedy recovery and mitigating the impact of disasters
- 1.7. Windows 10 is Microsoft's latest operating system and works effectively on mobile and desktop devices. The key benefits of Windows 10 are
- 1.7.1. Improved security by providing a layered defence in line with ICT Services Security roadmap, supported class leading security products
  - 1.7.2. Evergreen which will mean that users will always be on the latest versions of Windows, avoiding costly change programmes



- 1.7.3. Provides increased user functionality in line with latest touch technology
- 1.8. Office 365 is Microsoft cloud software as a service officer product suite. The key benefits of Office 365 are
  - 1.8.1. Supports the goals of both councils to consume more cloud services
  - 1.8.2. Access to the latest versions of desktop and office products
  - 1.8.3. Enables better collaboration with external partners and suppliers including Health
  - 1.8.4. Provides a more cost effective email solution
  - 1.8.5. Office 365 is delivered as SaaS (software as a service) delivers the benefit of being evergreen, meaning that both councils will always be using the latest versions of Office 365 product and provides other benefits including
    - 1.8.5.1. Enables a reduction in costs, as Councils will only pay for what they use. Provides the ability to turn things off when not needed and hence not pay for them can give rise to some savings, but this needs to be balanced with a more intense management of things like the starters, leavers and movers' processes within both Councils and the business hours of service(s) required. In the context of our desktop transformation programme, this also avoids tie in to long term contracts.
    - 1.8.5.2. Seamless Coordination with the Tools we Already Know Office 365 works seamlessly with the programs we already know and use, including Outlook, Word, Excel, OneNote, Publisher and PowerPoint. These tools provide the same great features you rely on as well as powerful capabilities in Office 365. We can if others are editing the document we're creating, synchronise documents with our desktop, broadcast PowerPoint presentations, and check documents in and out of your online document library.
    - 1.8.5.3. Aligns to our vision of Right Device, Right Time Any Place Access Microsoft® Office 365 provides web-enabled access to email, important documents, contacts, and calendar on almost any device—including PCs, Apple Mac,, iPhones and Android phones. Office 365 enables users to view and edit documents from web browsers on PCs and Apple Mac computers. Office 365 allows us to easily Communicate and Collaborate Inside and Outside both Organisations with Office 365, we can send instant messages to colleagues and customers and invite them to participate in online meetings where we can review documents or take control of a desktop.
    - 1.8.5.4. Office 365 offers great flexibility by only providing our users with the services they need, cost-effectively adding value to your business.

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