

# Corporate Policy Committee

## Agenda

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**Date:** Tuesday, 6th July, 2021  
**Time:** 10.30 am  
**Venue:** Council Chamber, Municipal Buildings, Earle Street, Crewe  
CW1 2BJ

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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**

To note any apologies for absence from Members.

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/Open Session**

In accordance with paragraph 2.24 of the Committee Procedure Rules and Appendix on Public Speaking, set out in the [Constitution](#), a total period of 15 minutes is allocated for members of the public to put questions to the Committee on any matter relating to this agenda. Each member of the public will be allowed up to two minutes to speak; the Chair will have discretion to vary this where they consider it appropriate.

Members of the public wishing to speak are required to provide notice of this at least three clear working days in advance of the meeting.

4. **Minutes of Previous Meeting** (Pages 3 - 10)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

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**Contact:** Paul Mountford  
**Tel:** 01270 686472  
**E-Mail:** paul.mountford@cheshireeast.gov.uk

5. **Medium Term Financial Strategy - Corporate Services Budgets 2021/22**  
(Pages 11 - 26)

To note the decision of the Finance Sub-Committee to allocate the approved capital and revenue budgets, related policy proposals and earmarked reserves to the Corporate Policy Committee.

6. **Apprenticeship Levy Procurement Framework** (Pages 27 - 32)

To consider a proposed way forward for the procurement of apprenticeship training provision across the Council, ASDVs and maintained schools.

7. **Organisational Culture Change Programme** (Pages 33 - 40)

To consider a report which provides an update on the work undertaken on the Brighter Future Together (Culture) Programme.

8. **Consultation on Council Tax Support Scheme 2022/23** (Pages 41 - 48)

To consider a report which seeks approval to consult on the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2022/23.

9. **Customer Experience Progress Report** (Pages 49 - 62)

To consider an update on progress against the agreed delivery plan in support of the Customer Experience Strategy.

10. **Shared Services Review Update Report** (Pages 63 - 68)

To consider a report on progress with a joint review of shared services.

11. **2023 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies** (Pages 69 - 76)

To consider a report which outlines the proposals recently published by the Boundary Commission for England for revised Parliamentary Constituency boundaries and which makes provision for a sub-committee to be established, with powers to produce a Council submission to the Commission's current and future consultation exercise.

12. **Work Programme** (Pages 77 - 82)

To consider the Committee's work programme and determine any required amendments.

**THERE ARE NO PART 2 ITEMS**

**Membership:** Councillors C Browne, J Clowes, S Corcoran (Chair), J P Findlow, K Flavell, R Fletcher, S Gardiner, N Mannion, A Martin, K Parkinson, J Rhodes, A Stott (Vice-Chair), and M Warren

**CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the **Corporate Policy Committee**  
held on Tuesday, 8th June, 2021 at The Assembly Room - Town Hall,  
Macclesfield SK10 1EA

**PRESENT**

Councillor S Corcoran (Chair)  
Councillor A Stott (Vice-Chair)

Councillors J Clowes, D Edwardes (in place of Cllr Browne), JP Findlow,  
K Flavell, R Fletcher, S Gardiner, N Mannion, A Martin, K Parkinson,  
J Rhodes and M Warren

**Other Members Present**

Councillor J Nicholas

**Officers**

Lorraine O'Donnell, Chief Executive  
Jane Burns, Executive Director Corporate Services  
Alex Thompson, Director of Finance and Customer Services  
David Brown, Director of Governance and Compliance  
Sara Barker, Head of HR  
Brian Reed, Head of Democratic Services and Governance  
Michael Moore, Interim Communications Manager  
Julie Gregory, Acting Legal Team Manager  
Paul Mountford, Democratic Services

**Apologies**

Councillor C Browne

The Chair welcomed everyone to what was the first decision-making meeting of the Council's new committee system.

At the Chairman's request, members of the Committee and officers introduced themselves.

**1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors R Fletcher and S Gardiner declared non-prejudicial interests in the report on Members' Allowances as they were each personally known to a member of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

**2 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION**

Sue Helliwell referred to item 10 on the agenda relating to the proposed senior management restructure and asked if the current holder of the post of Executive Director People was being made redundant or leaving the

Council. She also asked how many members of the Corporate Leadership Team had left the Council since May 2019.

At the Chair's request, the Chief Executive responded that the former holder of the post of Executive Director People had left the Council in January 2021 to take up a role in another organisation. Since May 2019, three members of the Corporate Leadership Team had left the Council.

### **3 COVID-19 UPDATE**

The Committee received a report summarising developments since May in relation to infection rates in Cheshire East, and progress with the vaccination programme and the test, trace, contain and enable strategy. Officers gave a further oral update at the meeting on the most recent developments, including increases in infection rates in the Borough.

The report also outlined the implications for Council services of the move to Step 3 of the Government's roadmap for easing restrictions in England. It also provided an update on support for businesses and on recovery planning and reported the latest position on the financial implications of the pandemic.

### **RESOLVED**

That the report be noted.

### **4 CONSTITUTION UPDATE**

The Committee considered a report which sought a recommendation to Council to approve further changes to the constitution and grant delegated authority to the Monitoring Officer to amend the constitution.

The proposed changes comprised editorial amendments which fell directly to the Monitoring Officer but must be reported to Council; changes reserved to Council such as amendments to committee terms of reference; and substantive insertions, such as member remuneration, which were awaiting approval by Council. Further details were set out in the Council report at Appendix 1 and were highlighted in the attached sections of the constitution.

It was intended that this version of the constitution would remain operative until a review by Council in November 2021.

At its meeting, the Corporate Policy Committee accepted a tabled amendment to provide for editorial consistency at Chapter 3, Part 4, paragraph 6.23 (authority for Directors to submit applications for grant funding without commitment); and a minor rewording to Chapter 2, Part 2, paragraph 8 for clarity (that significant decisions likely to be taken by committees will appear on the Council's Forward Plan).

**RESOLVED**

That the report at Appendix 1 and the proposed changes to the constitution referred to therein be recommended to Council subject to the inclusion of the two additional minor amendments accepted at the meeting.

**5 APPOINTMENTS TO SUB-COMMITTEES, WORKING GROUPS, PANELS, BOARDS AND JOINT COMMITTEES**

The Committee considered its appointments to a number of bodies.

Where necessary, the names of appointees would be notified to the Head of Democratic Services and Governance by the Group Whips.

With regard to the Constitution Working Group, it was noted that whilst the current version of the constitution provided for the Working Group to consist of 8 members, the Committee had just agreed to recommend to Council a change to the constitution to provide that the Working Group should consist of no more than 8 members. This would allow a smaller Working Group to be appointed if considered appropriate.

Where members of bodies meeting on an ad hoc basis were drawn from a pool of members appointed for this purpose, the Head of Democratic Services and Governance advised that such members were selected according to their availability but that the availability and attendance of such members could be monitored to ensure that all were able to participate.

**RESOLVED**

That the following appointments be made to the bodies indicated:

**A. Bodies which report to the Corporate Policy Committee**

**Constitution Working Group**

Whilst the report recommended that the Working Group should comprise 8 members, the Committee resolved that it should comprise 6 members with the following composition: 2 Conservative: 2 Labour: 2 Independent Group.

**Community Governance Review Sub-Committee**

The Sub-Committee comprise 7 members with the following composition: 3 Conservative: 2 Labour: 2 Independent Group. In addition, 1 member of the Liberal Democrat Group and 1 member of the Real Independent Group be invited to attend and participate in meetings of the Sub-Committee in a non-voting capacity.

### **Staffing Appeals Sub-Committee**

3 members appointed on an ad hoc basis, drawn from a pool of 10 selected on a politically proportionate basis (4 Conservative: 3 Labour: 2 Independent Group: 1 Liberal Democrat).

### **General Appeals Sub-Committee**

5 members appointed on an ad hoc basis, drawn from a pool of 10 selected on a politically proportionate basis (4 Conservative: 3 Labour: 2 Independent Group: 1 Liberal Democrat).

### **Shared Services Joint Committee**

Whilst the report recommended a membership comprising one member of the Labour Group and two members of the Independent Group, the Committee resolved that it should have the following composition: 3 members: 1 Conservative: 1 Labour: 1 Independent Group.

Subject to confirmation from the Group Whip as regards the Independent Group nomination, the following members be appointed to the Joint Committee:

Councillor J P Findlow  
Councillor J Rhodes  
Councillor A Moran

Councillor A Stott to be the reserve member for the Independent Group.

## **B. Other Bodies to which the Corporate Policy Committee is required to make appointments**

### **Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Board**

Councillor S Corcoran be appointed as one of the Council's three voting members on the Board.

### **Joint Extra Care Housing Management Board**

Councillor N Mannion be appointed as one of the Council's three members on the Board.

## **6 MEMBER ALLOWANCES**

The Committee considered the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on members' allowances.

A working group of members had been appointed to consider the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel and had met on 26th May 2021. The Chair of the working group was Councillor M

Warren. Councillor Warren circulated a set of his recommendations at the Committee's meeting.

With regard to a recommendation that there be no uprating of the basic allowance in 2021/22, the working group had agreed that in future years, starting in 2022/23, member allowances should continue to be uprated in line with the NJC officers pay award.

## **RESOLVED**

That the Committee recommends to Council that the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel be adopted to take effect from the start of the 2021/22 municipal year subject to the following:

1. there be no uprating of basic allowance in 2021/22;
2. in future years, starting in 2022/23, member allowances continue to be uprated in line with the NJC officers pay award;
3. the allowance for vice-chairs of service committees be increased to £6,000;
4. the whips' allowances be replaced with a group administrator allowance paid at £3,825 to the administrator of any group with at least 10 members and £1,766 to the administrator of any group with at least 4 members but fewer than 10;
5. no allowance be paid for opposition spokespersons;
6. the following allowances be continued as recommended for 2021/22 but be reviewed for 2022/23:
  - a. the Scrutiny Committee chair's allowance, which should be reviewed in the light of the workload of that committee and this be reported back to Council in November as part of the constitution review; and
  - b. the civic allowances for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

## **7 MEDIA RELATIONS PROTOCOL**

The Committee considered an updated draft media relations protocol for Cheshire East Council which set out the policy and principles that defined how public and media relations activity would be undertaken. The protocol defined the roles and responsibilities with regard to public relations, and specifically media relations activity, including the approvals process, identifying spokespersons and the distribution/publication protocol. The Committee welcomed reference to local members being quoted on ward issues.

**RESOLVED**

That the updated media relations protocol be approved.

**8 PERFORMANCE REPORTING**

The Committee's views were sought on future performance reporting arrangements.

The Committee's terms of reference included a co-ordinating role across all other committees and exercising a corporate view of outcomes, performance, budget monitoring and risk management. It also included oversight and scrutiny of the performance of the Corporate Services Directorate. The new committee arrangements provided an opportunity to look afresh at Members' requirements to fulfil their responsibilities for oversight, scrutiny and holding to account.

Members were keen to see easier to read and timely reports, presenting a balanced view of performance, with more analysis and commentary and the development of proxy measures.

**RESOLVED**

That the Executive Director of Corporate Services design a balanced scorecard for consideration at a future meeting.

**9 PROPOSED SENIOR MANAGEMENT RESTRUCTURE**

The Committee considered a report which outlined the final proposals for the senior management structure following formal staff consultation. Approval was sought from the Committee to recommend these changes to full Council.

Draft proposals had been approved by the Staffing Committee on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2021 and approval had been given to undertake formal consultation with the affected staff. The outcome of the consultation was detailed in the report. The final proposed changes to the senior management structure had now been formulated, together with a timeline for the proposed recruitment process.

The Corporate Policy Committee noted that within the Corporate Services Directorate, the repurposing of the currently vacant Director of Transformation to the Director of Policy and Change had also been undertaken. The arrangements for the recruitment to that post were set out in the report.

The Corporate Policy Committee was also informed of the resignation of the Executive Director Place and agreed to recruit on a like-for-like basis on the same timescale as the other three senior posts.

## **RESOLVED**

That the Committee

1. recommends to full Council the adoption of the Senior Management Structure at Appendix 1 to the report;
2. recommends to full Council the deletion of the Executive Director People and the Strategic Director Adult Social Care and Health roles and the creation of 2 new posts: the Executive Director of Children's Services and the Executive Director of Adults, Health and Integration (Appendix 2) which include the statutory responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services and Director of Adults Social Services;
3. recommends to full Council the salaries in respect of the Executive Director of Children's Services and the Executive Director of Adults, Health and Integration which will be in excess of £100,000 (up to £136,313 / Grade CX2);
4. recommends to full Council that it delegate all constitutional changes, including the scheme of delegation, to the Monitoring Officer;
5. notes the summary of the consultation and progress since the Staffing Committee meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2021;
6. notes that following a formal procurement exercise, Tile Hill Executive Recruitment has been appointed as the executive search partner for the recruitment and selection processes;
7. notes the timeline for the recruitment and selection process, subject to approval by full Council; and
8. agrees to recruit to the post of Executive Director Place on a like-for-like basis on the same timescale as the other three senior posts referred to in the report.

## **10 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered its work programme.

It was noted that the Constitution Committee at its meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2021 had agreed the basis of a public and member engagement protocol and had referred the basis for the development of a non-administration group role in a committee to the Corporate Policy Committee. Both matters would now be referred to the Constitution Working Group for further consideration with a view to a report coming back to the Committee in due course.

**RESOLVED**

That the work programme be approved.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and concluded at 1.35 pm

Councillor S Corcoran (Chair)



*Working for a brighter future together*

## **Corporate Policy Committee**

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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	06 July 2021
<b>Report Title:</b>	Medium Term Financial Strategy – Corporate Services budgets 2021/22
<b>Report of:</b>	CLT Lead Officer: Alex Thompson, Director of Finance & Customer Services
<b>Report Reference No:</b>	CP/11/21-22
<b>Ward(s) Affected:</b>	All wards and all members will be affected and impacted by the content of the MTFS and Corporate Plan.

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### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1. The Corporate Plan and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for Cheshire East Council for the four years 2021/22 to 2024/25 was approved by full Council on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2021.
- 1.2. Cheshire East Council provides in the region of 500 local services every day. During 2020/21 the Council drafted and consulted on a new Corporate Plan to articulate a vision of how these services will make Cheshire East an Open, Fairer and Greener borough. The MTFS matches forecast resources to the costs associated with achieving the Council's vision.
- 1.3. The Finance Sub Committee meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021 approved the allocation of the approved capital and revenue budgets, related policy proposals and earmarked reserves to each of the service committees.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. To note the decision of the Finance Sub-Committee to allocate the approved capital and revenue budgets, related policy proposals and earmarked reserves to the Corporate Policy Committee, as set out in Appendix A.
- 2.2. To note the MTFS timelines, as set out in paragraphs 5.9 – 5.12.

- 2.3. To note the supplementary estimates and virements as set out in Appendix B.

### **3. Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1. The Corporate Policy Committee has the responsibility for the oversight, scrutiny, reviewing of outcomes and performance, budget monitoring and risk management of the Directorates of Finance & Customer Services; Governance & Compliance Services and Transformation including the following functions; Legal, Governance and Compliance; Audit and Risk; Transactional Services; Transformation; Business Change; B4B/ERP; Human Resources; ICT, together with Strategic Partnerships and shared services. .
- 3.2. Finance Sub-Committee met on 1 July and set out the budgets in accordance with the above responsibilities.

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

- 4.1. Not applicable.

### **5. Background**

- 5.1. All councils are legally required to set a balanced budget each year. The Budget Setting Process 2021-2025 was developed and endorsed by the Cabinet and Corporate Leadership Team in May 2020 and the MTFS was approved by full Council in February 2021.
- 5.2. The MTFS is balanced in line with the Section 25 statement from the Chief Finance Officer which states that he is satisfied with the robustness of the estimates and the adequacy of the financial reserves for the Council.
- 5.3. Finance Procedure Rules set limits and responsibilities for movement of funds within this balanced position, treating reserves as part of this overall position. Any movement within this balanced position is treated as a virement. To increase the overall size of the MTFS requires a supplementary estimate, which must be backed with appropriate new funding and approved in line with the Procedure Rules.
- 5.4. On 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020 the Council resolved to cease operating the existing Leader and Cabinet model of governance and implement a committee system model of governance to take effect from the Annual Council meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021.
- 5.5. The 2021/22 budget is now the overseen by the appropriate committees and this report sets out the allocation of the revenue and capital budgets and earmarked reserves to the Corporate Policy Committee in accordance with its functions.
- 5.6. Each committee Function has been associated with a Director budget. Budget holders are responsible for budget management. Where a team supports multiple Directors (most notable in Corporate Services) the budget

remains with the Director and is not split, for example, Governance and Democratic Services are aligned to the Corporate Policy Committee even though the activity of the team is split across all teams.

- 5.7. The financial alignment of budgets to each Committee is set out in Table 1 with further details on the Corporate Policy Committee budgets in Appendix A.

**Table 1: Revenue and Capital Budgets allocated to service committees as per the approved MTFS**

Committee	Expenditure £m	Income £m	Net Budget £m	Total Capital Budget £m	Total Rev + Cap £m
Adults and Health	178.348	-59.304	119.044	<b>1.434</b>	<b>120.478</b>
Highways and Transport	23.090	-11.849	11.241	<b>90.996</b>	<b>102.237</b>
Children and Families	74.100	-5.906	68.194	<b>22.683</b>	<b>90.877</b>
Economy and Growth	32.692	-10.866	21.826	<b>31.459</b>	<b>53.285</b>
Environment and Communities	52.512	-10.613	41.899	<b>11.220</b>	<b>53.119</b>
Corporate Policy	112.635	-76.421	36.214	<b>6.451</b>	<b>42.665</b>
Finance Sub Committee	19.340	-6.662	12.678	<b>7.030</b>	<b>19.708</b>
			-311.096	<b>-171.274</b>	<b>-482.370</b>
<b>Original Budget (MTFS Feb 21)</b>	<b>492.717</b>	<b>-181.621</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>

- 5.8. The 2021-25 MTFS includes a net revenue budget of £311.1m and an approved capital programme of £171.3m for the financial year 2021/22. Further details on the schemes within the capital programme for the Corporate Policy Committee are provided in Appendix A.

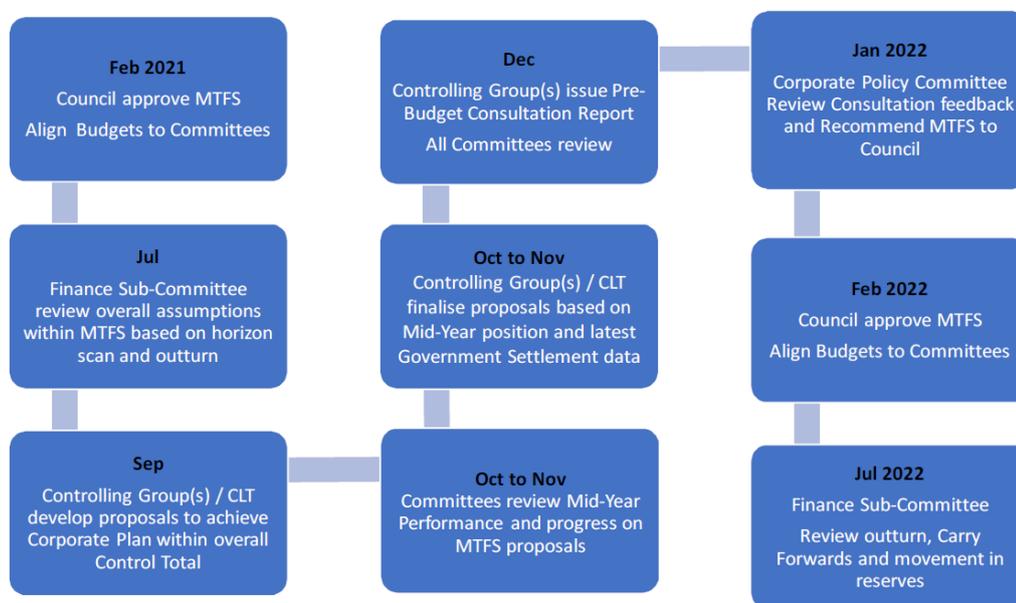
### **MTFS Timelines**

- 5.9. Council-wide budget control rests with the Corporate Policy Committee (and Finance Sub Committee) and Council. Budgets have been aligned with service committees to facilitate expenditure assurance, but committees do not hold 'a budget'. Responsibility for budget management remains with officers but the Committee is responsible for assuring the budget is spent on delivering the objectives set out in the policy framework of the Corporate Plan.
- 5.10. The new budget process will provide each committee with a review of the mid-year position and the opportunity to comment on future proposals relating to their areas, by individual service area, which can be considered with the new budgetary consultation process and will be considered by Corporate Policy Committee for recommendation to Council.
- 5.11. Sessions will be arranged for all members in advance of the wider consultation on proposals. This will increase opportunities for all members to engage with the process to review the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. Members will be invited to attend sessions that will allow them to share ideas to support development of future proposals in an informal setting. This

approach was well received when trialled in 2019, but, due to circumstances, could not be re-run in 2020.

5.12. The budget setting process is set out below:

### Indicative Budget Setting Process



## 6. Consultation and Engagement

- 6.1. The annual business planning process involves engagement with local people and organisations. Local authorities have a statutory duty to consult on their Budget with certain stakeholder groups including the Schools Forum and businesses. In addition, the Council chooses to consult with other stakeholder groups. The Council continues to carry out stakeholder analysis to identify the different groups involved in the budget setting process, what information they need from us, the information we currently provide these groups with, and where we can improve our engagement process.
- 6.2. Cheshire East Council conducted an engagement process on its Medium-Term Financial Plans through a number of stages running from December 2020 to Council in February 2021.
- 6.3. The budget consultation launched on-line on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020, included details of the proposals against each (draft) Corporate Plan aim. This consultation was made available to various stakeholder groups and through a number of forums.

## **7. Implications**

### **7.1. Legal**

- 7.1.1. The legal implications surrounding the process of setting the 2021 to 2025 Medium Term Financial Strategy were dealt with in the reports relating to that process.

### **7.2. Finance**

- 7.2.1. Contained within the main body of the report.

### **7.3. Policy**

- 7.3.1. The Corporate Plan sets the policy context for the MTFs and the two documents are aligned. Any policy implications that arise from activities funded by the budgets that this report deals with will be dealt within the individual reports to Members or Officer Decision Records to which they relate.

### **7.4. Equality**

- 7.4.1. The Council needs to ensure that in taking decisions on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, the Budget and the Corporate Plan, the impacts on those with protected characteristics are considered. The Council undertakes equality impact assessments where necessary and continues to do so as proposals and projects develop across the lifetime of the Corporate Plan. The process assists us to consider what actions could mitigate any adverse impacts identified. Completed equality impact assessments form part of any detailed Business Cases which support the detailed budget.
- 7.4.2. Any equality implications that arise from activities funded by the budgets that this report deals with will be dealt within the individual reports to Members or Officer Decision Records to which they relate.

### **7.5. Human Resources**

- 7.5.1. Any HR implications that arise from activities funded by the budgets that this report deals with will be dealt within the individual reports to Members or Officer Decision Records to which they relate.

### **7.6. Risk Management**

- 7.6.1. Financial sustainability remains a strategic risk for Cheshire East Council as for most local authorities given the lack of a comprehensive settlement. Risks associated with delivering The MTFs are assessed and reported on a regular basis, and remedial action taken if and when required. Risks associated with the achievement of the 2021/22 budget and the level of general reserves were factored into the 2021/22 financial scenario, budget, and reserves strategy.

**7.7. Rural Communities**

7.7.1. The report provides details of service provision across the borough.

**7.8. Children and Young People/Cared for Children**

7.8.1. The report provides details of service provision across the borough.

**7.9. Public Health**

7.9.1. Public health implications that arise from activities that this report deals with will be dealt with as separate reports to Members or Officer Decision Records as required.

**7.10. Climate Change**

7.10.1. Any climate change implications that arise from activities funded by the budgets that this report deals with will be dealt within the individual reports to Members or Officer Decision Records to which they relate.

<b>Access to Information</b>	
Contact Officer:	Alex Thompson Director of Finance and Customer Services (Section 151 Officer) <a href="mailto:alex.thompson@cheshireeast.gov.uk">alex.thompson@cheshireeast.gov.uk</a>
Appendices:	<b>A</b> - Allocation of capital and revenue budgets, earmarked reserves and policy proposals to service committees <b>B</b> – Supplementary Estimates
Background Papers:	The following are links to key background documents:

**Appendix A – Allocation of capital and revenue budgets, earmarked reserves and policy proposals to service committees.**

<b>2021/22 Corporate Policy MTFS pages 176-178</b>	<b>Exp £m</b>	<b>Inc £m</b>	<b>Revenue Budget £m</b>	<b>Capital Budget £m</b>	<b>Total Rev + Cap £m</b>
<b>Directorate (Corporate)</b>	0.35	0.00	<b>0.35</b>	0.00	<b>0.35</b>
<b>Finance &amp; Customer Services</b>	59.58	-49.73	<b>9.86</b>	1.19	<b>11.04</b>
<b>Transformation</b>	39.12	-23.30	<b>15.81</b>	5.26	<b>21.08</b>
<b>Governance &amp; Compliance</b>	13.59	-3.39	<b>10.20</b>	0.00	<b>10.20</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>112.64</b>	<b>-76.42</b>	<b>36.21</b>	<b>6.45</b>	<b>42.67</b>

<b>Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>Estimated Opening Balance as at 1st April 2021 £m</b>
Transformation Programme	0.74
Other reserves	0.66

# Corporate Policy

## CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021/22 - 2024/25

Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure					Total Budget £000
	Prior Years £000	Budget 2021/22 £000	Budget 2022/23 £000	Budget 2023/24 £000	Budget 2024/25 £000	
<b>Committed Schemes - In Progress</b>						
<b>Transformation</b>						
Core Financials	7,522	1,167	0	0	0	8,689
IADM (Information Assurance and Data Management)	13,465	1,500	0	0	0	14,965
Unified Communications Project	366	300	310	230	0	1,206
Vendor Management	487	519	0	0	0	1,006
Infrastructure Investment Programme (IIP)	27,073	1,777	0	0	0	28,850
<b>Finance and Customer Services</b>						
Best4Business Programme	22,553	1,188	0	0	0	23,741
<b>Total Committed Schemes - In Progress</b>	<b>71,466</b>	<b>6,451</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>78,457</b>

Budget Policy Proposal	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
[17] Capital Programme Review	-1,000	1,000		
[1] Local Election Costs	150			
[2] Census 2021	-20			
[45] People Directorate - ICT Procurements 2020-24 (Revenue implications of Capital)	60	63	66	19
[46] Place Directorate - ICT Procurements 2020-24 (Revenue implications of Capital)	11	11	11	11
[47] Corporate Directorate - ICT Procurements 2020-24 (Revenue implications of Capital)	2	2	2	2
[44] Unified Communications (Revenue implications of Capital)	251	283	296	
[43] Infrastructure Investment Programme (Revenue implications of Capital)	59	127	224	
[54] Reduce central training budget	-80			

Budget Policy Proposal	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
[21] Review of corporate subscriptions	-35	-15		
[13] Efficiency savings and Restructures within Corporate Services	-200	-350		
[15] Shared services review			-200	
[32] Commercial Workstream	-100			
[16] Improved Debt Recovery and correcting budgeted court costs income targets to reflect actual levels	-290	225	50	50
[14] Review Staff Terms and Conditions	-50	-350	-100	
[18] Member allowances and reduced mileage	-30			
[5] Core Financial System	764	-459		
[4] Housing Benefit – Supported Accommodation	1,300			
[6+7] Mitigation of reduction in the Dedicated Schools Grant	150	107	122	136

Budget Policy Proposal	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
Budget Policy Proposal	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
34] Brighter Futures Together Programme Customer Experience	-120	-133	-81	
[3] Pay inflationary increase	1,662	3,753	3,833	3,922

## Appendix B – Supplementary Estimates

**Table A - Supplementary Estimates less than £1,000,000**

Committee	Year	Type of Grant	£000	Details
Corporate Policy	2020/21	Covid-19 Test and Trace Support (Specific Purpose)	489	Standard grant, discretionary grant, and grant administration. This payment is designed to support people on low incomes, if they will lose income as a result of self-isolating, and to encourage them to get tested if they have symptoms. This is important to help stop the transmission of COVID-19 and avoid further economic and societal restrictions.
Corporate Policy	2020/21	Additional Individual Electoral Registration Grant (General Purpose)	93	The funding is to cover the additional costs of Individual Electoral Registration (IER) already incurred from Electoral Services budget in 2020/21 financial year.
Corporate Policy	2020/21	Covid-19 LA Framework/ Practical Support for those Self Isolating (Specific Purpose)	71	The purpose of the grant is to provide funding to local authorities to provide practical support for those self-isolating.
Corporate Policy	2020/21	Covid-19 Housing Benefit Administration Subsidy – Additional 2020/21 Funding (General Purpose)	36	This is a one-off payment by the Department for Work and Pensions for maintaining the Housing Benefit service during the COVID-19 pandemic and acknowledging the cost impact on service delivery throughout this period.

Committee	Year	Type of Grant	£000	Details
Corporate Policy	2020/21	New Burdens - Council Tax Hardship Fund and Business Rate Reliefs (Specific Purpose)	33	Administration of Council Tax Hardship Relief and Business Rate Reliefs.
Corporate Policy	2020/21	Local Government Transparency Code - New Burdens (General Purpose)	13	New burdens in relation to the Council's obligation to publish information in line with the Government's Transparency Code 2014.
Corporate Policy	2021/22	Covid-19 Business Support Grant New Burdens (Specific Purpose)	353	Administration of Business Support Grants; This grant is intended to fund costs incurred in the administration of business support grants including staff costs, software updates, print & postage, and other 3rd party support.
Corporate Policy	2021/22	Covid-19 Welcome Back Fund (Specific Purpose)	339	Funding to support the return to high streets safely and help build back better from the pandemic.
Corporate Policy	2021/22	Covid-19 Local Elections (Specific Purpose)	14	The funding is to cover the costs of Covid-19 safety measures for the Borough by-election, Town and Parish by-elections and Neighbourhood Planning Referendums (NPRs) taking place on Thursday 6 May 2021.
<b>Total Grants £1m or Below</b>				

**Table B - Supplementary Estimates over £1,000,000**

Committee		Type of Grant	£000	Details
Corporate Policy	2021/22	Covid-19 Business Rates Reliefs 2021/22 (Specific Purpose)	15,983	HM Treasury announced a new business rates relief fund worth £1.5 billion for businesses affected by COVID-19 that have been unable to benefit from the existing reliefs package for retail, hospitality, and leisure businesses.
Corporate Policy	2021/22	Covid-19 Local Authority Support Grant (General Purpose)	8,508	Funding to manage the immediate and long-term impacts of the pandemic.
Corporate Policy	2021/22	Covid-19 Additional Restrictions Grant Top-up Allocation (Specific Purpose)	3,405	Supports businesses that are not covered by other grant schemes or where additional funding is needed.
Corporate Policy	2021/22	Covid-19 Council Tax Support Scheme (Specific Purpose)	3,373	To enable councils to continue reducing council tax bills for those least able to pay, including households financially hard-hit by the pandemic.
<b>Total Grants over £1m Recommended to Council by Finance Sub-Committee</b>				

**Table C – Urgent Decisions already made**

Committee	Year	Type of Grant	£000	Details
Corporate Policy	2020/21	Covid-19 Local Restrictions Grant (Specific Purpose)	10,247	Additional Restrictions Support as part of the wider set of measures to support the nation's economy and its businesses in response to Coronavirus (Covid-19).
Corporate Policy	2021/22	Covid-19 Business Restart Grants (Specific Purpose)	21,295	Urgent Decision made by Chief Executive. The new 'Restart Grants' will offer hospitality, hotels, gyms, hair, and beauty salons up to £18,000 per premises, allocated based on the rateable value of the property. Local councils will distribute the grants.
<b>Decisions Already Made</b>				

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## **Corporate Policy Committee**

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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	06 July 2021
<b>Report Title:</b>	Apprenticeship Levy Procurement Framework
<b>Report of:</b>	Jane Burns - Executive Director, Corporate Services
<b>Report Reference No:</b>	CP/13/21-22
<b>Ward(s) Affected:</b>	All wards

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### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1. This report provides a proposed way forward for the procurement of apprenticeship training provision across the Council, ASDVs and maintained schools.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. That Corporate Policy Committee:
  - 2.1.1. Delegates authority to the Executive Director of Corporate Services, to set the Council up to utilise the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO) Framework – Apprenticeships and Associated Training 883 to award contracts, where possible, to training providers using YPO's call off contract template. This requires the Council to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement – Customer Access Agreement. Authority is further delegated to enable officers to utilise the replacement YPO framework scheduled for summer 2022 which will replace the existing version.
  - 2.1.2. Authorises the Executive Director of Corporate Services to take all necessary actions to implement the proposal.
  - 2.1.3. Receives a further update report on the strategic approach to apprenticeship delivery at the Council.

### **3. Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1.** Framework agreements were not yet available when the apprenticeship levy was set up in 2017, hence the development of the current Council framework.
- 3.2.** The YPO framework is fully compliant with Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and provides an extensive list of providers. Providers can be added every quarter which enables the Council to establish a preferred supplier list within the YPO framework. The framework also reduces the current administrative burden for the Council.

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

- 4.1.** The development of a further procurement framework specific to Cheshire East Council has been considered, but this option has proved resource intensive and a considerable administrative burden for Workforce Development, Legal Services and Procurement.
- 4.2.** The proposed option is much less onerous and also offers more flexibility to access a wider range of training providers and apprenticeship standards.
- 4.3.** Other framework providers offer apprenticeship solutions. These are via a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS), which does not offer direct award flexibility. It is necessary to retain the right to make direct awards to continue to cover the range of apprenticeships the Council wishes to access.

### **5. Background**

- 5.1.** From April 2017, the Finance Bill (2016) introduced a new funding mechanism for apprenticeships, an 'apprenticeship levy'. The levy is paid by employers (including the public sector) on 0.5% of pay bill. All employers receive an annual allowance of £15,000 to offset against their levy, meaning that the levy only applies to employers whose annual wage bill is £3 million or above. Employers in England who pay the levy do get out more than they pay into the levy, through a 10% top-up to their digital accounts. This applies to all employers who pay the apprenticeship levy. The 10% top up is credited to the digital accounts of employers on a monthly basis, irrespective of the number of apprentices they have.
- 5.2.** The levy payment made by Cheshire East Council is made available to the Council through an Apprenticeship Service account. The functionality of this online portal enables the Council to search for training providers, advertise apprenticeship opportunities, select the most appropriate training provider and is also the tool used to pay selected training providers for the training element of our apprenticeships. Funds expire 24 months after they appear in the digital account.
- 5.3.** Cheshire East Council calculates, reports, and pays its apprenticeship levy to HMRC through the PAYE process alongside tax and NICs.

- 5.4.** Following a previous report submitted to Cabinet on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2017, Cheshire East Council developed and has since utilised its own preferred supplier list, via a formal OJEU tendering process. After a series of rounds, the framework has more than 70 suppliers available for different courses in place. This framework expires on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021.
- 5.5.** Whilst this did provide options for the procurement of apprenticeship training, many of the training providers required did not fall within the framework. This has resulted in an additional administrative burden for several services across the Council as the development and review of additional contracts has been required. It is anticipated that this may continue to some extent with the YPO Framework and direct awards will still be occasionally required to ensure the Council is able to access the apprenticeship standards it requires, but it is anticipated that overall workloads will be reduced.
- 5.6.** Apprenticeship training provider frameworks have developed extensively in the last four years and a review undertaken by the Procurement Team has found more effective and efficient options now in the marketplace. The proposed framework provider is YPO. The Council has a strong relationship with the framework provider, and they have been used successfully by the Council to contract with colleges who are not currently on our framework. Utilising a framework provider means the Council has access to more resource to manage training providers and the apprenticeship standards they offer. YPO also has a simple portal for contracting new college/courses which will benefit the council in terms of resource and speed to implement contracts. Using a framework will mean no above threshold level procurement to manage suppliers would be required.
- 5.7.** This is a fully compliant framework adhering to Public Contract Regulations 2015. Cheshire East Council will agree to use the YPO framework and will then contract with available providers via the framework. This framework expires on 31/7/2022 and it is expected to be replaced with a similar framework.
- 5.8.** The framework has allowed the Council to deliver a range of apprenticeships, which has expanded significantly since the inception of the apprenticeship levy in April 2017. This has provided the Council with a valuable resource to attract, develop and retain our workforce. The opportunity presented by the later introduction of an allowance to transfer unspent levy funds to other employers has also afforded the ability to improve the skills base across the wider Cheshire East footprint.

## 6. Implications

### 6.1. Legal

- 6.1.1. The Finance Act 2016 created an obligation on certain major employers, including the Council, to pay the Apprenticeship Levy with effect from the 2017/18 tax year.
- 6.1.2. In commissioning training providers to supply apprenticeship qualifications, the Council must comply with both the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Council's own Contract Procedure Rules.
- 6.1.3. The YPO Apprenticeships and Associated Training Framework Agreement 833 runs from 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2021 with two possible extensions, to 31 July 2022 when it is anticipated that a new agreement will be put in place. It is understood to be compliant with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. The OJEU notice references to the Government list of Local Authorities able to use the Framework Agreement and Cheshire East Council is listed.
- 6.1.4. The YPO has agreed a set of framework terms and conditions between YPO and the provider. These cannot be amended by the Council. YPO has created call-off terms and conditions for the Council to put in place with a provider, which can be amended if both parties agree. Legal Services will draft any such required amendments.

### 6.2. Finance

- 6.2.1. The apprentice levy is set at 0.5% of total payroll that is subject to National Insurance. The anticipated annual cost is around £743,000. The Government deducts a portion of this figure (approximately £20,000) to reflect employees who live outside England and then tops up the remainder by 10%. Based on figures to date, the anticipated total annual amount available to spend will be around £797,388. This figure has reduced, and will continue to do so, as schools have left/leave the Council to become academies. Apprenticeship levy funds expire after a period of two years if they remain unspent.

### 6.3. Policy

- 6.3.1. Supporting delivery of the Corporate Plan, the apprenticeship programme provides an additional significant resource to develop and retain our workforce and supporting them to be confident, motivated, and resilient.
- 6.3.2. The use of a compliant framework allows the Council to be fair and transparent in its approach to the procurement of apprenticeship training, whilst retaining an ambition to use local providers wherever possible. This is consistent with the Council's Social Value Policy.

**6.4. Equality**

6.4.1. The continued offer of new apprenticeships at the Council attracts and retains young people within our workforce.

**6.5. Human Resources**

6.5.1. This compliant procurement route will reduce the administrative burden for Human Resources of managing the apprenticeship levy.

6.5.2. In addition to attracting new talent into the organisation, the continued offer of apprenticeships supports the development of our existing workforce through succession planning and talent management and addresses identified skills. Established career pathways are now in place across a number of areas that support wider recruitment and retention issues.

**6.6. Risk Management**

6.6.1. A timetable for the awarding of the contracts is in place to ensure that the required deadlines are met.

**6.7. Rural Communities**

6.7.1. There are no implications.

**6.8. Children and Young People/Cared for Children**

6.8.1. This report relates only to the procurement of training providers, but it should be noted that work has begun on how the increase in apprenticeship opportunities at the Council can form part of a Cared for Children Strategy.

**6.9. Public Health**

6.9.1. There are none.

**6.10. Climate Change**

6.10.1. There are none.

<b>Access to Information</b>	
Contact Officer:	Abigail Rushton Abigail.rushton@cheshireeast.gov.uk 01270 686583
Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	None

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## **Corporate Policy Committee**

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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	06 July 2021
<b>Report Title:</b>	Organisational Culture Change Programme
<b>Report of:</b>	Jane Burns: Executive Director, Corporate Services
<b>Report Reference No:</b>	CP/09/21-22
<b>Ward(s) Affected:</b>	All Wards

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### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1. This report provides an update on the work undertaken on the Brighter Future Together (Culture) Programme. It covers its key milestones, the pulse survey, benefits, and work planned for 2021 and beyond, contributing to the Council achieving its priority to support and develop a workforce to be confident, motivated, innovative, resilient, and empowered.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. That Corporate Policy Committee:
- 2.1.1. Note the report.
- 2.1.2. Agree to monitor progress of future actions.

### **3. Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1. To ensure Members are kept up to date with the progress on the Brighter Future Together (Culture) Programme and its contribution to the Council achieving its priority to support and develop a workforce to be confident, motivated, innovative, resilient, and empowered.

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

- 4.1 Not applicable

## 5 Briefing Information

### 5.1 Update on Activity

5.1.1 The achievement of all the recommendations made within the LGA's culture review in 2018 was recognised by the Corporate Peer Challenge carried out in January 2020. The Brighter Future Culture Programme has continued to embed our collective vision for workplace culture, with our values, behaviours and employee deal being co-produced by staff. Our vision and values continue to be embedded through the Corporate Plan and the Brighter Future Transformation Programme.

5.1.2 There has been an emphasis for the Brighter Future Together (Culture) Programme since March 2020 on supporting staff and promoting their wellbeing throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Feedback from staff on the additional wellbeing initiatives, put into place as a response to the pandemic, has been excellent. These have included:

- **Time to Listen and Chat 'TLC' calls.** Originally set up in April 2020 to provide wellbeing support to all staff through themed calls.
- **Workplace Wellbeing Conversation Toolkits.** These have been added to those that already exist to support managers in having conversations with their staff around managing their resilience and wellbeing.
- **Manager Support Sessions.** These themed sessions will continue to run to support all people managers across the organisation manage their staff and provide an opportunity to share best practice. The forum has also proved a highly effective mechanism for 'sense checking' new initiatives.
- **'Golden Practices'.** These were developed and launched initially in September 2020 in conjunction with the Brighter Future Champions. A series of 'Golden Practices' will continue to be rolled out to help staff achieve the right balance between being productive and maintaining a positive approach to health and wellbeing at work each day.
- **Stress and resilience training for individuals and managers.** Modules have included resilience, wellbeing and managing staff remotely.

5.1.3 The Brighter Future Champions have continued to meet virtually throughout the pandemic every month and been used to 'sense check' issues and initiatives and as a valuable source of feedback from staff on how services are working under difficult circumstances. These sessions are attended by the Chief Executive, Lorraine O'Donnell.

5.1.4 Following on from a 'Pulse' survey carried out in July 2020, the Council commissioned the same third-party company, Djs Employee Research, to

conduct a follow-up employee survey – ‘Looking to the Future’ to understand how staff are feeling around a wide range of issues focussed on the current and future ways of working. The survey was conducted over a three-week period between 29 March and 23 April 2021. All employees were given the opportunity to participate in the survey via an electronic link which could be used on any work or personal device. Additionally, staff who do not have access to a personal or work device were offered support via libraries to complete the survey.

5.1.5 The purpose of the survey was to understand how staff feel about the current way of working, how effective it has been for individuals, teams, and our customers and how staff might work in the future. The survey results will inform the work being undertaken by the wider *Future Workplace* workstream.

5.1.6 In total 2110 employees completed the survey. This equates to a 59% response rate. This response rate is higher than the previous Pulse Survey and the last full staff survey, which both reported a 55% response rate. Djs Employee Research provided a summary infographic, which can be seen as Appendix 2. Importantly 82% of staff enjoy working for Cheshire East Council and 87% feel trusted to do their job. 81% also agree that communication from the Council has been effective since the pandemic began.

5.1.7 The overall survey findings were broken down by directorate (Adults, Children’s, Corporate and Place) and then into service level to better inform individual service workplace design.

5.1.8 A key element of the culture programme more recently has been the support offered to the wider transformation programme. This has included:

- **Customer Experience** - a team conversation, linking in with the customer journey has been developed alongside an e-learning module for all staff. Customer Service managers have all attended the first stage of the manager development programme attending a ‘Having the Conversation’ session.
- **Carbon Neutral.** Work is underway to develop a carbon neutral conversation toolkit. This will include a conversation to be used at a 1:1 meeting and a team conversation. A carbon neutral e-learning module was reviewed by members of this project group and is currently live on Learning Lounge and support has been given to the Communications Team to engage with staff on the Wildlife Trust’s #30DaysWild campaign.
- **Governance** – phase one of the training has been commissioned and delivered to Members and officers. An e-learning module has also been developed in conjunction with Democratic Services. The inaugural meetings of the new services committees and the Finance Sub-Committee have included presentations covering member/officer relationships and mutual respect.

- **Commercial** – a training programme has been co-ordinated and will be rolled out from June onwards.
- **Workplace** - the recent pulse survey was developed in conjunction with the Estates and ICT programme to ensure it provided relevant information to inform future workplace design, as covered in para 5.1.5.

## 5.2 Key Milestones & Next Steps

5.2.1 The diagram at Appendix 1 sets out the key milestones for the Culture Programme for the next 12 months.

5.2.2 The Pulse Survey results have provided a wealth of information to develop future ways of working. Sharing of the results will stimulate a wider conversation around future workplace design, providing an enhanced understanding of the results. This will allow key priorities and actions to be agreed to support customers, service delivery and our staff.

5.2.3 The development of a 'flexible workplace handbook', with input from Brighter Future Champions will set out clear cultural principles for the future way of working that will inform service agreements, alongside toolkit conversations for teams and individuals to support the shift in workplace design. It will act as a 'one-stop' point of reference, including links and further information on wellbeing, training and future support alongside the relevant HR policies and risk assessments. This will be launched in the Autumn.

5.2.4 A revised agile and flexible working policy will also be launched, following further consultation with the trade unions.

5.2.5 The success of the additional wellbeing initiatives has meant that these activities will now become part of business as usual and allow further engagement with staff and the enhancement of the employee deal.

5.2.6 As part of the wider business planning process, services were asked to complete a Service Workforce Plan, in line with bespoke HR data for their areas. The workforce plans will be used to inform wider workforce priorities and an overarching Workforce Strategy for the Council.

5.2.7 Training plans and the existing programme for leadership and management development will be updated to reflect new ways of working.

5.2.8 There are also several measures that demonstrate the benefits of the Culture Programme, linked to key priorities in the Corporate Plan: -

- % staff satisfaction rates. In the latest staff survey, 82% of staff said that they enjoyed working for Cheshire East Council.
- Staff turnover rates - in 2020-21 employee turnover was 8.3%, which is lower than the previous four financial years.
- Staff absence - sickness absence as days lost per FTE employee during 2020-21 at 8.93 days per year has fallen year on year since 2016/2017.
- Empowered staff and streamlined robust processes – the number of Brighter Future Champions has remained consistent at 110.
- Wider results from staff surveys around trust and communication – 87% of staff state that they feel trusted to do their job.
- Remote working is built into the ethos and ways of working within the organisation so that we release council office space. This is being taken forward as part of the *Future Workplace* workstream.

## **6 Consultation and Engagement**

6.1 Consultation with staff through the Pulse Survey is described above. Consultation with the trade unions has been carried out throughout the Programme.

## **7 Implications**

### **7.1 Legal**

7.1.1 There are no legal implications for the Council at this stage.

### **7.2 Finance**

7.2.1 The work is being done within existing resources.

### **7.3 Policy**

7.3.1 This is consistent with and complements the policy context set out in the Corporate Plan.

### **7.4 Equality**

7.4.1 The cultural change programme is all inclusive. Additional consideration is given to ensuring accessibility for all staff. Further links are being built with the EDI Board in the work undertaken on the future way of working.

### **7.5 Human Resources**

7.5.1 The outcomes of the programme inform and influence service redesign and restructuring and 'the deal' for our employees.

### **7.6 Risk Management**

7.6.1 The relevant strategic risks are capacity and demand (SR6) and dealing with the pandemic (SR11).

**7.7 Rural Communities**

7.7.1 There are no implications for rural communities.

**7.8 Children and Young People/Cared for Children**

7.8.1 There are no implications for young people and cared for children.

**7.9 Public Health**

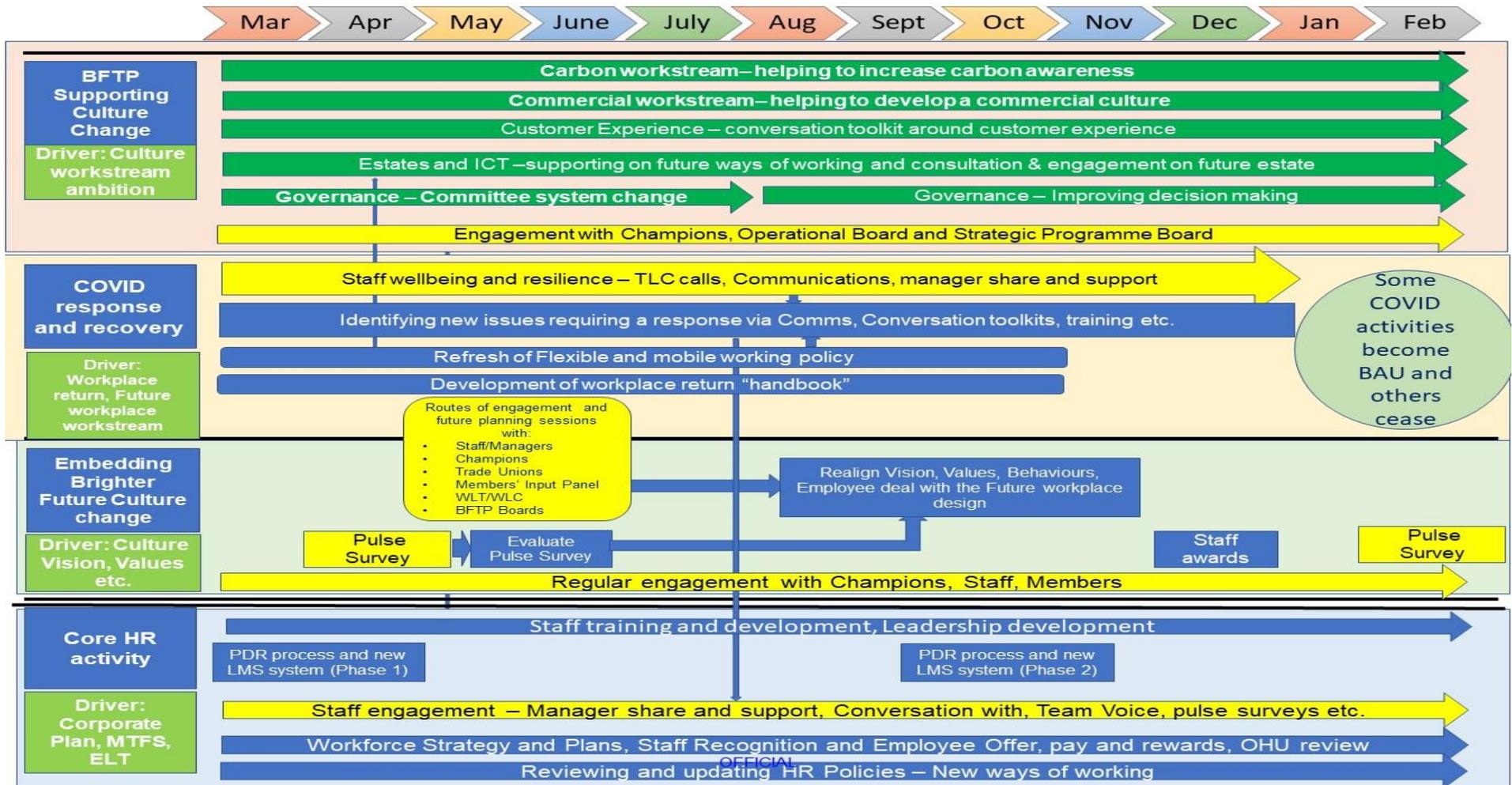
7.9.1 There are no public health implications for the Council.

**7.10 Climate Change**

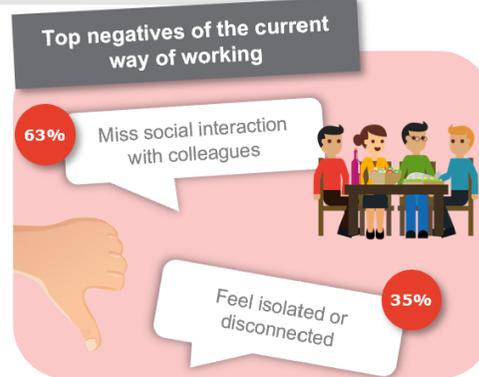
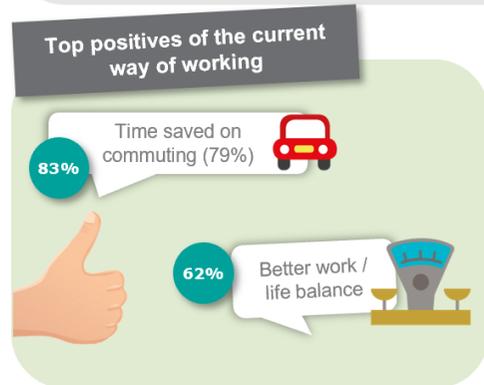
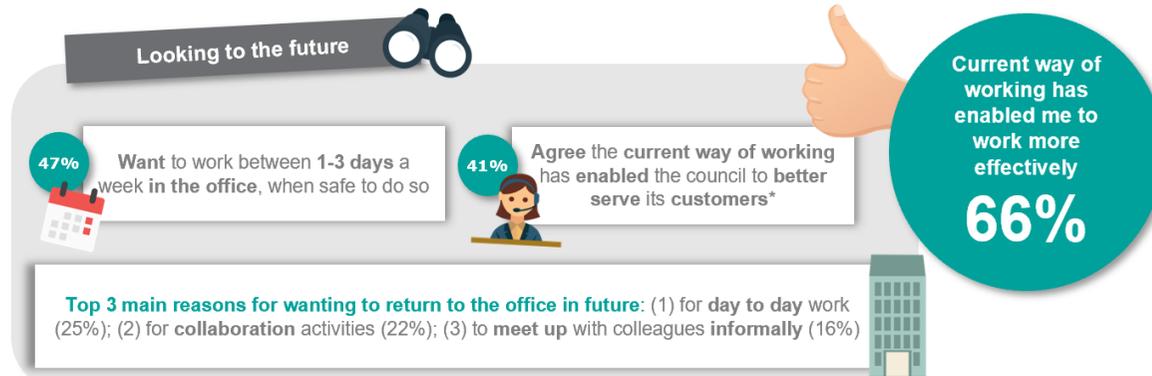
7.10.1 The new ways of working will contribute towards a reduction in the amount of commuting and travelling carried out in staff. This will support the Council’s pledge to become carbon neutral by 2025.

<b>Access to Information</b>	
Contact Officer:	Sara Barker Sara.barker@cheshireeast.gov.uk 01270 686328
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Milestones Appendix 2 – Staff survey infographic
Background Papers:	All information in relation to the Brighter Future Culture Programme can be viewed on Centranet.

# Appendix 1 – Key Milestones



# Looking to the future

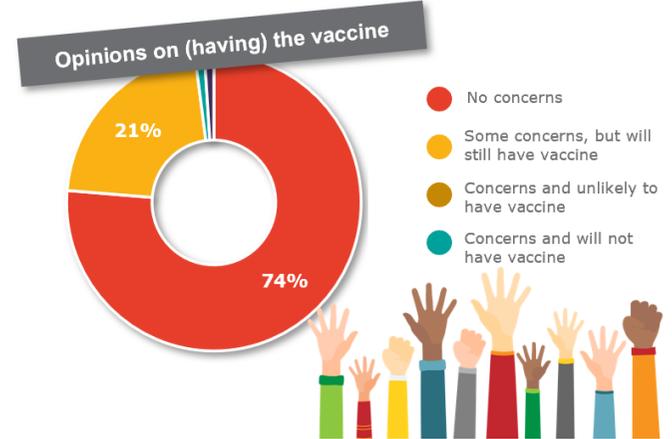


Data collection in March and April 2021. Response rate: 59%. No. of responses: 2,110 of 3,600

\*Question in relation to serving customers asked during lockdown. A continuation of the current way of working after restrictions are lifted might not be optimal



Part of the DJS Research group





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## **Corporate Policy Committee**

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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	06 July 2021
<b>Report Title:</b>	Consultation on Council Tax Support Scheme 2022/23
<b>Report of:</b>	Alex Thompson, Director of Finance and Customer Services
<b>Report Reference No:</b>	CP/12/21-22
<b>Ward(s) Affected:</b>	All

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### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1.** This report is to seek approval from the Committee on proposals to consult on the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2022/23. The Scheme provides reductions in Council Tax to give financial assistance to people on low incomes. The Committee will receive feedback from the consultation process prior to making recommendations to Council of any potential amendments to the scheme.
- 1.2.** The Medium Term Financial Strategy set out Council Tax increases for Cheshire East Council of 4.99% in 2021/22 and subsequent annual increase of 1.99%. Locally the Council has seen large increases in claims for support, particularly related to people affected by the pandemic. The Council Tax increases were important to provide financial stability and support essential services. In agreeing the MTFS, a commitment was made to review the Council Tax Support Scheme to see how households on low incomes could be protected and the proposals will be developed to ensure the MTFS is not adversely affected. To amend the scheme requires consultation and a subsequent Council decision as part of the process to set the Council Tax Base each year.
- 1.3.** The consultation will consider options to increase support levels whilst remaining affordable within the Council's financial strategy. The review aims to minimise the impact of increasing Council Tax levels.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1. To agree to a formal consultation on the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2022/23
- 2.2. To delegate final design of the consultation material to the Director of Finance and Customer Services in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee.

## 3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1. The caseload for Council Tax Support has increased by 37% during the pandemic (see **table 2** at **5.6**). As part of a package of financial support to local authorities MHCLG provided a grant of £3.37m (The Local Council Tax Support Schemes grant) to assist with the additional pressures households are facing. In setting the MTFS the Council disregarded this grant for two reasons; to recognise the risk of the increasing caseload and to provide potential flexibility to review the scheme and increase overall levels of support. The options being considered are modelled against the available grant and the potential feedback from the consultation, when received.
- 3.2. Under the current scheme all working age customers must contribute a minimum of 25% towards their Council Tax liability but the level is capped to that of a Band B property in their area. The 4.99% increase in Council Tax for 2021/22 disproportionately affected those on lower income.
- 3.3. The proposed changes to the Council Tax Support scheme being consulted on can ensure the most vulnerable are supported whilst recognising the financial challenges the Council faces.

## 4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. The scheme could remain unchanged, without any requirement for consultation, subject to the annual approval required by full Council (income bands will increase by CPI).
- 4.2. The consultation could consider widening the income bands within the scheme so that maximum awards could be increased, however this would exceed the funding available, reducing the tax base further and unbalance the current MTFS.
- 4.3. Consultation could consider an award of a set amount to each household in receipt of Council Tax Support similar to the Council Tax Covid-19 Hardship Fund. Under that fund those in receipt of Council Tax Support during 2020/21 were awarded up to an additional £150 on top of their normal award. This fund was based on a specific response to the pandemic. The future local scheme should remain sustainable and consistent with the accessibility of the current scheme and does not therefore consider 'lump sum' or 'set amount' payments.

## 5. Background

- 5.1.** Council Tax Benefit was abolished as part of Central Government's welfare reform changes. This was replaced in April 2013 by a local Council Tax Support Scheme approved by full Council each year.
- 5.2.** The Council's scheme only affects those of working age. This means pensioners are not affected by this consultation. MHCLG maintain the scheme for pensioners at a national level, which mirrors the former Council Tax Benefit.
- 5.3.** The local scheme was last fully reviewed in 2019, and changes were made for 2020/21 following a public consultation, approved by Council on 19 December 2019. This change introduced a 'banded scheme', that is reviewed annually in line with the Consumer Price Index for September of the preceding year.
- 5.4.** The current bands for 2021/22 are as follows:

Single		Couple		Family – one child		Family – two or more children		Maximum Council Tax Support
0.00	90.45	0.00	140.70	0.00	201.00	0.00	291.45	<b>75%</b>
90.46	115.58	140.71	170.85	201.01	231.15	291.46	321.60	<b>60%</b>
115.59	140.70	170.86	201.00	231.16	271.35	321.61	361.80	<b>45%</b>
140.71	165.83	201.01	231.15	271.36	301.50	361.81	391.95	<b>30%</b>
165.84	190.95	231.16	261.30	301.51	321.60	391.96	411.05	<b>15%</b>

*1 Council Tax Support income bands 2021/22*

- 5.5.** In addition, the following are considered when determining entitlement:
- Disregard the first £40 of weekly income for those households where the claimant, partner or child are classed as disabled (under the former Council Tax Benefit legislation)
  - Fully disregard Carer's allowance, child benefit, maintenance payments for children, Personal Independence Payment or Disability Living Allowance, Armed Forces Independence Payments, charitable payments, Fostering Allowance and Guardian's Allowance
  - Housing Costs are disregarded from Universal Credit income (remainder of Universal Credit income is taken into account)
  - Disregard the first £25 of combined earnings of the claimant and partner (if applicable)
  - Deduction from earnings for child- care costs from those working (not in receipt of Universal Credit): maximum of £175 for one child or £300 for two or more children each week
  - Capital is not considered but those with £6,000 or more are not entitled
  - A fixed weekly deduction is made for other adults in the household of £8 per week
  - There is a minimum award of £2 per week (nothing is awarded if less than this amount)

- Claims can be backdated up to 1 year where continuous good reasons are shown for the delay

5.6. The working age caseload has increased by 37% during the pandemic with more households facing financial difficulties.

Date	Pensioners	Working age	Combined
<b>May 2021</b>	8,008	12,827	<b>20,835</b>
<b>Mar 2021</b>	8,058	13,042	<b>21,100</b>
<b>May 2020</b>	8,273	12,145	<b>20,418</b>
<b>Feb 2020</b>	8,383	9,549	<b>17,932</b>
<b>May 2019</b>	8,720	9,306	<b>18,026</b>

*2 Council Tax Support caseload*

5.7. The consultation will seek views on the following proposals:

Increasing awards

- Increasing the cap on the maximum award from Band B to Band D
- Increase the maximum award for those passported to 100% from 75%
- Increase the maximum for other groups in the lowest income bands to 80% from 75%
- Disregard Industrial Injuries Disablement benefit and Industrial Death benefit in full
- Deduction from earnings for child-care costs from those working and in receipt of Universal Credit: maximum of £175 for one child or £300 for two or more children each week

Decreasing awards

- Small reductions in the income levels of the bands for those not on the lowest income
- Increase the fixed non-dependant deductions from £8 to £9 per week and increase each year in line with CPI (the same as the income bands)
- Reduce the earnings disregard for single people and couples without children to £20 instead of £25 per week

Administration of the scheme

- Re-write the regulations in a clearer way and allow for more general disregards of new one-off grants. Currently only specific grants can be disregarded and the scheme is finalised each March. If a new grant is announced mid-year it cannot be disregarded until the scheme is reviewed for the following year, whereas other benefits can be updated in-year.

## 6. Consultation and Engagement

- 6.1. A formal public consultation is planned to run from mid July 2021 to late September 2021 to seek views on the proposed changes to the scheme.
- 6.2. This will be promoted on the Council's web site and with key stakeholders and during each contact with Council Tax Support customers (telephone, email and letter).

## 7. Implications

### 7.1. Legal

- 7.1.1. Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) places a duty on the Council to make a scheme specifying the reductions to Council Tax for those:
  - Persons whom the Council considers to be in financial need, or
  - Persons in classes consisting of persons whom the Council considers to be, in general, in financial need
- 7.1.2. Schedule 1A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 sets out what a Council must include in its Council Tax Reduction Scheme, including the basis upon which any reduction under the scheme may be awarded. The schedule also requires that the Council conducts a consultation in respect of the proposed scheme.
- 7.1.3. Before making a scheme, the authority must (in the following order)—
  - (a) consult any major precepting authority which has power to issue a precept to it,
  - (b) publish a draft scheme in such manner as it thinks fit, and
  - (c) consult such other persons as it considers are likely to have an interest in the operation of the scheme.
- 7.1.4. The scheme must be approved by full Council before the start of the financial year it relates to. Once approved by Council the authority must publish the scheme in such manner as it thinks fit.

### 7.2. Finance

- 7.2.1. The Council Tax Support Scheme has an impact on the Council Tax base as it reduces the amount of Council Tax billed to eligible households.
- 7.2.2. The tax base reflects assumptions around the Council Tax Support Scheme. Since it was introduced the cost has been monitored and an allowance for risk was added. The risks include uncertainty over the economy including the risk of a major rise in caseload.

- 7.2.3.** Following the consultation, the proposed scheme will be modelled and costed to fall within the budget proposed for 2022/23.
- 7.2.4.** The recommendations to Council will consider use of the Local Council Tax Support Schemes grant of £3.37m from MHCLG. This can be used to cover some reduction in the tax base resulting from the potential new scheme, but also recognising the additional pressures as more households are facing financial difficulties as a result of the Covid pandemic.
- 7.2.5.** By modelling against the available grant and feedback received, the proposals will be developed to ensure the current MTFS is not adversely affected. The modelling will also reflect on how the scheme remains sustainable, without creating a 'cliff edge' when the grant funding has been fully spent.

### **7.3. Policy**

- 7.3.1.** The change to the scheme supports the following strategic priority:
- An open and enabling organisation

### **7.4. Equality**

- 7.4.1.** The equality impact assessment on the Council Tax Support Scheme has been updated to include the options being considered.

### **7.5. Human Resources**

- 7.5.1.** There are no staffing implications; the scheme will continue to be managed by the existing officers in the Benefits Section.

### **7.6. Risk Management**

- 7.6.1.** As the scheme is demand led, there is a risk that a large increase in demand will inflate the cost of the Council Tax Support scheme.
- 7.6.2.** To mitigate this, the tax base reflects assumptions around the caseload and an allowance for risk is added. Regular monitoring is undertaken and the proposed scheme has been modelled against the current caseload where possible.
- 7.6.3.** The Council is able to review the scheme on an annual basis, presenting the opportunity to reflect on the impact of any changes and whether subsequent amendments are necessary.
- 7.6.4.** The risk environment around COVID-19 remains dynamic. Risk registers have been maintained as part of the Council's response to date and the plans for recovery.

### **7.7. Rural Communities**

- 7.7.1.** There are no direct implications for rural communities

**7.8. Children and Young People/Cared for Children**

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

**7.9. Public Health**

7.9.1. There are no direct implications for public health

**7.10. Climate Change**

7.10.1. The Council Tax Support Scheme is fully digital; applications are made on-line and supporting evidence can be uploaded or submitted via email. Customers are encouraged to sign up to receive all the information in their online portal: [Cheshire East account](#)

<b>Access to Information</b>	
Contact Officer:	Liz Rimmer, Benefits Manager <a href="mailto:Liz.rimmer@cheshireeast.gov.uk">Liz.rimmer@cheshireeast.gov.uk</a> 01270 371448
Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	Information on the current Council Tax Support Scheme: <a href="#">Council Tax Support (cheshireeast.gov.uk)</a>

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## **Corporate Policy Committee**

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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	06 July 2021
<b>Report Title:</b>	Customer Experience Progress Report
<b>Report of:</b>	Alex Thompson, Director of Finance and Customer Services
<b>Report Reference No:</b>	CP/08/21-22
<b>Ward(s) Affected:</b>	All

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### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1. In March 2021, Cabinet approved Cheshire East Council's first "Customer Experience Strategy". The Strategy sets out our vision to put customers at the heart of everything we do and supports the Corporate Plan's vision to be an open, fairer, green Cheshire East.
- 1.2. An action plan in support of the Strategy has been developed by the officer Brighter Future Transformation Board. Actions are aimed at driving an enhanced customer experience, developing the tools, skills, and knowledge to support our staff in delivering this, and building a customer focused culture across the organisation.
- 1.3. Delivery against the Customer Experience action plan during 2020 was initially delayed due to the response to the COVID pandemic, but all actions are now progressing to agreed delivery timescales.
- 1.4. Significant progress has been made to raise awareness of the Customer Experience Strategy, to establish requirements for the revised technology, to commence the service re-design work within the Highways Service and to build the training and awareness suite of products.
- 1.5. This report provides an update on progress against the agreed delivery plan and sets out the baseline measures identified to assess ongoing improvements.

## 2. Recommendation

- 2.1. That the Committee note the progress made to date on the agreed Customer Experience action plan.

## 3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1. To continue to raise awareness of the Council's actions to enhance the Customer Experience at Cheshire East Council. Understanding and sharing the information within this report will support the embedding of enhanced customer experience as a goal throughout the authority.

## 4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. No other options were considered to this report as it is provided to enhance understanding and demonstrate activity. This report does not require alternative options to be considered as the Strategy underpinning the action plan has already been agreed.

## 5. Background

- 5.1. The Customer Experience Strategy sets out how we aim to become an organisation which is fully focused on our customers. Where the needs of our customers are central to the services we deliver and the way in which we deliver them and where every interaction a customer has with us is of a consistently high quality. Specifically, this entails:

- Providing a consistent and high quality of service
- Understanding what our customers need
- Designing and delivering services to meet that need
- Working as one organisation and with our partners to provide a joined-up experience for customers
- Ensuring staff have the knowledge, skills, capability, and tools to deliver a quality experience
- Maximising the use of digital technology
- Providing value for money

- 5.2. The Customer Experience Action Plan sets out our approach to delivering against each of the workstreams within the project and the measures we will use to assess progress. Details of progress against the plan can be seen at **Appendix 1**.

- 5.3. The Customer Experience programme contains six workstreams which collectively aim to address the outcomes outlined at 5.1 (above). The aim of each workstream is set out below:

- 5.4. **Vision and Strategy** – the development of a corporate vision for Customer Experience and an approach to its consistent development. Supported by a Customer Charter setting out standards of quality,

timescales and behaviours which will be consistently applied across the Council and against which we will be assessed.

- 5.5. Customer Insight** – the development of an enhanced approach to consultation and engagement, ensuring we are listening to customers through both formal consultation and informal feedback. Ensuring that customer feedback and data is available and accessible to decision makers, that we use this information, and are seen to be using the information, in all decision-making processes.
- 5.6. Service Re-design** – Adopting an outside in view of customer experiences with the Council (and our delivery partners), looking at the people, processes, policies and technology that underpin services; to understand if they are fundamentally meeting the needs of customers and provide value for money.
- 5.7. Culture** – development and delivery of a programme of training and awareness to provide staff with the skills to deliver excellent customer experience, provide managers with the skills to view services from the customers perspective, to make improvements and to embed a customer focused culture across the Council.
- 5.8. Technology – Contact Centre** – to improve the technology that underpins the corporate contact centre to ensure it provides staff with the tools to support and enable customers and provides the information we need to learn from customer experiences.
- 5.9. Technology – Digital** – to improve the technology that underpins our digital offering making sure it is easy for customers to use, provides the same level of service as other channels and actively encourages customers to use digital where appropriate.

## **6. Consultation and Engagement**

- 6.1.** The Customer Experience programme aims to ensure that the Council designs and delivers services that our customer's need. Consultation and engagement with customers are integral to the programme and will take place throughout the programme's lifecycle.
- 6.2.** Customer feedback has informed the Customer Experience Strategy already, with initial design of the programme reflecting the Customer Satisfaction Survey in 2018. Further consultation supported the final design of the strategy. Staff and elected member consultation was held during October 2020 with public consultation taking place November 2020 – January 2021. The "What matters to customers" survey, which was completed May 2021, the results of which will inform the Corporate Customer Charter. Customers have been asked their opinions on the

Council's website and the feedback received has informed those areas requiring improvement such as the search engine.

- 6.3.** A dedicated workstream within the Programme will review our methods of consultation and engagement to ensure we are listening and responding to customers, that this informs our decision making and that we are transparent and open throughout the process.
- 6.4. Legal** - There is no legal requirement to produce a Customer Experience Strategy. However, it is helpful to have a clear articulation of the priority in the Council's Corporate Plan.
- 6.5. Finance** -The Customer Experience programme is funded through the Brighter Futures Transformation Earmarked Reserve. Details of the funding and expenditure to date are at Table 1 below.

Details	Actual	Committed	Total
<b>Strasys Consultancy</b> Customer Value Proposition work (Mar 19 – Jun 19) Customer Segments (Sept 19 – Dec 19)	£51,840.85	£0.00	£51,840.85
<b>Programme Support</b>			
Strategy Design	£280	£0.00	£280
Communications and Marketing	£0.00	£15,000.00	£15,000.00
Training and Development	£0.00	£5,000.00	£5,000.00
Additional Costs	£0.00	£39,720.00	£39,720.00
<b>Gartner U.K Limited</b> November 2020 – October 2022	£29,900.00	£29,900.00	£59,800.00
<b>Business Analyst Resource</b> February 2021 - Ongoing	£32,271.60	£81,728.00	£113,999.60
<b>Total</b>	<b>£114,292.45</b>	<b>£171,348.00</b>	<b>£285,640.45</b>

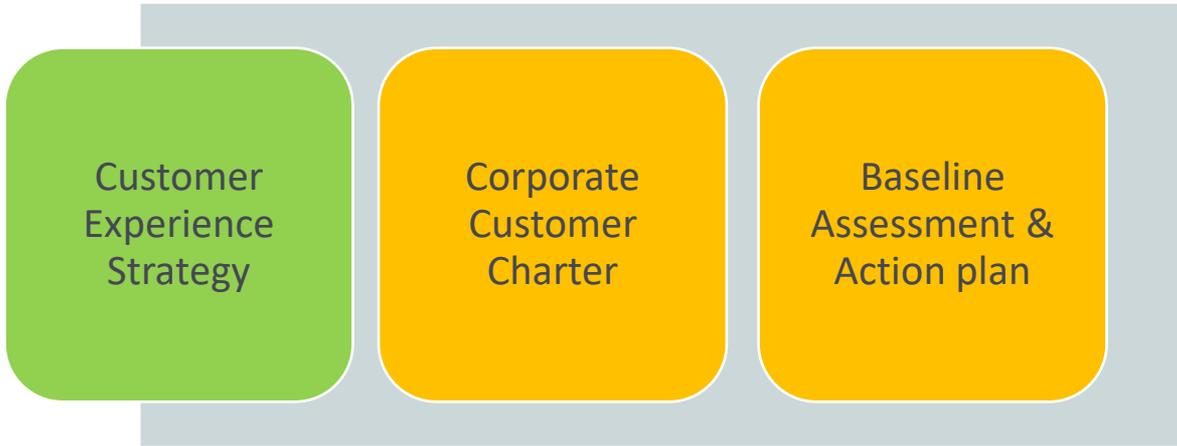
- 6.6.** The focus of the programme is on the creation of an enhanced customer experience there is the potential for savings to be delivered. Early estimates of efficiencies of £334k per annum by 2024/25 have been incorporated within the MTFS approved by Council in February 2021. To date £90k of savings have been achieved through a restructure within the Corporate Contact Centre because of falling demand for face to face services.

Proposal	Details	Annual Savings Target
Reduced demand for face to face provision	Adapt the operating model for face to face services to more appropriately match demand. Reduce staffing levels for Advisors from 8.36 to 4	90K
Reduction in staffing levels within the CC due to reduced demand and reduced handling time	Reduce in CC FTE from 43 to 37 FTE	161K
Reduction in print, postage, and stationary budget for Revenues	Increased use of online services and e billing	50K
Reduction in complaints	Bring the volume of Waste complaints in line with other visible services	33K
Re-designing services to enable payment up front at all times	Reduction in debt written off	Included within debt recovery HLBC
<b>Totals</b>		<b>334k</b>

- 6.7.** The service redesign work has the potential to identify further financial benefits. The impact of these will be considered as part of the development of the MTFs as the programme is expanded across the Council.
- 6.8. Policy** - Cabinet approved the revised Customer Experience Strategy in March 2021 following extensive consultation. The service re-design work may recommend changes to policies where it is identified that these are creating a barrier to improved customer experience. These will be reported to Members as appropriate.
- 6.9. Equality** - A full equality impact assessment has been completed for the Customer Experience Strategy. Whilst there were no implications highlighted an equality impact assessment will be developed as the work on the proposed customer charter progresses. Any potential impact on equality will be addressed within each of the workstreams to ensure we provide a consistent and quality customer experience for all customers.
- 6.10. Human Resources** – Implementation of the Strategy will require additional training and support being provided to staff and members. Changes to the structure within the Contact Centre Team have already been implemented and planned changes within the Web Team are being developed.
- 6.11. Risk Management** – a risk register for the programme has been developed and is monitored through the Brighter Future Transformation Governance process. The majority of staff required to fully implement the strategy are currently offering front line services, meaning the most significant risk remains a potential reduction in capacity due to any extended response to the pandemic.

- 6.12. Rural Communities** – there are no specific implications for rural communities
- 6.13. Children and Young People/Cared for Children** - there are no specific implications for children and young people/cared for children
- 6.14. Public Health** - there are no specific implications for public health
- 6.15. Climate Change** – one of the aims of the Customer Experience programme is to enhance the Councils digital offering for customers and to actively encourage customers to use digital where appropriate.

<b>Access to Information</b>	
Contact Officer:	Helen Gerrard – Head of Customer Services Helen.Gerrard@cheshireeast.gov.uk 01270 371464 / 07827 958141
Appendices:	<a href="#">Customer Experience Progress Report – Appendix 1</a>
Background Papers:	<a href="#">Customer Experience Report – Cabinet 09-03-2021</a> <a href="#">Customer Experience Strategy</a>



The Customer Experience Strategy was approved by Cabinet in March 2021.

The Strategy will be supported by a Corporate Customer Charter setting out consistent standards across the Council.

To inform the Charter a survey has been issued to ask “What matters to customers”.

A baseline assessment has been issued to all Services to establish how they are adapting to the Strategy and what, if any, additional support they need.

The results of the baseline assessment will inform a Service action plan

Review of customer  
consultation,  
engagement &  
feedback

Development of data  
insight tool

An approach to a review of consultation, engagement & feedback is under development. This will include both formal and informal feedback. It will help us to improve the way in which we gather feedback, the use we make of it in decision making and how we make this visible to customers.

We are currently engaging with “The Consultation Institute” to review our skills and knowledge in this area

We have also identified the data we need to build our understanding of the “Voice of the Customer” and are now analysing the availability of this data.

Formal  
correspondence  
review

Service specific  
review – Highways

A detailed analysis of how we manage and respond to formal correspondence has been completed and a number of actions identified.

A pilot to improve responses to simple service requests is now underway within Highways.

A customer experience review of the Highways services is underway and initial findings have been identified.

An action plan to address these findings is now under development.

As “quick wins” the messages issued to customers following a Highways request have been improved to provide clearer information to customers; information available on the Cheshire East website has been improved and more information on planned maintenance is now available to customers.

## Customer Service Training (E Learning)

Improved training providing an overview of Customer experience, Customer segments, Council expectations regarding customer services and basic skills.

Aimed at all staff and core to induction

## Customer Experience Workshops

Half day workshop to improve understanding of customer segments and customer journeys and how these can be used to improve services.

Aimed at all senior staff and managers

## “Having a Conversation”

Aimed at embedding customer experience within Services and encouraging ongoing discussion

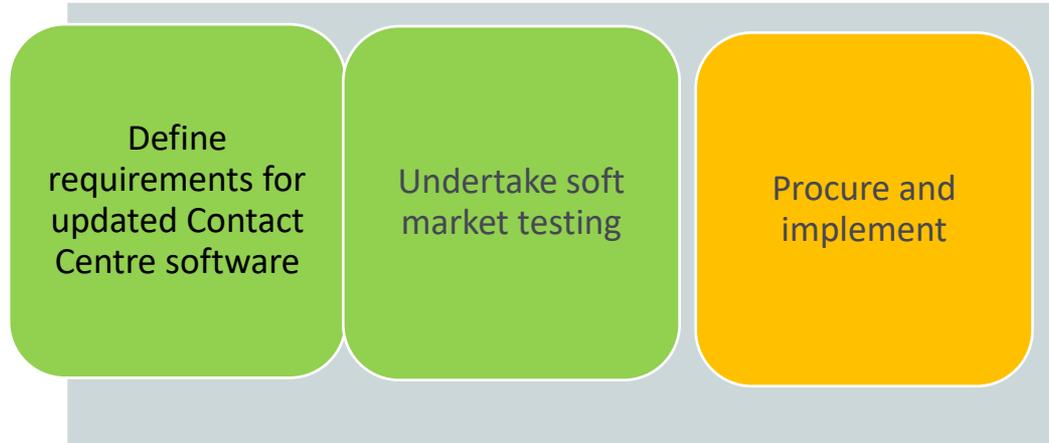
## Customer segments awareness videos

Animated video highlighting the differing experiences throughout an individuals life cycle

All training material is under development and progressing to agreed timescales.

The expectation for these to be available to staff mid Summer (Covid permitting for face to face sessions)

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Demonstrations from providers completed and requirements finalised

Originally a joint procurement with CWAC but now CE only

Tender documents to be issued late June

Software will enable:

Consistency of customer experience irrelevant of channel used

Single source of customer experience data

Greater support for channel migration

Reduced “cost to serve” within CC and Services



Digital platform requirements agreed

Review of refresh requirements underway

Redesign of the Council Website on track

Soft market testing to consider “art of the possible” due June

Digital enhancements will enable:

- Enhanced digital customer journeys
- Integration with CC technology to provide consistency of experience
- Simplification of digital landscape
- Migration to business as usual

# How will we measure the success of the Customer Experience Strategy?



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## **Corporate Policy Committee**

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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	06 July 2021
<b>Report Title:</b>	Shared Services Review Update Report
<b>Report of:</b>	Jane Burns, Executive Director Corporate Services
<b>Report Reference No:</b>	CP/10/21-22
<b>Ward(s) Affected:</b>	None

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### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1. Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester Councils operate a number of shared services and shared arrangements, which are overseen by the Shared Services Joint Committee (SSJC). The SSJC's terms of reference set out that Joint Committee is responsible for overseeing projects and changes to shared services. A joint review of shared services has been commissioned by both councils and this report provides an update on the process for and progress of that review.
- 1.2. This report was considered by the Shared Services Joint Committee on 11 June 2021.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 1.2 That the content of the report be noted.

### **3. Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1 The Corporate Policy Committee is the parent body for the SSJC for Cheshire East purposes.

### **4. Background**

- 4.1. A number of shared services existed after Local Government Reorganisation in 2009 when Cheshire East Council and Cheshire West and Chester councils were formed.

**4.2.** Currently there are eight formal shared services, all underpinned by formal legal agreements (six Cheshire West and Chester (CWAC) - hosted and two Cheshire East Council (CEC) hosted.

- Farms Estate (Management)
- Archives and Local Studies
- Emergency Planning
- ICT
- Transactional Service Centre (TSC)
- Cheshire Rural Touring Arts
- Archaeological Planning and Advisory Services
- Libraries Shared Services

**4.3.** Cheshire East Council and Cheshire West and Chester Councils agreed to commission a strategic review of the eight formal shared services. It was agreed that an external perspective and expertise would be valuable, and a specification was drawn up. Following a procurement exercise, C.Co, the consultancy arm of CIPFA, were appointed to conduct the reviews.

## **5. Approach to the Shared Services Review**

**5.1.** The purpose of the service review exercise is to:

- provide assurance on the operation of the shared service in terms of both meeting the objectives of each council and delivering value for money
- to identify opportunities for efficiencies and financial savings; and
- to identify how could the services work better and/or what will make them work better?

**5.2.** The scope of the review for each of the shared services, includes, but is not limited to the following questions, relating to whether the shared service, in its current form, is fit for purpose and whether it currently meets the objectives of each council.

- Is it/can it deliver its business plan within the parameters of the performance management framework (i.e. within budget, good performance levels)?
- Have risks and issues been identified in the service's delivery and if so, what are they related to?
- What are the alternative operating models?
- Are the financial principles that the shared service operates on sound?
- Does the cost model work in practice?
- Is the resourcing model fit for purpose and able to support the delivery of objective and outcomes – are there the right people, in the right roles, with the right skills and competencies, delivering the right things at the right time?

- How might improvements be made?

**5.3.** The review of all of the shared services will be undertaken between February and September 2021. The review will take place in three phases:

Phase 1: ICT – in-depth review

Phase 2: TSC – in-depth review

Phase 3: the six other shared services

Each service review will provide:

- Clarity of how all the shared services align to the strategic objectives for both councils
- Identification of improvements to secure greater efficiencies and effectiveness
- A milestone plan for delivery

**5.4.** For the in-depth reviews of ICT and TSC the recommendations will also include:

- An assessment of the delivery against previous reviews
- A high-level recommended delivery model setting out a recommendation for which functions should continue to be shared or separated, or an alternative hybrid model, with at least an estimate of the cost of change.
- The recommended model to have a high-level financial plan that delivers against an agreed financial envelope, including clarity on how costs are apportioned.

Additionally, a recommended model of governance and assurance of the Shared Service will be developed.

**5.5.** The governance of the programme is taking place through a series of meetings and reports including:

- Project Group – a weekly meeting
- Project Board – at least monthly meeting
- Regular Sponsor meetings
- Bi-weekly Highlight Reports

## **6. Progress of the Shared Services Review**

**6.1** The project has made good progress against the intended Phase 1 deliverables including, to date:

- Reviewing key actions undertaken since the completion of the Ernst Young (EY) review of ICT in 2017.
- Establishing Council priorities, through engagement with senior stakeholders as well as review of key corporate policies and strategies.

- Development of shared evaluation criteria to inform the recommended model for future delivery of service.
- Identification of best practice
- Benchmarking of the service against comparator councils.
- Review of current financial position, establishment, performance as well as intended in/train changes.
- Identification of service improvements
- Development of options for delivery of the service going forward.

**6.2** In addition to Phase 1 activity, Phase 2 and 3 activity has already commenced to ensure timely delivery, this includes:

- Meetings with managers and stakeholders of Transactional Services
- Developing an understanding of the costs of Transactional Services
- Meetings with all other shared services managers
- Development of Evaluation criteria for all services

**6.3** The review is on track to meet all other deliverables for all phases.

**6.4** The outputs from the reviews will be shared with Shared Services Joint Committee in due course.

## **7. Next Steps**

**7.1** The next steps of the review are to:

- Refine and agree the baselining and benchmarking costs for ICT.
- Project Board to discuss and agree the ICT model options emerging from the Evaluation. Once agreed, further work can be undertaken to develop a high-level delivery model with indicative cost of change.
- Meeting to be convened with both Councils' senior officer leadership teams to discuss strategic alignment and future opportunities.

## **8. Implications of the Recommendations**

### **8.1 Legal Implications**

**8.1.1** The Shared Services Administrative Agreement sets out the overall arrangements in relation to the manner in which the sharing Authorities will work together. This will need to be revised when revised arrangements are agreed.

### **8.2 Finance Implications**

**8.2.1** For the purposes of this report, the Financial Implications will be the cost of undertaking the reviews together with the costs of implementing any revised delivery models. Implementation costs, together with any savings identified will be used to evaluate the viability of the preferred models and shared in due course as part of the individual service reviews.

**8.2.2** The cost of the contract with C.Co is £98,000, shared equally between the two councils. Cheshire East’s contribution is funded from the Brighter Future Transformation Programme Budget.

**8.3 Policy Implications**

**8.3.1** Policy implications will be dependent on the findings and recommendations of the review and will be identified for each service.

**8.4 Equality Implications**

**8.4.1** There are no direct Equality implications at this stage.

**8.5 Human Resources Implications**

**8.5.1** Implications for Human Resources are dependent on the recommendations arising as a result of any revised agreed operating model.

**8.6 Risk Management Implications**

**8.6.1** The risks associated with the findings will be made clear once a final report is produced and be made clear to members at the appropriate time.

Risks are included in each organisation’s risk register as appropriate.

**8.7 Rural Communities Implications**

**8.7.1** There are no direct implications for Rural Communities.

**8.8 Implications for Children and Young People/Cared for Children**

**8.8.1** There are no direct implications for Children and Young People/Cared for Children.

**8.9 Public Health Implications**

**8.9.1** There are no direct implications for Public Health.

**8.10 Climate Change Implications**

**8.10.1** There are no direct implications for Climate Change.

<b>Access to Information</b>	
Contact Officer:	Heather Grove, Senior Manager Business Development, Assurance and Collaboration. Email: <a href="mailto:heather.grove@cheshireeast.gov.uk">heather.grove@cheshireeast.gov.uk</a>
Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	Documents are available for inspection at: Cheshire East Democratic Services Westfields, Middlewich Road

	<p>Sandbach CW11 1HZ or: Cheshire West and Chester Democratic Services HQ Building, Nicholas Street Chester CH1 2NP</p>
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## **Corporate Policy Committee**

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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	06 July 2021
<b>Report Title:</b>	2023 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies
<b>Report of:</b>	Jane Burns, Executive Director Corporate Services
<b>Report Reference No:</b>	CP/14/21-22
<b>Ward(s) Affected:</b>	All Wards

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### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1. This report outlines the proposals recently published by the Boundary Commission for England for revised Parliamentary Constituency boundaries and makes provision for a sub-committee to be established, with powers to produce a Council submission to the Commission's current and future consultation exercise, should that be the will of the Committee.

### **2. Recommendations**

Should the Committee be minded to do so:

- 2.1. That the Committee appoint a sub-committee to review the consultation proposals in detail, with full powers to make a formal submission, if it chooses to do so, to the Boundary Commission, and also with such powers to respond to the second round of consultation proposals.
- 2.2. That the Sub-Committee be named the "Parliamentary Constituencies Sub-Committee".
- 2.3. That the Committee agree the size of the Sub-Committee, which will observe the political proportionalities of the Council.

### **3. Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1. The creation of a sub-committee is the most appropriate way of enabling the Council to make a reasoned submission to the Boundary Commission, within the timescale for consultation responses, which now applies.

## 4. Background

- 4.1. The Boundary Commission for England is the independent organisation responsible for reviewing Parliamentary Constituency boundaries. The current exercise will conclude with a formal report and recommendations being submitted to Parliament in 2023. Full details of the proposals for England can be found on the Boundary Commission's website at: <https://www.bcereviews.org.uk/>
- 4.2. The Commission state that the process for reviewing constituency boundaries is heavily informed by public consultation. There will be two rounds of public consultation before the final recommendations are submitted to Parliament. This report relates to the first round of consultation.
- 4.3. The rules that the Commission are working-to will retain 650 Constituencies in the UK Parliament, but will require that they comply with strict requirements as to the number of electors in each constituency. The proposals being consulted-upon have between 69,724 and 77,062 Parliamentary electors (as at 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2020) in each Constituency. Across the North West, the number of constituencies would decrease from 75 to 73. Local Government wards are used as the building-blocks for proposed constituencies, but the Commission will consider splitting wards where there is a strong case for doing so.
- 4.4. When the Commission last made proposals for revised constituencies (2017) they were working to a different set of rules that would have seen the size of the UK Parliament reduce by 50 seats. These plans were not implemented.
- 4.5. Details of the proposed changes as they relate to Cheshire East are set out in Appendix 1. In summary no changes are proposed to the Macclesfield constituency. Minor changes are proposed in respect of Congleton Constituency, Tatton Constituency (including a proposal for two wards from Warrington moving into the Constituency) and Crewe and Nantwich Constituency. However, it is proposed that the Eddisbury constituency be abolished, and a that new South Cheshire Constituency be created.
- 4.6. The proposed South Cheshire Constituency would cover a wide area, including parts of Chester, Tarporley, Tarvin and Winsford, together with Audlem, Bunbury, Wrenbury and Wybunbury from Cheshire East. Details are provided in Appendix 2.
- 4.7. The recommendations of this report provide an appropriate mechanism for formal consultation responses to be agreed by a Sub-Committee, on behalf of Council, and submitted to the Boundary Commission. However, it is acknowledged that, if appointed, the Sub-Committee may not be able to reach a consensus upon a response, in which circumstances, it may choose not to submit one.

- 4.8** Irrespective of whether or not the Committee chooses to appoint a sub-committee to do so, individual Members, political groups and political parties may choose to make their own submissions to the Boundary Commission.

## **5. Implications**

### **5.1. Legal**

- 5.1.1.** There are no direct legal implications flowing from the recommendations in this report. If appointed the Sub-Committee will have full powers to formally respond to the first and second rounds of consultation.

### **5.2. Finance**

- 5.2.1.** There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

### **5.3. Policy**

- 5.3.1.** There are no policy implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

### **5.4. Equality**

- 5.4.1.** There are no equality implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

### **5.5. Human Resources**

- 5.5.1.** There are no HR implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

### **5.6. Risk Management**

- 5.6.1.** There are no risk management implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

### **5.7. Rural Communities**

- 5.7.1.** There are no implications for rural communities arising from the recommendations in this report.

### **5.8. Children and Young People/Cared for Children**

- 5.8.1.** There are no implications for children and young people or for cared for children arising from the recommendations in this report.

### **5.9. Public Health**

- 5.9.1.** There are no public health implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

**5.10. Climate Change**

**5.10.1.** There are no climate change implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

<b>Access to Information</b>	
Contact Officer:	Brian Reed Head of Democratic Services and Governance <a href="mailto:Brian.reed@cheshireeast.gov.uk">Brian.reed@cheshireeast.gov.uk</a>
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – proposals as they relate to each Cheshire East ward. Appendix 2 – proposals for South Cheshire constituency.
Background Papers:	There are no background papers.

## Appendix 1

<b>Borough ward name</b>	<b>Polling district(s) within this borough ward</b>	<b>Current (2011) parliamentary constituency within which this/ these polling district(s) lie(s)</b>	<b>Parliamentary constituency within which this/ these polling district(s) lie(s) under the BCE 2023 Review initial (June 2021) proposals</b>
Alderley Edge	All	Tatton	Tatton
Alsager	All	Congleton	Congleton
<b>Audlem</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>Eddisbury</b>	<b>South Cheshire</b>
Bollington	All	Macclesfield	Macclesfield
<b>Brereton Rural</b>	<b>3FK6</b>	<b>Eddisbury</b>	<b>Congleton</b>
Brereton Rural	All except 3FK6	Congleton	Congleton
Broken Cross and Upton	All	Macclesfield	Macclesfield
<b>Bunbury</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>Eddisbury</b>	<b>South Cheshire</b>
Chelford	All	Tatton	Tatton
Congleton East	All	Congleton	Congleton
Congleton West	All	Congleton	Congleton
Crewe Central	All	Crewe and Nantwich	Crewe and Nantwich
Crewe East	All	Crewe and Nantwich	Crewe and Nantwich
Crewe North	All	Crewe and Nantwich	Crewe and Nantwich
Crewe South	All	Crewe and Nantwich	Crewe and Nantwich
Crewe St Barnabas	All	Crewe and Nantwich	Crewe and Nantwich
Crewe West	All	Crewe and Nantwich	Crewe and Nantwich
<b>Dane Valley</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>Congleton</b>	<b>Tatton</b>
Disley	All	Macclesfield	Macclesfield
Gawsworth	All	Macclesfield	Macclesfield
Handforth	All	Tatton	Tatton
Haslington	All	Crewe and Nantwich	Crewe and Nantwich
High Legh	All	Tatton	Tatton
Knutsford	All	Tatton	Tatton

<b>Leighton</b>	<b>3FJ2</b>	<b>Eddisbury</b>	<b>Crewe and Nantwich</b>
Leighton	All except 3FJ2	Crewe and Nantwich	Crewe and Nantwich
Macclesfield Central	All	Macclesfield	Macclesfield
Macclesfield East	All	Macclesfield	Macclesfield
Macclesfield Hurdsfield	All	Macclesfield	Macclesfield
Macclesfield South	All	Macclesfield	Macclesfield
Macclesfield Tytherington	All	Macclesfield	Macclesfield
Macclesfield West and Ivy	All	Macclesfield	Macclesfield
Middlewich	All	Congleton	Congleton
Mobberley	All	Tatton	Tatton
Nantwich North and West	All	Crewe and Nantwich	Crewe and Nantwich
Nantwich South and Stapeley	All	Crewe and Nantwich	Crewe and Nantwich
Odd Rode	All	Congleton	Congleton
Poynton East and Pott Shrigley	All	Macclesfield	Macclesfield
Poynton West and Adlington	All	Macclesfield	Macclesfield
Prestbury	All	Macclesfield	Macclesfield
Sandbach Elworth	All	Congleton	Congleton
Sandbach Ettiley Heath and Wheelock	All	Congleton	Congleton
Sandbach Heath and East	All	Congleton	Congleton
Sandbach Town	All	Congleton	Congleton
Shavington	All	Crewe and Nantwich	Crewe and Nantwich
Sutton	All	Macclesfield	Macclesfield
Willaston and Rope	All	Crewe and Nantwich	Crewe and Nantwich
Wilmslow Dean Row	All	Tatton	Tatton
Wilmslow East	All	Tatton	Tatton
Wilmslow Lacey Green	All	Tatton	Tatton

Wilmslow West and Chorley	All	Tatton	Tatton
Wistaston	All	Crewe and Nantwich	Crewe and Nantwich
<b>Wrenbury</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>Eddisbury</b>	<b>South Cheshire</b>
<b>Wybunbury</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>Crewe and Nantwich</b>	<b>South Cheshire</b>

**NOTES:**

**Shaded rows indicate the two borough wards currently split between Parliamentary constituencies.**

**Bold font indicates areas where proposals are being made to move the ward to another constituency.**

**Appendix 2****Proposed South Cheshire Constituency**

<b>Ward</b>	<b>Council</b>	<b>Current Constituency</b>
Audlem	Cheshire East	Eddisbury
Bunbury	Cheshire East	Eddisbury
Christleton and Huntington	Cheshire West and Chester	City of Chester
Farndon	Cheshire West and Chester	Eddisbury
Handbridge Park	Cheshire West and Chester	City of Chester
Lache	Cheshire West and Chester	City of Chester
Malpas	Cheshire West and Chester	Eddisbury
Tarporley	Cheshire West and Chester	Eddisbury
Tarvin and Kelsall	Cheshire West and Chester	Eddisbury
Tattenhall	Cheshire West and Chester	Eddisbury
Winsford Over and Verdin	Cheshire West and Chester	Eddisbury
Wrenbury	Cheshire East	Eddisbury
Wybunbury	Cheshire East	Crewe and Nantwich

## Corporate Policy Committee Work Programme

Committee Date	Report title	Purpose of Report	Report Author /Senior Officer	Consultation and Engagement Process and Timeline	Equality Impact Assessment Required and Published (Y/N)	Part of Budget and Policy Framework (Y/N)	Corporate Plan Priority	Exempt Item and Paragraph Number (Y/N) <sup>2</sup>
<b>Sept</b>								
7.9.21	Terms and Conditions Review - scoping	To undertake consultation with TUs on proposed changes.	Sara Barker/Jane Burns	Formal process with TUs	Yes	Yes	Open and Enabling Organisation	Yes
7.9.21	Update on performance scorecard	Part of the performance management framework. Accountability	Phil Christian/Jane Burns	Corporate Health and Safety Forum	no	yes	Open and Enabling Organisation	No
7.9.21	Refreshed Workforce Strategy – Covid Workforce and mobile workforce	To approve the updated strategy	Sara Barker/Jane Burns	Ongoing engagement with staff and TUs	yes	yes	Open and Enabling Organisation	No
7.9.21	Emergency Assistance Scheme	Launch Consultation	Helen Gerrard / Alex Thompson	Begins process	No	No	Open and Enabling Organisation	No
7.9.21	Digital Strategy	To approve the strategy	Helen Gerrard/ Alex Thompson	Yes	Yes	Yes – MTFS savings	Open and Enabling Organisation	No

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Nov								
4.11.21	2020/21 Finance – outturn  For CEC and Corporate Services	Part of the performance management framework. Accountability	Jo Wilcox / Alex Thompson	no	no	yes	Open and Enabling Organisation	No
4.11.21	Mid-Year Review 2021/22	Part of the performance management framework. Accountability	Jo Wilcox / Alex Thompson	no	no	Yes	Open and Enabling Organisation	No
4.11.21	Corporate Plan review	To update for 2022/23	Jane Burns	Yes	Yes	Yes	Open and Enabling Organisation	No
4.11.21	Committee System Review	Report to Committee prior to November Council report?	Brian Reed/ David Brown	TBC	TBC	No	Open and Enabling Organisation	No
4.11.21	Terms and Conditions Review	To provide an update	Sara Barker/Jane Burns	Formal process	yes	Yes	Open and Enabling Organisation	No
Dec								
2.12.21	Communications plan for residents	To develop a new approach	Michael Moore/Jane Burns	yes	yes	No	Open and Enabling Organisation	No
2.12.21	Local Council Tax Support Scheme	Recommend Final Scheme to Council	Helen Gerrard/ Alex Thompson	No	Yes	Yes	Open and Enabling Organisation	No
2.12.21	Council Tax Base	Recommend Final Version to Council	Jo Wilcox / Alex Thompson	No	Yes	Yes	Open and Enabling Organisation	No
2.12.21	B4B Post Implementation Review with CWAC	To review lessons learned	Frank Jordan	TBC	TBC	Yes	Open and Enabling Organisation	No

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2.12.21	Approach to consultation and engagement	To develop a new approach	Phil Christian	yes	yes	yes	Open and Enabling Organisation	No
<b>Jan</b>								
12.01.22	Third Quarter Review	Part of the performance framework. Accountability	Jo Wilcox / Alex Thompson	no	no	Yes	Open and Enabling Organisation	No
12.01.22	MTFS	Respond to Budget consultation (for Corporate Services)	Jo Wilcox / Alex Thompson	Yes	Yes	Yes	Open and Enabling Organisation	No
12.01.22	Strategic performance and Risk Reporting – Q2	Part of the performance framework. Accountability	DMT/ Jane Burns	no	no	yes	Open and Enabling Organisation	No
12.01.22	Health and Safety and Workforce Reporting – Q3	Part of the performance framework. Accountability	Josie Griffiths/Jane Burns	Corporate Health and Safety Forum	no	yes	Open and Enabling Organisation	No
12.01.22	Terms and Conditions Review	Scoping review in July, with bi-monthly progress reports	Sara Barker/Jane Burns	Formal process	Yes	Yes	Open and Enabling Organisation	Yes
12.01.22	Emergency Assistance Scheme	Approval final scheme for 2022/23	Helen Gerrard / Alex Thompson	Yes	Yes	Yes	Open and Enabling Organisation	No
<b>Feb</b>								
10.02.22	Medium Term Financial Strategy	To recommend the MTFS and budget for approval at Council	Jo Wilcox / Alex Thompson	Yes	Yes	Yes	Open and Enabling Organisation	No

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10.02.22	Corporate Plan	To agree the CP for approval at Council	Jane Burns	Y	Y	YES	Open and Enabling Organisation	No
10.02.22	Shared Services Review	To update on the key milestones and benefits	Heather Grove/Jane Burns	Ongoing engagement with staff and TUs	yes	Yes – MTFS savings	Open and Enabling Organisation	No
<b>Mar</b>								
3.03.22	Health and Safety and Workforce Reporting – Q3	Part of the performance management framework. Accountability	Josie Griffiths/Jane Burns	Corporate Health and Safety Forum	No	Yes	Open and Enabling Organisation	No
3.03.22	Open data – Annual report	For “implementation in March 22”	Phil Christian/Jane Burns	TBC	TBC	No	Open and Enabling Organisation	No
3.03.22	Strategic performance and Risk Reporting – Q3	Part of the performance management framework. Accountability	DMT/Jane Burns	no	no	yes	Open and Enabling Organisation	No
3.03.22	Terms and Conditions Review	Scoping review in July, with bi-monthly progress reports	Sara Barker/Jane Burns	TBC	TBC	No	Open and Enabling Organisation	No
	<b>As yet unscheduled</b>							
TBA	Commercial/Enterprise Strategy	To approve a new Strategy as part of the BTFP	Nichola Thompson	yes	yes	yes	Open and Enabling Organisation	No
TBA	Ways of working with T&P Councils	TBC	Frank Jordan	yes	yes	yes	Open and Enabling Organisation	No
TBA	Local Members say in local decisions	TBC	David Brown	TBC	TBC	yes	Open and Enabling Organisation	No

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TBA	MoD Employer Recognition Award – Gold and Silver Schemes	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	yes	Open and Enabling Organisation	No
TBC	ICT Procurements – need to be specified	TBC	Gareth Pawlett	TBC	TBC	yes	Open and Enabling Organisation	No
TBC	EDI Strategy and objectives	Develop and agree an action plan and at least 6 monthly updates	Phil Christian/ Jane Burns	EDI Board	TBC	yes	Open and Enabling Organisation	No
TBC	Corporate Peer Challenge – annual update?	TBC	Jane Burns	TBC	TBC	yes	Open and Enabling Organisation	No

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