

Corporate Policy Committee

Agenda

Date: Wednesday, 12th January, 2022
Time: 10.30 am
Venue: Council Chamber, Municipal Buildings, Earle Street, Crewe
CW1 2BJ

PLEASE NOTE – This meeting is open to the public and anyone attending this meeting will need to wear a face covering upon entering and leaving the venue. This may only be removed when seated.

The importance of undertaking a lateral flow test in advance of attending any committee meeting. Lateral Flow Testing: Towards the end of May, test kits were sent to all Members; the purpose being to ensure that Members had a ready supply of kits to facilitate self-testing prior to formal face to face meetings. Anyone attending is asked to undertake a lateral flow test on the day of any meeting before embarking upon the journey to the venue. Please note that it can take up to 30 minutes for the true result to show on a lateral flow test. If your test shows a positive result, then you must not attend the meeting, and must follow the advice which can be found here:
https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/council_information/coronavirus/testing-for-covid-19.aspx

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

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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 - 12)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd December 2021.

5. **Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 - 2025/26** (Pages 13 - 56)

To respond to budget consultation.

6. **Communications Plan for Residents** (Pages 57 - 70)

To develop and approve a new approach for communications with residents.

7. **Health and Safety and Workforce Reporting** (Pages 71 - 88)

To consider an update on health and safety and workforce 2021/22.

8. **Work Programme** (Pages 89 - 90)

To consider the Work Programme and determine any required amendments.

9. **Minutes of Sub-Committees** (Pages 91 - 102)

To receive the following minutes of sub-committees:

Finance Sub-Committee – 1st December 2021

General Appeals Sub-Committee – 7th December 2021

10. **Reporting of Urgent Decisions**

To note any urgent decisions taken on behalf of the Committee.

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 Thursday, 2nd December, 2021 in the Committee Suite 1,2 & 3,
Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

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

Councillors C Browne, J Clowes, R Fletcher, N Mannion, A Martin,
K Parkinson, J Rhodes, M Warren, C Bulman (for Cllr Flavell), T Dean (for Cllr
Findlow) and S Edgar (for Cllr Gardiner)

Other Members Present

Councillors A Critchley, C Naismith and L Wardlaw

Officers

Lorraine O'Donnell, Chief Executive
Jane Burns, Executive Director Corporate Services
David Brown, Director of Governance and Compliance
Sara Barker, Head of HR
Paul Goodwin, Head of Financial Services & Deputy Chief Finance Officer
Helen Gerrard, Head of Customer Services
Paul Mountford, Democratic Services

Apologies

Councillors J P Findlow, K Flavell and S Gardiner

44 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

45 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

There were no public speakers

46 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 4th November 2021 be approved
as a correct record.

47 NOTICE OF MOTION: FIRE AND RE-HIRE

The Committee considered a report in response to a Notice of Motion
referred by Council on 20th October 2021. The Notice of Motion, which was
proposed by Councillor L Crane and seconded by Councillor C Naismith,

requested that consideration be given to a number of employment-related issues, namely:

- To seek to ensure local residents are protected against the use of 'fire and re-hire' and to protect their employment terms and conditions.
- That Cheshire East Council does not use fire and rehire itself as an employer and to prevent its use by council contractors.
- To promote the increasing number of progressive local employers prioritising their employees' standard of living and wellbeing and best practice.
- To support the TUC campaign for a 'New Deal for Working People'.

The proposer of the motion, Councillor L Smith, was unable to attend the meeting but had submitted a written statement which was read out by the Chair. Copies of the statement were circulated at the meeting.

The seconder of the motion, Councillor C Naismith, attended the meeting and spoke in support of the motion.

At the invitation of the Chair, Councillor A Critchley spoke on this matter as a visiting member.

RESOLVED

1. That the Leader of the Council be asked to write to the Prime Minister in support of the principles set out in the Private Members Bill Employment and Trade Union Rights (Dismissal Re-engagement);

RESOLVED (unanimously)

That the Committee

2. notes that the Council does not and would not use fire and re-hire practices to the detriment of staff terms and conditions;
3. notes that the Council as an employer, already attains all the standards recommended by the TUC campaign for a "New Deal for Working People"; and
4. notes the TUC campaign for a New Deal for Working People and encourages businesses in the Borough to consider how they may also support best employment practice.

48 COVID-19 UPDATE

The Committee considered an update report on the Covid-19 pandemic and the response of Cheshire East Council.

The Executive Director of Corporate Services advised that the report had been published before the new Covid-19 variant, Omicron, had become a variant of concern. The Government had since announced new restrictions including the mandatory wearing of face coverings in shops, some other settings, and on public transport. Pupils in secondary schools were being advised to wear face coverings in communal areas, an approach that Cheshire East Council had already taken locally. There had also been new requirements as regards self-isolation, new restrictions on international travel, and an extension of the vaccination booster programme.

Infection rates in the Borough remained high. The Council continued to provide public messaging around the need for vaccination and testing, and the need to exercise caution in public places.

The Executive Director drew attention to the new household support fund to which members were able to make referrals. She also advised that there were no major issues with staff absences. The report also provided an updated financial position and included details of the ongoing support for local businesses.

The information on the Council's website would be updated regularly to reflect the developing situation.

Members asked about the continuing backlog of planning applications. The Chair drew attention to the relevant section of the report. A number of measures were being taken to address the issue but it was likely to take about 12 months to resolve.

Concern was expressed that applications for recovery and growth grant were to close after 17th December. The Chief Executive undertook to arrange a written response to members regarding the take-up and capacity of the grant. The Chair asked that further publicity for the grant be arranged.

RESOLVED

That the ongoing implications of the Covid-19 pandemic and the Council's response be noted.

49 2021/22 FINANCIAL YEAR REVIEW

The Committee considered a report considered by the Finance Sub-Committee at its meeting on 1st December 2021 in relation to the 2021/22 Financial Year Review.

The report outlined how the Council was managing resources to provide value for money services during the 2021/22 financial year. It set out the financial performance of the Council with and without the impact of Covid-19.

Further details of how the Council was performing in 2021/22 were set out in the Annex to the report. Appendix 2 to the Annex contained information specific to the Corporate Policy Committee.

Councillor A Stott, as Chair of the Finance Sub-Committee, reported the outcome of the Sub-Committee's consideration of the report and commended the Sub-Committee's recommendations to the Committee.

Arising from members' consideration of the report, the following comments were made:

- Any underspends/overspends by service committees would be reported at year end.
- It was important to note that each service committee was responsible for its own budget, although it was important to manage the budget as a whole.
- Officers and members were congratulated on achieving a budget variance of less than 1% in the difficult circumstances of the pandemic.

Councillor T Dean referred to the capital strategy of the Environment and Communities Committee and asked about the scheme for the Knutsford Leisure Centre which did not appear on the list. The Chair asked that a written answer be provided.

RESOLVED (unanimously)

That the Corporate Policy Committee

1. notes the report and specifically the recommendations of the Finance Sub-Committee as follows:

Finance Sub-Committee recommends Service Committees to:

- (a) note the financial update and forecast outturn relevant to their terms of reference; and
- (b) note that officers will seek to improve outcomes and the financial outturn across all Committees to mitigate the overall forecast overspend of the Council.

2. notes the Annex to the report;

3. notes Appendix 2 and the following sections specific to the Committee:
 - Changes to Revenue budget 2021/22
 - Policy Proposals Update
 - Corporate Grants Register
 - Debt Management
 - Capital Strategy
 - Reserves Strategy

50 MID-YEAR REVIEW OF THE CORPORATE PLAN AND PERFORMANCE REPORTING UPDATE

The Committee considered a report on the Mid-Year Review of the Corporate Plan and Performance Reporting Update.

The report provided an initial assessment of progress as at the end of September 2021.

A summary of progress and future activity was set out in paragraph 5.7 of the report, with further detail set out in the Appendix.

The context for the review was one of ongoing significant challenges, with the Council, working with its partners, continuing to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. There would be a further update in the new year.

Members noted in particular the significant challenges of developing an Integrated Care System for Cheshire East in the timescale envisaged.

RESOLVED

That the Committee notes the progress in delivering the Corporate Plan.

51 CHESHIRE EAST - DIGITAL STRATEGY

The Committee considered a report on the Draft Digital Strategy.

It was intended to issue the Draft Strategy for formal consultation with a view to submitting a final version to the Committee in March 2022.

Officers corrected an error in paragraph 1.3 of the report, which should have stated that the Committee had approved a recommendation to develop a single overarching Digital Strategy in September 2021.

Arising from members' consideration of the report, the following comments were made:

- Consideration should be given to how people in rural areas would be made aware of the public consultation and to how would they be able to make their views known.
- Attention should be given to the way in which digital systems worked in practice. As an illustration of this, reference was made to recent instances in which the recordings of committee meetings had not been available on the website. The Executive Director of Corporate Services responded that officers were seeking to resolve the technical issues, including with the Council's new firewall.
- The proposal to develop a community grant scheme to fund equipment, subsidise broadband and install wi-fi was welcomed.

At the invitation of the Chair, Councillor L Wardlaw spoke on this matter as a visiting member.

RESOLVED (unanimously)

That

1. the Draft Digital Strategy be approved for formal consultation; and
2. the final version of the Digital Strategy be submitted to the Committee following consultation in March 2022.

52 COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2022/23

The Committee considered a report on proposed amendments to the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2022/23 following public consultation. Council was required to approve the Scheme each year.

Officers advised that there were mechanisms in place to monitor progress with the operation of the Scheme.

RESOLVED (unanimously)

That Council be recommended to amend the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2022/23 as follows:

- Increase the cap on the maximum award from Band B to Band D (those living in a property banded higher than a D will receive the same amount those living in a Band D)
- Increase the maximum award for those passported to 100% from 75%. Passporting covers those in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance (Income-based), Employment and Support Allowance (Income-related) or Income Support. Also increase the maximum for other groups in the lowest income bands to 80% from 75%, and revise the bands as follows and continue to increase the income levels by CPI each year:

Single	Couple	Couple / lone parent with 1 child	Couple / lone parent with 2 or more children	Maximum award
£0 - £97	£0 - £140	£0 - £200	£0 - £290	80%
£97.01-£115	£140.01-£170	£200.01-£230	£290.01-£320	60%
£115.01-£140	£170.01-£200	£230.01-£260	£320.01-£350	45%
£140.01-£165	£200.01-£230	£260.01-£290	£350.01-£380	30%
£165.01-£190	£230.01-£260	£290.01-£320	£380.01-£410	15%

1 Income bands, categories, and awards for 2022/23

- Disregard Industrial Injuries Disablement benefit and Industrial Death benefit in full

- Deduct 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
- 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
- Re-write the regulations in a clearer way and allow for more general disregards of new one-off grants.

53 DOMESTIC TAXBASE 2022/23 REPORT

The Committee considered a report on the Council taxbase calculation 2022/23 for recommendation to full Council.

Members congratulated the officers in maintaining a high collection rate.

Members also noted the reduction in the number of empty properties in the Borough and the increase in the number of empty houses that were being brought back into use. The Chair asked that a press release be issued, giving the figures for the reduction in the number of empty homes largely as a result of the increase in charges for long-term empty properties.

The Head of Customer Services confirmed that the numbers of new-build houses forecast for the 12 month period were also taken into account in calculating the taxbase.

The Head of Customer Services undertook to provide for members of the Committee a breakdown of the figures for new homes and homes being brought back into use.

RESOLVED (unanimously)

That Council be recommended that:

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Taxbase) Regulations 1992, the amount to be calculated by Cheshire East Council as its Council taxbase for the year 2022/23 is 156,607.48 for the whole area.

54 APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Committee considered an update on the work carried out on the apprenticeship programme at Cheshire East Council and the plans in place to ensure that it continued to support the priorities set out within the Corporate Plan.

The report set out progress to date with the apprenticeship programme and an action plan for 2021-2023.

Members welcomed the work to support apprenticeships, particularly encouraging young people into work with the Council.

The Head of HR undertook to provide members with details of the numbers of individuals under the apprenticeships programme who were completely new starters as opposed to existing employees.

RESOLVED (unanimously)

That the Committee notes the position in relation to Apprenticeships and the further improvements set out in the action plan.

55 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered its work programme for 2021/22.

RESOLVED

That the work programme be noted.

56 REPORTING OF URGENT DECISIONS

There were no urgent decisions to report.

57 INSURANCE CONTRACTS PROCUREMENT

The Chair had agreed that this item be added to the agenda following publication as it required an urgent decision and could not await the next meeting of the Committee.

The Committee considered a report setting out an approach to the re-procurement of the Council's insurance portfolio for contracts expiring in March 2022.

RESOLVED (unanimously)

That the Committee approves a one-year extension to the Council's current insurances and delegates authority to the Executive Director Corporate Services to approve the modification of the existing contracts of insurance to facilitate such an extension, with a formal report to come back to the Committee, seeking the delegation of authority to the Executive Director Corporate Services to undertake the procurement process using a framework for cover incepting 1st April 2023 and award the contracts following the procurement exercise.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and concluded at 12.30 pm

Councillor S Corcoran (Chair)

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Working for a brighter future together

Corporate Policy Committee

Date of Meeting:	12 th January 2022
Report Title:	Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 – 2025/26
Report of:	Alex Thompson, Director of Finance and Customer Services (Section 151 Officer)
Report Reference No:	CP/30/21-22
Ward(s) Affected:	Not Applicable

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to capture the Committee members' response to consultation on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2022 to 2026.
- 1.2. The Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy sets out the financial implications of the Council's Corporate Plan and how spending plans can be funded over the next four years. The Council is required by law to approve a balanced budget, where gross expenditure is matched by gross income and appropriate use of reserves, on an annual basis.
- 1.3. The consultation document includes proposals to update the current MTFS that was approved by Council in February 2021.
- 1.4. The current MTFS was balanced over the four-year period 2021 to 2025 and assumed that spending linked to the pandemic would be matched by government funding. The proposals recognised the risk of ongoing reductions in Government Grants as well as growth in demand, particularly within Adult and Children's and Waste services. Additional impacts were included for inflation such as staff pay and spending on utilities. Mitigation for increasing costs included savings, and additional income from some user charges. Mitigation also included increases in Council Tax of 4.99% for 2021/22 and a further annual increase of 1.99% from 2022/23.

- 1.5. The MTFS 2022 to 2026 consultation reflects financial pressures identified in the In-Year Review of Finance. The consultation also recognises high-level implications of the 2021 Central Government Spending Review.
- 1.6. This report sets out the activities to date and current estimated timescales and assumptions. All Committees are being asked to provide feedback in relation to their financial responsibilities as identified within the Constitution and linked to the budget alignment approved by the Finance Sub-Committee in July 2021.
- 1.7. Responses to the consultation will be reported to the Corporate Policy Committee to support that Committee in making recommendations to Council on changes to the current financial strategy. The Chief Finance Officer will report on the robustness of estimates and the adequacy of reserves in relation to the final proposals.

2. Recommendations

That Corporate Policy Committee:

- 2.1. Review the MTFS 2022 to 2026 Consultation Document (**Appendix 1**) and provide feedback on the proposals relevant to the responsibilities of the Committee as outlined in the Constitution, which are:
 - 1) Improving Digital Customer Experience (page 11)
 - 2) Pay inflation (page 11)
 - 3) National Insurance increase at 1.25% for social care funding (page 11)
 - 4) Improved Debt Recovery and correcting budgeted court costs income targets to reflect actual levels (page 11)
 - 5) Transactional Service Centre additional funding (page 12)
 - 6) Vendor Management Phase 3 (page 12)
 - 7) Unified IT Communications (page 12)
 - 8) IT Security and Compliance (page 12)
 - 9) IT Procurements and Application Lifecycle Management (page 12)
 - 10) Information Assurance and Data Management Phase 3 (page 12)
 - 11) Removal of temporary implementation budget and investment to run the new Financial System (page 14)
 - 12) Staff Travel and related savings (page 14)
- 2.2. Notes those proposals that are rolling forward from the MTFS 2021-25 relevant to the committee (as part of **Appendix 1** (Appendix A)).
 - 6) Mitigation of reduction in the Dedicated Schools Grant (Corporate Services) (page 33)
 - 7) Mitigation of the year-on-year reduction in the Dedicated Schools Grant (ICT) (page 33)

- 13) Efficiency savings and Restructures within Corporate Services (page 33)
- 15) Shared services review (page 33)
- 21) Review of corporate subscriptions (page 33)
- 34) Brighter Futures Together Programme Customer Experience (page 34)
- 43) Infrastructure Investment Programme (page 34)

- 2.3. Notes the impact of the local government financial settlement as provided at **Appendix 2** on the MTFS Consultation Document.
- 2.4. Comments on any other element of the MTFS Consultation Document related to the responsibilities of the Committee (including WOC Business Plans, and Reserves levels).
- 2.5. Notes that the minutes of this meeting will form the consultation response of this Committee, and along with feedback from all the other Committees, will be considered at the next meeting on 10 February 2022.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1. The Council is required to consult on the proposals within the annual budget. This is required in general terms with businesses but may also require consultation with service users on specific proposals, although where proposals relate to universal services the requirements can be covered through a single consultation document on the overall budget.
- 3.2. The Council must set a balanced budget for each financial year based on robust estimates and supported by adequate reserves. This requirement is significantly supported by meaningful consultation as this improves the assurance that proposals will be delivered within manageable levels of risk.
- 3.3. Establishing key dates for the consultation process manages expectations for stakeholders.
- 3.4. The financial parameters within the MTFS have been reviewed and options for proposals that could be included in a revised MTFS have been put forward.
- 3.5. **Appendix 1** contains the Budget Engagement document including the survey questions that have been used during the consultation period (closed 4 January 2022).

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. Delay the publication of budget proposals until after the local government finance settlement had been confirmed, which is usually late December, and adopt the minimum level of engagement. This was not desirable because it is not transparent and does not give enough time to consider future budget changes by stakeholders.

5. Background

- 5.1. Proposals to vary the current budget have been set out as part of the Budget Engagement document that was launched on 24 November 2021. These are continuing to be developed in line with the priorities included within the Corporate Plan and refined as further funding announcements are confirmed.
- 5.2. Proposals will recognise growth and savings requirements to ensure the published MTFS is both robust and transparent and supports members in making informed decisions.
- 5.3. On 27 October, the Chancellor announced the spending review 2021 that will cover the next 3 years (2022/23 to 2024/25). Details of the actual funding allocations for each local authority were not announced until the provisional settlement on 16 December 2021. At the time of publishing the Budget Consultation in November it had been confirmed that broadly there is due to be an extra £1.6bn for local authorities in each of the next three years. This funding will help the council in managing the increasing costs of complex care, stabilisation of the care market and rising inflation as well as including funding to manage cyber threats.
- 5.4. Planning for the MTFS is an ongoing process, and the Council has, in most years, followed a path of establishing the parameters for the planning process, then proposing variations to achieve a sustainable strategy and then consulting on the proposals. The launch of the consultation process has taken place in November/December in recent years and for the 2022-26 MTFS, the consultation launched on 24 November 2021 and ran until 4 January 2022.
- 5.5. The Provisional Settlement announced on 16 December has varied the assumptions contained in the Budget Engagement document. **Appendix 2** sets out the changes announced and the impact on the estimated funding envelope (Appendix to follow).
- 5.6. Service committees will provide feedback on their individual proposals and then this Committee will make the final recommendation to full Council at the February meeting.

6. Consultation and Engagement

6.1. The budget consultation involves engagement with local people and organisations to ensure that we seek feedback from all stakeholders:

6.1.1. With regards to the Budget consultation, the 6-week public consultation period ran from 24 November 2021 to 4 January 2022. During this time, residents, members and stakeholders were able to provide their views in a number of ways.

6.1.2. A dedicated engagement hub provided access for all stakeholders to get information about the proposals being consulted upon within the Budget consultation and encouraged the submission of comments, views and suggestions. The Council's social media accounts promoted the dedicated website.

6.1.3. The Council's Digital Influence Panel, Councillors, Town and Parish Councils, Public Service partner agencies, voluntary, community and faith sector stakeholders and Trade Unions have also been invited to give their views. The Council also sought to engage with representative groups for young people, disabled people and older people in the community.

6.1.4. The feedback is being collated and analysed and used to enable transparent decision making.

7. Implications

7.1. Legal

7.1.1. The Medium-Term Financial Strategy is a part of the Council's Budget and Policy Framework and as such requires approval by Council.

7.1.2. The Council should have robust processes so that it can meet statutory requirements and fulfil its fiduciary duty.

7.1.3. Any legal implications arising from this report will be addressed through the budget setting process.

7.2. **Finance**

7.2.1. The current Medium-Term Financial Strategy estimates a balanced budget over the next four years.

7.2.2. The Budget Engagement document sets out the estimated revised position, based on up-to-date information and forecasts, and maintains that balanced four-year position.

7.2.3. Changes as a result of the provisional settlement are set out in Appendix 2.

7.3. Policy

7.3.1. The Corporate Plan sets out the vision, values, aims and priorities for Cheshire East. It is a sister document to the MTFS.

7.4. Equality

7.4.1. An Equality Impact Assessment will be completed to support the MTFS, setting out the implications and mitigation.

7.5. Human Resources

7.5.1. Consultation on the proposals will include staff. Any changes involving staff will be managed in consultation with staff and Trade Unions.

7.6. Risk Management

7.6.1. There are significant risks associated with the financial consequences of the pandemic, recovery and COVID-scarring. These are set out in more detail in the Strategic Risk Register.

7.7. Rural Communities

7.7.1. There are no direct implications for rural communities.

7.8. Children & 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. The Coronavirus pandemic has had a significant impact on public health.

7.10. Climate Change

7.10.1. The Corporate Plan has a very strong environmental thread throughout with a specific aim for the Council to be 'Greener'.

7.10.2. A number of priorities and activities are underway which will support the Council's commitment of being carbon neutral by 2025,

including the delivery of an Environmental Strategy and a Carbon Action Plan.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	<p>Alex Thompson</p> <p>Director of Finance and Customer Services (Section 151 Officer)</p> <p>alex.thompson@cheshireeast.gov.uk</p>
Appendices:	<p>Appendix 1 – Budget Engagement Document</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Provisional Settlement</p>
Background Papers:	<p>Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-25</p> <p>2021/22 In-Year Review of Finance</p>

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Cheshire East Council

Budget Engagement 2022 - 26



Your **views** matter



Purpose of our Budget Engagement

The Council must set a balanced budget each year, meaning we cannot spend more than our income. To help improve value for money we need to seek the views of residents and businesses about priorities for the year ahead. Your views and feedback as local people, businesses, organisations, councillors and staff are very important and will help us to understand the impact of any changes required to achieve a financially balanced position.

We are responsible for managing annual expenditure of around **£700million**. After taking account of all the income we receive for specific purposes, such as conditional grants for schools, we have an annual net revenue budget of approximately **£300million**. This must be funded from the local taxes paid by households and businesses, and some general government grants, and will cover the day-to-day running costs of our vital services. The net budget equates to approximately **£16** per week for every resident living in the borough.

As well as providing day-to-day services to support children and adults who need our help, or emptying the

bins and managing the highways, the Council also manages a range of capital projects. These projects include building new schools, new roads, information and digital technology and regenerating our town centres. The total value of projects being managed over the next four years alone, is almost **£400million**.

This document outlines the key financial issues that we need to tackle, including those that relate to the ongoing pandemic. It also includes our proposed response to these financial challenges and our plans for spending next year. Your views will be captured and will help inform councillors in making the decisions regarding the council's budget.

Giving your feedback



This PDF document is for information only – to let us know what you think about this budget engagement document please use one of the methods below. Please submit your feedback by 4th January 2022:



- Complete a paper survey, available at all Cheshire East libraries, and return it to Research and Consultation, Cheshire East Council, Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach, CW11 1HZ
- Email RandC@cheshireeast.gov.uk
- Write to Research and Consultation, Cheshire East Council, Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach, CW11 1HZ
- Tweet [@CheshireEast](https://twitter.com/CheshireEast) #CECBudget

- Comment on our budget consultation comments board at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/BudgetEngagement

For any queries about this engagement, for example if you would like to receive this questionnaire in an alternative format, or submit your response in a different way, please call Customer Services 0300 123 5500 or email our Research and Consultation Team

RandC@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Your confidentiality is assured

Any personal information you supply will remain strictly confidential and will be used in line with the Data Protection Act 2018.

To find out more about how we use your information see our privacy policy at

www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/Privacy



Content

This budget engagement document covers the below topics :

1 | Our corporate priorities

2 | Spending within resources

3 | Spending on our priorities for next year

4 | Summary position for 2022/23

5 | Open investment and savings proposals

6 | Fairer investment and savings proposals

7 | Greener investment and savings proposals

8 | Central budgets and funding activity

9 | Final budget consultation comments

1 | Our corporate priorities

Our corporate plan sets out the vision and priorities over the next four years. Our vision is for a more **Open**, **Fair** and **Green** Cheshire East.

Our Vision

An Open, Fairer,
Greener Cheshire East

Open

Fair

Green

Open - We will provide strong community leadership and work transparently with our residents, businesses and partners to deliver our ambition in Cheshire East.

Fair - We aim to reduce inequalities, promote fairness and opportunity for all and support our most vulnerable residents

Green - We will lead our communities to protect and enhance our environment, tackle the climate emergency and drive sustainable development

- The vision is ambitious, long-term and includes actions that will help us towards achieving our priorities.

- Our ability to achieve them all will depend on the resources we have at our disposal. This means that our corporate plan and the budget are intrinsically linked.

- The plan also relies on the council demonstrating a set of values that support success.

Our Priorities

An open and enabling organisation

- Ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision making
- Listen, learn and respond to our residents, promoting opportunities for a two-way conversation
- Support a sustainable financial future for the council, through service development, improvement and transformation
- Look at opportunities to bring more income into the borough
- Support and develop our workforce to be confident, motivated, innovative, resilient and empowered
- Promote and develop the services of the council through regular communication and engagement with all residents

A council which empowers and cares about people

- Work together with residents and partners to support people and communities to be strong and resilient
- Reduce health inequalities across the borough
- Protect and support our communities and safeguard children, adults at risk and families from abuse, neglect and exploitation
- Be the best Corporate Parents to our children in care
- Support all children to have the best start in life
- Increase opportunities for all children and young adults with additional needs
- Ensure all children have a high quality, enjoyable education that enables them to achieve their full potential
- Reduce the reliance on long term care by improving services closer to home and providing more extra care facilities, including dementia services

A thriving and sustainable place

- A great place for people to live, work and visit
- Welcoming, safe and clean neighbourhoods
- Reduce impact on the environment
- Be a carbon neutral council by 2025
- A transport network that is safe and promotes active travel
- Thriving urban and rural economies with opportunities for all

Our Values

We are
flexible

We
innovate

We take
responsibility

We deliver
the **service**
that customers
need

We use
**effective
teamwork**

2 | Spending within resources

Cheshire East Council gets income from council tax, business rates, government grants and local fees and charges.

Since 1st April 2019 the council has not received any central government general-purpose revenue support grant (it was worth £55.9million to us in 2013/14). To maintain spending on vital services the council has therefore had to increase council tax and fees and charges.

We receive more money when new houses are built, and new residents begin to pay council tax. However, increasing population, and a population that is living longer with new needs, does increase overall costs of services. It is a difficult challenge to manage increases in demand as well as unavoidable costs such as inflation on the things we use and the wages we pay.

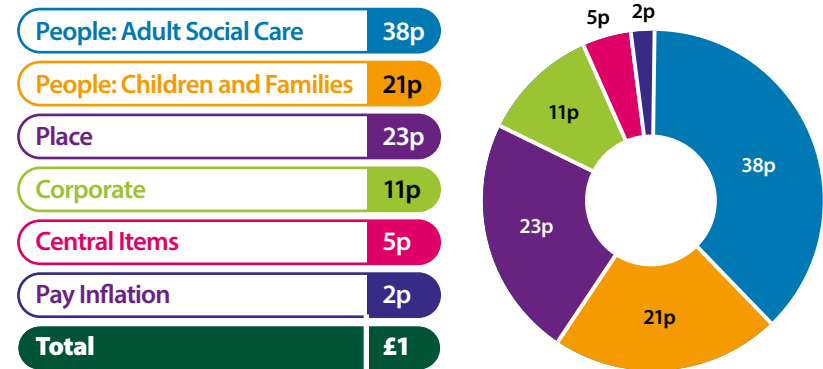
Almost 40% of the budget is spent on supporting older people in care homes or in the community, people with a physical or learning disability or mental ill health. About 20% is spent protecting our most vulnerable young people who need to come into the care of the local authority or ensuring our children with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) are supported to live full and active lives.

The council's finances are audited, with reports to central government and independent external auditors that provide an opinion on the quality of the council's arrangements. Services are also inspected by external bodies such as OFSTED, CQC and the Local Government Ombudsman. If there ever is a risk that a council is not going to achieve a balanced budget in-year or in the future, it must take immediate action.

When the council agreed its budget in February 2021, it was balanced for a four year period. This consultation again sets out a balanced position, but with several potential changes within that reflecting improved estimates and emerging information on costs and financial pressures.

How is £1 of your Council Tax spent?

In February 2021, Cheshire East Council agreed it would spend each £1 of its budget for the year April 2021 to March 2022 in the following areas:



2 | Spending within resources cont'd

Within budget so far

The good news is that this year, the council is again living within its means. The Financial Review 2021/22 is balanced to within 0.7% of the revised budget that was agreed for the year. In-year spending on Children's Services reflects the most significant ongoing financial pressure. This challenge was identified at the end of last year and is a significant factor in the changes to the financial plans looking ahead. Mitigating action across all services will continue during the final quarter of the year to try and achieve an overall balanced position without having to rely on reserves.

COVID-19 continues to have a local impact, with council spending (or lost income) of £10m in excess of what would normally be expected. Government grants and good financial control locally means the council is currently forecasting that the impact of COVID-19 should not reduce council reserves. Longer term effects of COVID-19 are still a factor in public sector finances and the council continues to work with government and our partners to support local people and businesses in an appropriate affordable way.

Council Tax and funding allocations

Since setting the financial strategy in February 2021 the council has experienced ongoing increases in the costs of caring for children, and although the budget was increased for 2021/22 it has not been sufficient. The council is also having to manage increasing costs from a nationally negotiated pay award and local decisions not to increase income targets in car

parking. There is further significant financial pressure on some care providers partly due to changes brought about by COVID-19 and increases to minimum wages. There continues to be ongoing growth in costs for adult social care and waste services due to an increasing population. These financial pressures are addressed within this consultation document through efficiencies and increasing income from council tax and government grants.

On 27th October, the Chancellor announced the Spending Review 2021 that will cover the next 3 years (2022/23 to 2024/25). Details of the actual funding allocations for each local authority will not be announced until the provisional settlement in December 2021 but broadly there is due to be an extra £1.6bn for local authorities in each of the next three years. This funding will help the council in managing the increasing costs of complex care, stabilisation of the care market and rising inflation as well as including funding to manage cyber threats.

Council tax thresholds will remain at similar levels to recent years, with the threshold for "core" council tax increases remaining at 1.99%. There is also an expectation from central government that some demand growth in adult social care will be funded by a further annual precept of 1%.

Final confirmation of the threshold limits will be in the provisional settlement in December but for the purpose of presenting these budget estimates we have **increased council tax in each year by 2.99%** in order to manage ongoing demand for services.

Government have also made announcements about the Social Care Levy, funded from increasing national insurance contributions. The levy will support the NHS and help keep down the overall care costs for individuals. At this stage the full financial implications on the council are not known. This consultation therefore assumes that any new income from the new levy will be matched by expenditure. We have therefore taken the approach of not including it within this consultation. As more information is shared, we will be able to publicise the impact on local people and organisations.

Use of Reserves

It is essential to balance resources against forecast spending levels, as the council continues to have relatively low levels of reserves. Reserves cannot therefore be used to regularly manage the risk of potential reductions in income or unachievable savings proposals. Therefore, the proposals contained within this document aim to address all key areas of risk and cover the planned and estimated increases in spending to keep up with demand. Reliance on reserves is kept to a minimum to manage in-year variations and specific spending.

3 | Spending on our priorities for next year (Summary)

We will continue to invest in our priorities, support our most vulnerable residents and meet the needs of a growing population. Detailed proposals to change the 2022/23 budget are included in Section 5. Proposals previously consulted on are also included at [Appendix A](#). The total of all these budget changes result in a net change to each Directorate as follows:

Service Area (+£ Net increase)	Spending Priorities
+£2.9m in 2022/23 for Children's Services (Services include Social Care for Children, Education and Prevention services)	Despite significant financial challenges, we plan to invest in children's services. There will be increases in spending to meet the needs of the growing numbers of children in care, care leavers, education (including more school places) and early help. Social Care spending is proposed to increase by £4m, which is mitigated by lower travel costs and removing one-off transformation funding provided in 2021/22. There will also be investment in SEND services.
+£0.3m in 2022/23 for Adult Services (Services include Social Care for Adults, Public Health and Communities)	We plan to increase spending by £4m to meet the needs of the growing numbers of older people who often have complex care needs and younger adults who are living with very complex needs. However, we aim to transform care services where possible to mitigate some of the growing cost pressures and drive efficiencies in every aspect of the service to provide best value for money.
+£0.6m in 2022/23 for Place Services (Services include Highways, Waste, Environmental Management, Economic Development, Planning and Leisure)	As more houses are being built, we need to ensure we can increase the level of services such as waste collection to meet this demand. The financial strategy previously included additional potential income from car parking, but local decisions not to proceed with this approach mean income must be made up in other ways. These requirements will be offset by service reviews and efficiencies elsewhere within the Directorate.
+£0.4m in 2022/23 for Corporate Services (Services include Legal and Democratic Services, ICT, Finance, HR and Customer Services)	We continue to invest in modern technology and efficient ways of working. We have completely changed how we work since the pandemic and all staff who can work from home continue to do so for the majority of the time. This will help us to reduce our premises and mileage costs to allow us to invest in other parts of our support services.
+ Additional Budgets (Across all services to manage items such as pay inflation and the ongoing costs of the capital programme)	Pay inflation is set to increase the budget by £5.5m in 2022/23 as we also need to catch up from the unbudgeted, likely, nationally agreed pay increase from 2021/22. The costs of the capital programme which reflect the Council's requirement to borrow money to fund significant infrastructure schemes will also increase by £4m for next year.

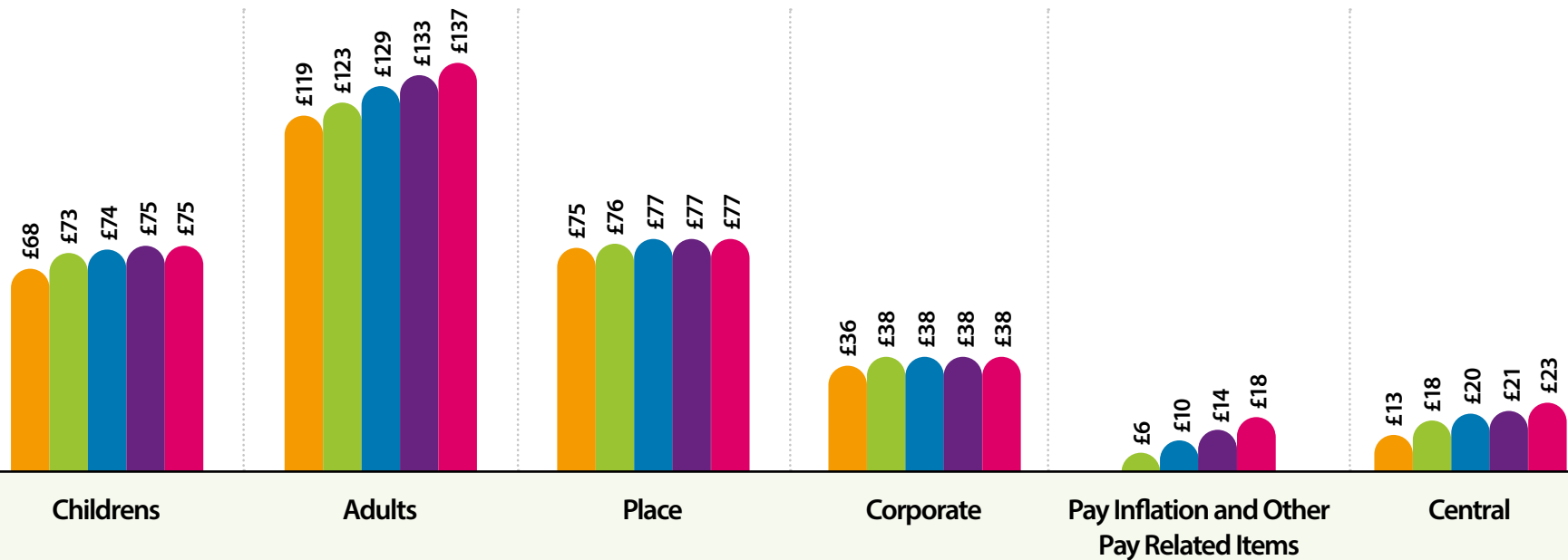
3 | Spending on our priorities for next year (Summary) cont'd

Revenue Budget (for day-to-day spending)

MTFS Budgets, by service area (£million)

This chart shows the proposed budget for each year up to 2025/26 for each of the directorates at Cheshire East, plus the planned budget increases required for pay inflation and central services.

There is planned increased investment overall in all areas over the medium term. The increase in budgets is growing at a faster rate in our people based services for Children and Adults.



● 2021/22 ● 2022/23 ● 2023/24 ● 2024/25 ● 2025/26

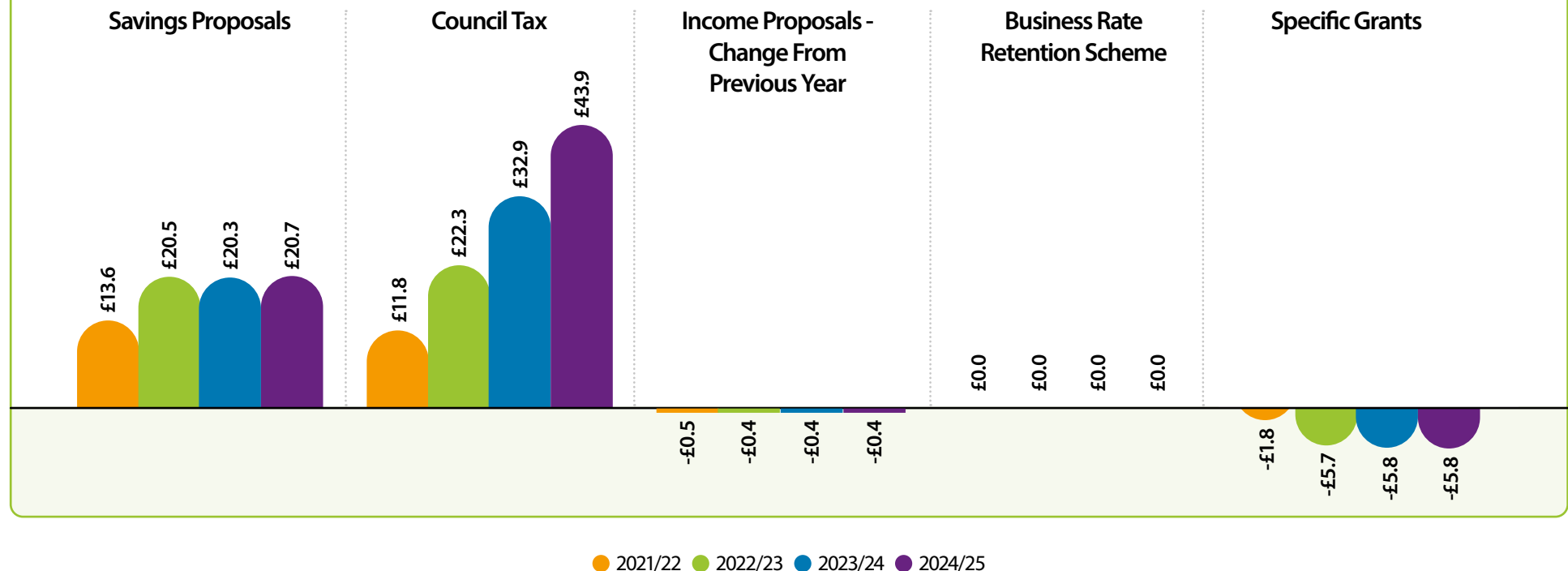
3 | Spending on our priorities for next year (Summary) cont'd

Funding, income and savings

Funding, income and savings proposals - cumulative change (£million)

This chart shows the change in funding, income and savings proposals over the medium term. Council tax is steadily increasing while business rates are forecast to plateau due to the uncertainties around the future of the Business Rates Retention Scheme. Specific grants available to support the general revenue budget continue to decline over the

medium term (although this remains a prudent estimate until firm allocations are released in December 2021). Some proposed car parking charge increases are no longer being implemented as planned (as shown by the negative income stream compared to current budget levels).



3 | Spending on our priorities for next year (Summary) cont'd

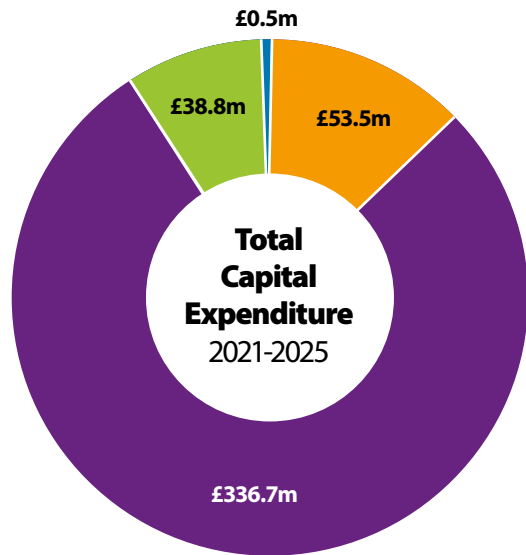
Capital Budget (for spending on projects)

These charts show the 2021-2025 Capital Programme expenditure for the council as well as how the programme is to be funded.

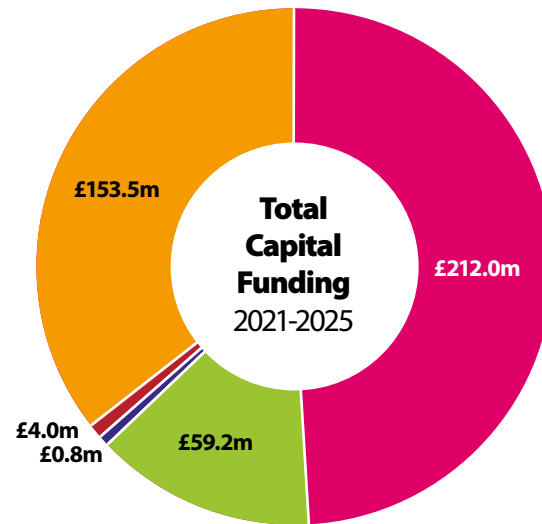
The Place Directorate, which is responsible for Highways and Regeneration projects, is responsible for almost 80% of the programme overall.

Over 60% of the programme is to be funded from external resources, such as government grants and contributions from developers.

Borrowing is mainly funded from the council's net budget.

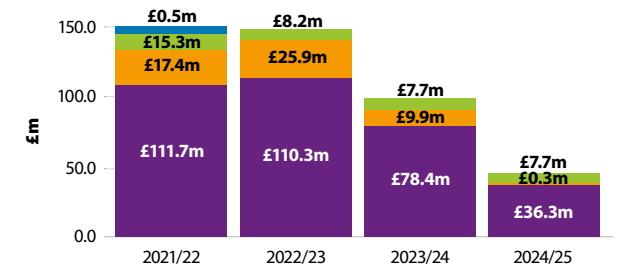


● Adults, Health and Integration
 ● Children's Services
 ● Place
 ● Corporate



● Government Grants
 ● Prudential Borrowing
 ● Revenue Contributions
 ● External Contributions
 ● Capital Receipts

Capital Expenditure
2021/22 to 2024/25



● Adults, Health and Integration
 ● Children's Services
 ● Place
 ● Corporate

4 | Summary position for 2022/23

We are consulting on our plans to increase spending each year across the range of council priorities.
To fund the increasing cost of services the council expects to increase council tax in line with government inflation targets.

Estimated Net Budget				
	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m
Service Budgets	298.5	309.1	315.5	324.6
Proposed changes as follows:				
Open	+2.2	+2.2	+4.2	+4.1
Fair	+6.6	+3.7	+4.5	+4.4
Green	+1.8	+0.5	+0.4	-
Total Service Budgets	309.1	315.5	324.6	333.1
Total Central Budgets (Net of Reserves)	12.1	12.1	13.7	16.1
TOTAL Service + Central Budgets	321.2	327.6	338.3	349.2
Funded by				
Council Tax	-254.7	-265.1	-275.8	-286.7
Business Rate Retention Scheme	-49.1	-49.1	-49.1	-49.1
Revenue Support Grant	-	-	-	-
Specific Unringfenced Grants	-17.4	-13.4	-13.4	-13.4
TOTAL Funded by	-321.2	-327.6	-338.3	-349.2
Balanced Position	-	-	-	-



Your views matter

For options on how to complete this survey, including digitally or in paper format, please see 'Giving your feedback' on page 2.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the council spends money wisely?

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Tend to agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Tend to disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Don't know

5 | Open Investment and Savings Proposals

New or revised investment proposals

The following table presents the 'Open' investment proposals that are new or revised within this year's budget setting process – you can comment on any of these proposals in the following survey. Investments are areas where the council is proposing to increase spending.

Please note within the following tables positive numbers represent a budget growth, while negative numbers represent a budget saving.

	Open – Investment	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m
Listen. Learn	1) Improving Digital Customer Experience [New for 2022/23 Budget] This proposal directly supports the implementation of the agreed Customer Experience Strategy which will improve customer responsiveness and delivery.	0.110	-	-	-
	2) Pay inflation [Change to item 3 in 2021/22 Budget] This proposal includes incremental increases for eligible staff and nationally negotiated pay awards. Average increases are forecast at c.2.5%. This may not apply evenly across pay bands due to implications of the Living Wage. The proposals recognise the additional delayed impact of the 2021/22 pay negotiations that also affect the 2022/23 budget.	5.536	3.873	3.964	4.062
Financial Sustainability	3) National Insurance increase at 1.25% for social care funding [New for 2022/23 Budget] The planned introduction of a national Social Care Levy will increase national insurance contributions for all employers. As the council is part of the public sector, government will provide compensation for such payments. Although not confirmed these costs are currently mitigated in full through increased grant.	0.913	-	-	-
	4) Improved Debt Recovery and correcting budgeted court costs income targets to reflect actual levels [Change to item 16 in 2021/22 Budget] Improving debt collection will reduce income from court costs, which are already forecasting a budget shortfall. This is positive in many respects, although it does reflect an income deficit. The council will continue to innovate with debt collection improvements that recognise the circumstances of those in debt.	0.337	0.013	-0.024	-

5 | Open Investment and Savings Proposals cont'd

	Open – Investment	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m
Commercial Opportunities	5) Transactional Service Centre additional funding [New for 2022/23 Budget] Transactional Service is a shared service with Cheshire West and Chester. The TSC Team budget is again unbalanced due to a loss of income (primarily from schools opting out), additional costs of the new Unit4 governance and support team, and inflation costs to the base budgets.	0.238	-	-	-
	6) Vendor Management Phase 3 [New for 2022/23 Budget] Continuing improvements to the council procurement and contract management process have seen the rollout and adoption of a new system. The system, Atamis, is a cloud-based contract lifecycle management (CLM) solution across Cheshire East Council, by the Corporate Procurement Team.	0.175	-0.089	0.071	-
	7) Unified IT Communications [Change to item 44 in 2021/22 Budget] Additional funding required to modernise the communication systems including telephony and video conferencing, to further enable the Flexible and Mobile Working (FMW) strategy by enabling corporate calling from most devices in most locations and improve video calling between corporate locations.	0.110	0.009	0.017	-
Workforce	8) IT Security and Compliance [New for 2022/23 Budget] Cyber threats are increasing in both quantity and sophistication, with sources ranging from individuals, professional groups, and international actors. Additional investment would be needed from CEC to ensure the council continues to have an appropriate security and compliance posture, capability, and capacity across our ICT platforms.	0.097	0.006	0.006	-
	9) IT Procurements and Application Lifecycle Management [Change to items 45, 46, 47 in the 2021/22 Budget] Additional funding would be needed for the council's key line of ICT business systems from initial procurement, to implementation, maintenance and decommissioning. The benefits of robust Application Lifecycle Management (ALM) will be modern business systems that are secure, supportable and compliant.	0.075	0.075	0.078	-
	10) Information Assurance and Data Management Phase 3 [New for 2022/23 Budget] The Information Assurance and Data Management (IADM) programme phase 3, will deliver key projects that will underpin the safeguarding of information and enhance its use.	0.040	-	-	-
	Open – Investment	7.631	3.887	4.112	4.062

5 | Open Investment and Savings Proposals cont'd



Your views matter

For options on how to complete this survey, including digitally or in paper format, please see 'Giving your feedback' on page 2.

Do you support or oppose each of the new or revised investments under **Open?**

Investments are areas where the council is proposing to increase spending. Please tick one box only in each row:

	Support	Oppose	No opinion / Don't know
1 Improving Digital Customer Experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2 Pay inflation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3 National Insurance increase at 1.25% for social care funding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4 Improved Debt Recovery and correcting budgeted court costs income targets to reflect actual levels	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5 Transactional Service Centre additional funding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6 Vendor Management Phase 3	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7 Unified IT Communications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8 IT Security and Compliance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9 IT Procurements and Application Lifecycle Management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10 Information Assurance and Data Management Phase 3	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you wish to comment on any of the new or revised investments under **Open** please do so below – Please clearly state which investment you are commenting on. Please write in below:


5 | Open Investment and Savings Proposals cont'd

New or revised savings proposals

The following table presents the 'Open' savings proposals that are new or revised within this year's budget setting process – you can comment on any of these proposals in the following survey. Savings are areas where the council is proposing to decrease spending.

	Open – Savings	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m
Financial Sustainability	11) Removal of temporary implementation budget and investment to run the new Financial System [Change to Item 5 in the 2021/22 Budget] Implementation costs for the council core financial system can now be removed from the ongoing revenue budget. Inflation costs of the new system need to be reflected to ensure estimates are robust in respect of the whole life costs of the system.	-0.453	0.006	0.006	0.006
Workforce	12) Staff Travel and related savings [Change to item 14 in the 2021/22 Budget] Staff travel savings will be derived from changes to working practices since COVID-19, some of which will continue in the future. A review of other terms and conditions will be undertaken to ensure that the council is aligned with other Local Authorities in its application of terms and conditions.	-0.525	-	-	-
	Open – Total savings	-0.978	0.006	0.006	0.006
	Open – Net budget change	6.653	3.893	4.118	4.068

5 | Open Investment and Savings Proposals cont'd



Your views matter

For options on how to complete this survey, including digitally or in paper format, please see 'Giving your feedback' on page 2.

Do you support or oppose each of the new or revised savings under Open?

Savings are areas where the council is proposing to decrease spending. Please tick one box only in each row

	Support	Oppose	No opinion / Don't know
11 Removal of temporary implementation budget and investment to run the new Financial System	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12 Staff Travel and related savings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you wish to comment on any of the new or revised savings under **Open** please do so below – Please clearly state which savings you are commenting on. Please write in below:

Previously agreed proposals

The following table presents the 'Open' investment and savings proposals agreed during last years' budget setting process that have not changed since then. Detail on these can be found in the [MTFS 2021-25](#).

	Open – Previously approved MTFS proposals – February 2021	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m
	See Appendix A (for further details see MTFS 2021-25)	-4.394	-1.656	0.076	-

6 | Fair Investment and Savings Proposals

New or revised investment proposals

The following table presents the 'Fair' investment proposals that are new or revised within this year's budget setting process – you can comment on any of these proposals in the following survey. Investments are areas where the council is proposing to increase spending.

Please note that within the following tables positive numbers represent a budget growth, whilst negative numbers represent a budget saving.

	Fair – Investment	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m
Reduce Reliance	13) Investment in Adult Social Care [Change to item 57 in the 2021/22 Budget] The Adult Social Care (Operations and Commissioning) and Public Health budgets remain under continued pressure across the country. The rising cost of social care in Cheshire East is driven by two main factors: increasing demand for services and the increasing costs of providing them. Unit costs are driven mainly by workforce costs and reflect current difficulties with the recruitment of staff. Demand for social care is related directly to the number of people who need personal care or support to help them live their lives.	4.000	3.500	4.000	4.000
	14) Care fee uplifts [New for 2022/23 Budget] Cheshire East Council has a duty under the Care Act 2014 to “promote the efficient and effective operation of a market in services for meeting care and support needs.” In delivering this obligation, councils must ensure the sustainability of the market and that there are sufficient high-quality services available to meet the care and support needs of adults in the area. This business case proposes a fee uplift for delivering care at home.	-	2.000	-	-
Safeguard Children	15) Investment in Cared for Children and Care Leavers and other pressures [Change to items 75, 77 in the 2021/22 Budget] Cheshire East Council has corporate parenting responsibility for over 500 cared for children and young people. The COVID-19 pandemic has increased demand and complexity across the spectrum of need. The pandemic has also impacted upon our ability to recruit new foster carers at the pace that we require and fully mobilise our block residential contract, resulting in a financial pressure. The impact of the pandemic remains visible nationally in relation to demand for statutory services and sufficiency challenges. Figures are under review and may be revised following further analysis of demand and pressures.	4.000	0.400	0.400	0.400

6 | Fair Investment and Savings Proposals cont'd

	Fair – Investment	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m
Safeguard Children	16) Increase capacity to support Statutory SEND service [New for 2022/23 Budget] Additional SEND service capacity required due to the growth in the number of children with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) and the need to comply with statutory timescales for annual reviews, ensure co-production and improve communications with families. Figures are under review and may be revised following further analysis of demand and pressures.	0.400	0.200	0.120	-
	17) Revenue costs for Crewe Youth Zone [New for 2022/23 Budget] Growth for running costs of Crewe Youth Zone for three years (to be funded through restructure of Early Help Budget).	-	-	-	0.400
	18) Safeguarding Children – legacy staffing pressure [New for 2022/23 Budget] In previous years children's social care has increased its frontline capacity due to increased demand and particularly in relation to the need for agency placement. The service continues to experience high demand and is not in a position to offset legacy savings. This has been exacerbated by the impact of the pandemic where complexity across the spectrum of need has increased and frontline capacity is essential.	0.390	-	-	-
	19) Growth in Children & Families Commissioning Contracts [New for 2022/23 Budget] Growth to correct a legacy pressure in the Children and Families commissioning budget.	0.180	-	-	-
	20) Increase capacity to support Statutory Education Psychology Service [New for 2022/23 Budget] Growth in the number of children with Education Health and Care Plans requires additional Educational Psychology capacity to carry out statutory work. Figures are under review and may be revised following further analysis of demand and pressures.	0.125	0.063	-	-
	Fair – Total investment	9.095	6.163	4.520	4.800

6 | Fair Investment and Savings Proposals cont'd



Your views matter

For options on how to complete this survey, including digitally or in paper format, please see 'Giving your feedback' on page 2.

Do you support or oppose each of the new or revised investments under Fair?

Investments are areas where the council is proposing to increase spending. Please tick one box only in each row.

	Support	Oppose	No opinion / Don't know
13 Investment in Adult Social Care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14 Care fee uplifts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15 Investment in Cared for Children and Care Leavers and other pressures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16 Increase capacity to support Statutory SEND service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17 Revenue costs for Crewe Youth Zone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18 Safeguarding Children – legacy staffing pressure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19 Growth in Children & Families Commissioning Contracts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20 Increase capacity to support Statutory Education Psychology Service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you wish to comment on any of the new or revised investments under **Fair** please do so below – Please clearly state which investment you are commenting on: Please write in below:

6 | Fair Investment and Savings Proposals cont'd

New or revised savings proposals

The following table presents the 'Fair' savings proposals that are new or revised within this year's budget setting process – you can comment on any of these proposals in the following survey. Savings are areas where the council is proposing to decrease spending.

	Fair – Savings	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m
Safeguard Children	21) A redesign of Early Help Services into a Locality model [Change to items 10, 11, 50, 72 in 2021/22 Budget] We will redesign Early Help Services to a Locality Model. This will support us to achieve better outcomes for children as it will enable services to be strongly connected to communities which will support strong joint partnership working and information sharing. The redesign will result in a reduction in the budget for Early Help Services, but this will be offset by funding from external grants, including the Supporting Families Grant.	-0.424	-	-	-
	22) Restructure Early Help Budget to fund Crewe Youth Zone [New for 2022/23 Budget] Restructure of Early Help Budget to fund Crewe Youth Zone for three years.	-	-	-	-0.400
	Fair – Total savings	-0.424	-	-	-0.400
	Fair – Net budget change	8.671	6.163	4.520	4.400

6 | Fair Investment and Savings Proposals cont'd



Your views matter

For options on how to complete this survey, including digitally or in paper format, please see 'Giving your feedback' on page 2.

Do you support or oppose each of the new or revised savings under Fair?

Savings are areas where the council is proposing to decrease spending. Please tick one box only in each row.

	Support	Oppose	No opinion / Don't know
21 A redesign of Early Help Services into a Locality model	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22 Restructure Early Help Budget to fund Crewe Youth Zone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you wish to comment on any of the new or revised savings under **Fair** please do so below – Please clearly state which savings you are commenting on: Please write in below:

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Previously agreed proposals

The following table presents the 'Fair' investment and savings proposals agreed during last years' budget setting process that have not changed since then. Details on these can be found in the [MTFS 2021-25](#).

	Fair – Previously approved MTFS proposals	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m
	See Appendix A (for further details see MTFS 2021-25)	-2.100	-2.450	-	-

7 | Green Investment and Savings Proposals

New or revised investment proposals

The following table presents the 'Green' investment proposals that are new or revised within this year's budget setting process – you can comment on any of these proposals in the following survey. Investments are areas where the council is proposing to increase spending.

Please note that within the following tables positive numbers represent a budget growth, whilst negative numbers represent a budget saving.

	Green – Investment	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m
Transport	23) Parking service – postponement of review of charges [Change to item 88 in 2021/22 Budget] This business case updates a prior year's proposal to align parking operational arrangements with corporate priority outcomes through changes to the borough's car parking provision. Following a decision at the Highways Committee in September 2021, these proposals will not be taken forward at this time.	0.504	-	-	-
	24) Local Supported Buses [Change to item 89 in 2021/22 Budget] The planned efficiency savings are no longer considered to be achievable at this time following market testing of options and taking into account the bus sectors prolonged recovery from the pandemic.	0.008	-0.012	-	-
	25) School Transport [Change to item NEW in 2021/22 Budget] Review of current school transport budget requirements as a result of an increase in eligible children, in particular those with SEND, and rising costs of school transport provision. Figures are under review and may be revised following further analysis of demand and pressures.	0.150	-0.050	-0.150	-
	Green – Total investment	0.662	-0.062	-0.150	-

7 | Green Investment and Savings Proposals cont'd



Your views matter

For options on how to complete this survey, including digitally or in paper format, please see 'Giving your feedback' on page 2.

Do you support or oppose each of the new or revised investments under **Green?**

Investments are areas where the council is proposing to increase spending. Please tick one box only in each row.

23 | Parking service – postponement of review of charges

Support

Oppose

No opinion / Don't know

☐
☐
☐

24 | Local Supported Buses

☐
☐
☐

25 | School Transport

☐
☐
☐

If you wish to comment on any of the new or revised investments under **Green** please do so below – Please clearly state which investment you are commenting on: Please write in below:

7 | Green Investment and Savings Proposals cont'd

New or revised savings proposals

There are no new or revised Green savings proposals being put forward this year.

Previously agreed proposals

The following table presents the 'Green' investment and savings proposals agreed during last years' budget setting process that have not changed since then. Detail on these can be found in the [MTFS 2021-25](#).

	Green – Previously approved MTFS proposals	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m
	See Appendix A (for further details see MTFS 2021-25)	1.158	0.524	0.536	-

7 | Green Investment and Savings Proposals cont'd

Assessing the carbon impact of proposals

As part of our Environment Strategy, the council has committed to its operations becoming carbon neutral by 2025 and to influencing carbon reduction across the borough.



We are also proposing that as part of our Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), we assess the estimated 'net carbon impact' of all new saving and investment proposals that are put forward, to understand how they will contribute to carbon reduction, or the extent of any work we will need to do to compensate for any additional carbon.



Your views matter

For options on how to complete this survey, including digitally or in paper format, please see 'Giving your feedback' on page 2.

Generally speaking, do you support or oppose the introduction of "net carbon impact" assessments for all new saving and investment proposals that are put forward?

Please tick one box only

Support

Oppose

No opinion / Don't know



If you wish to you can comment on the introduction of "net carbon neutral" assessments for proposals below – this could include comments on anything you would like to see the council do to help combat climate change and reduce emissions. Please write in below:

.....

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8 | Central budgets and funding activity

To ensure openness and transparency the council identifies the use of reserves and other impacts of the council's balance sheet. It considers how these affect the overall requirement to raise council tax to fund local services in a sustainable way.

General reserves were increased by £1.2million at the end of 2020/21 which was achieved ahead of planned targeted increases as a result of a more favourable outturn in April 2021. This takes the level of general reserves to £11.5million to reflect the increasing size of the budget and the associated risks from managing demand led services. However, at the same time, built up reserves from COVID-19 Grants, capital spending and the collection fund will be used to manage the impact of COVID-19 and ongoing costs of borrowing to fund infrastructure costs.

Costs of capital financing will still increase significantly over the medium term though (costing £21million over four years).

The previous strategy for year-on-year increases to contributions to the pensions fund has created a more sustainable position and contributions do not need to continue increasing which will continue to save money over the MTFS (saving £4million over four years).

Council tax provides the most significant funding source for local services and cumulative increase over the MTFS as a result of increased homes and proposed 2.99% annual increases, which will be significant (providing £110million over four years).

Overall, unringfenced grant funding continues to reduce over the medium term despite Spending Review announcements that local government is due to receive an extra £4.8billion over the next three years. There is widespread uncertainty around the allocation methods and the future of the New Homes Bonus Grant and business rates, so at this stage the council is not factoring-in these additional grants.

If the government settlement provides additional funding compared to the forecasts in this document it will help the council improve funding for local priorities and create additional flexibility to respond to the consultation responses.

Investment proposals

The following table presents the 'central budgets and funding activity' investment proposals that are within this year's budget setting process – you can comment on any of these proposals in the following survey. Investments are areas where the council is proposing to increase spending.

Please note within the following tables positive numbers represent a budget growth or reduction in funding, whilst negative numbers represent a budget saving or increased income.

8 | Central budgets and funding activity cont'd

Central budgets and funding activity – Investment / reduction in income		2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m
Financial Sustainability	26) Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Councils are required to charge a minimum amount to their revenue account each year, to finance the cost of capital expenditure. This ensures that the revenue costs of repaying debt are spread over the life of the asset. The budget for MRP is included in the capital financing budget along with interest charges, offset by income received on investments. MRP will rise significantly over the period of the MTFS due to the number of major schemes in the capital programme that are to be funded by borrowing. These include: Highways Improvements; Crewe and Macclesfield Town Centre regeneration schemes; Congleton Leisure Centre; Poynton Relief Road and investment in the council's assets and ICT infrastructure.	4.000	1.000	1.000	-
	27) Changes to unringfenced specific grant estimates Unringfenced grant funding estimates continue to reduce over the medium term despite Spending Review announcements that local government is due to receive an extra £4.8billion over the next three years. Prudent estimates have been factored in at this stage due to uncertainties around allocation methods and the future of the New Homes Bonus Grant.	1.755	3.969	0.046	-
Central budgets and funding activity – Total investment / reduction in income		5.755	4.969	1.046	-



Your views matter

For options on how to complete this survey, including digitally or in paper format, please see 'Giving your feedback' on page 2.

Do you support or oppose each of the new or revised investments under 'central budgets and funding activity'?

Investments are areas where the council is proposing to increase spending. Please tick one box only in each row

Support Oppose No opinion / Don't know

26 | Minimum Revenue Provision



27 | Change to unringfenced specific grants estimates



If you wish to comment on any of the new or revised investments under 'central budgets and funding activity' please do so below – Please clearly state which investment you are commenting on: Please write in below

8 | Central budgets and funding activity cont'd

Savings proposals

The following table presents the central budgets and funding activity savings proposals that are within this year's budget setting process – you can comment on any of these proposals in the following survey. Savings are areas where the council is proposing to decrease spending.

Central budgets and funding activity – Investment / reduction in income		2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m
Financial Sustainability	28) Council tax Each new home brings additional council tax revenue as well as a New Homes Bonus and Community Infrastructure Levy (if applicable). But homes also create additional costs, such as education, waste collection and highways. The council ensures that any subsidy from its general funding sources is carefully examined to achieve maximum value to ensure council tax increases for residents are kept to an overall minimum.	-4.527	-2.807	-2.728	-2.639
	Percentage increases in the base council tax charge brings in additional income to help fund demand growth in vital service areas but has to be considered against the impact on Cheshire East residents (1.99%). Extra adult social care precepts are ringfenced specifically to fund demand led growth in this area (1.00%).	-7.306	-7.622	-7.952	-8.293
	29) Business Rates Retention Scheme New commercial developments can result in additional income being retained to fund local services as well as benefiting local economic wellbeing. This supports the Council's approach to invest in economic growth through unlocking development land and supporting inward investment. Since the baseline funding level for business rates retention was set back in 2013/14, there have been many policy changes around reliefs for different business types. With each policy change, all local authorities are compensated for their share of business rates foregone. Up to and including 2018/19, these compensation grants have been set aside to help smooth changes in business rates that can arise when businesses are revalued or move out of the area. From 2019/20, some of the compensation grants being received are being used to fund the revenue budget. There are no changes forecast to the budget over the medium term due to uncertainties around the future of the Business Rates Retention Scheme.	-	-	-	-

8 | Central budgets and funding activity cont'd

Savings proposals

The following table presents the central budgets and funding activity savings proposals that are within this year's budget setting process – you can comment on any of these proposals in the following survey. Savings are areas where the council is proposing to decrease spending.

Central budgets and funding activity – Investment / reduction in income		2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m
Financial Sustainability	30) Central Pension adjustment For 2020/21 and 2021/22, the past service deficit element of the draw from service budgets is clawing back more than is required to be paid over to the Pensions Service. This is due to the fact the service pension oncost rate was calculated then the rate required by Pensions was reduced. This will result in three years' worth of over recoupment from service budgets from 2020/21 to 2022/23 (if budgets remain at current levels). This is creating a surplus in the central pension budget which is available to support the wider revenue budget.	-2.500	2.100	-	-
	31) Bad Debt Provision – change in provision Outstanding debt is reviewed on a quarterly basis and the bad debt provision is adjusted to reflect the current position. The provision generally increases during the year and this proposal provides an annual budget for a low level of increase to the provision during the year. There is also a plan to reduce adult social care debt by £800,000 by 2023/24.	0.200	-0.800	0.600	-
	32) Use of Earmarked Reserves Some of the proposals within this budget will be funded from specific earmarked reserves set aside to cover planned expenditure, or conversely, money is being put aside to cover future planned projects. Over the medium term, money that has been set aside to cover COVID-19 related shortfalls is being released to help smooth the transition back to normal activity levels. The council continues to have relatively low levels of reserves therefore they cannot be used to regularly manage the risk of potential reductions in income or unachievable savings proposals. Reliance on reserves is kept to a minimum.	-2.270	-2.252	-0.066	2.465
Central budgets and funding activity – Total savings / increases income		-16.403	-11.381	-10.146	-8.467

8 | Central budgets and funding activity cont'd



Your views matter

For options on how to complete this survey, including digitally or in paper format, please see 'Giving your feedback' on page 2.

Do you support or oppose each of the new or revised savings under 'central budgets and funding activity'?

Savings are areas where the council is proposing to decrease spending. Please tick one box only in each row.

	Support	Oppose	No opinion / Don't know
28 Council tax	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
29 Business rates	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
30 Central Pension adjustment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31 Bad Debt Provision – change in provision	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
32 Use of Earmarked Reserves	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you wish to comment on any of the new or revised savings under 'central budgets and funding activity' please do so below – Please clearly state which saving you are commenting on: Please write in below

9 | Final budget engagement comments

For options on how to complete this survey, including digitally or in paper format, please see 'Giving your feedback' on page 2.

If you would like to comment on any other aspect of this budget engagement, please write in below:



Your views matter

On a scale of 0 to 10 how do you rate this budget engagement overall, where 0 is "not good at all", and 10 is "very good"? Please tick one box only:

- ☐ 1 Not good at all

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5 Average

☐ 6

☐ 7

☐ 8

☐ 9

☐ 10 Very Good

How could we improve the way we conduct budget engagements? Please write in below

[illegible]

10 | About you



For options on how to complete this survey, including digitally or in paper format, please see 'Giving your feedback' on page 2.

It would help us to check that we are providing services fairly if you would answer the questions below.

Information you give will be used to see if there are any differences in views for different groups of people, and to check if services are being delivered in a fair and accessible way. You do not need to answer any of the following questions if you do not wish to.

Which of the following best describes how you are you responding to this consultation.

(Please write in the space below):

- ☐ On behalf of a group, organisation or club
- ☐ On behalf of a local business
- ☐ As an individual (e.g. local resident)
- ☐ As a Cheshire East Council employee
- ☐ As an elected Cheshire East Ward Councillor, or Town/Parish Councillor
- ☐ Other (Please write in the space below):

If you are responding on behalf of a group, organisation, club, business, Town / Parish Council, or a Ward please state the name and postcode below if you wish to (you do not need to complete the rest of the 'About you' section).

(Please write in the space below):

What is your home postcode?

We ask this so we can be sure we have obtained a range of views from across the borough.

(Please write in the space below):

What is your gender identity? Please tick one box only:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Prefer to self-describe (Please write in the space below):

What age group do you belong to?

Please tick one box only:

- ☐ 16-24
- ☐ 25-34
- ☐ 35-44
- ☐ 45-54
- ☐ 55-64
- ☐ 65-74
- ☐ 75-84
- ☐ 85 and over
- ☐ Prefer not to say

10 | About you cont'd



Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?

This includes problems related to old age.

Please tick one box only:

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

What is your ethnic origin?

Please tick one box only

- ☐ White British / English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / Irish
 - ☐ Any other White background
 - ☐ Mixed: White and Black Caribbean / African / Asian
 - ☐ Asian / Asian British
 - ☐ Black African / Caribbean / Black British
 - ☐ Prefer not to say
 - ☐ Prefer to self-describe (Please write in the space below):
-

Which of the following best describes your religious belief / faith?

Please tick one box only:

- ☐ Buddhist
 - ☐ Christian
 - ☐ Hindu
 - ☐ Jewish
 - ☐ Muslim
 - ☐ Sikh
 - ☐ None
 - ☐ Prefer not to say
 - ☐ Prefer to self-describe (Please write in the space below):
-
-
-

Do you look after, or give any help or support to, anyone because they have long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses, or problems related to old age?

Please tick one box only:

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes, 9 hours a week or less
- ☐ Yes, 10 to 19 hours a week
- ☐ Yes, 20 to 34 hours a week
- ☐ Yes, 35 to 49 hours a week
- ☐ Yes, 50 or more hours a week

Appendix A - MTFS approved February 2021

Open

Fair

Green

The following proposals were consulted on in developing the 2021/22 budget. Most are not proposed for amendment in 2022/23, but where changes are being proposed they are marked as 'Revised' and are included in the tables in the main part of this document. Please note the reference number in the tables below refers to last year's budget reference numbers.

Ref No	Detailed list of proposed budget changes – service budgets - Open	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m
[NEW]	CSC Transformation and OFSTED Response	-1.500	-	-
3	Pay inflationary increase	Revised [see proposal number 2]		
5	Core Financial System	Revised [see proposal number 11]		
6	Mitigation of reduction in the Dedicated Schools Grant (Corporate Services)	0.042	0.033	0.027
7	Mitigation of the year-on-year reduction in the Dedicated Schools Grant (ICT)	0.065	0.089	0.109
9	Continuing Healthcare Reviews	-1.000	-0.500	-
10	Prevention and Early Help Service – Reduction in the cost of Prevention Services	Revised [see proposal number 21]		
11	Reduce the numbers of Business Support Staff in line with the repurposing of Children and Family Centres	Revised [see proposal number 21]		
12	Reduce Base budget assigned to Community Grants	-0.100	-	-
13	Efficiency savings and Restructures within Corporate Services	-0.350	-	-
14	Review Staff Terms and Conditions	Revised [see proposal number 12]		
15	Shared services review	-	-0.200	-
16	Improved Debt Recovery and correcting budgeted court costs income targets to reflect actual levels	Revised [see proposal number 4]		
21	Review of corporate subscriptions	-0.015	-	-
24	Improving customer experience – Highways correspondence	Removed		
25	Transfer of Congleton Visitor Information Centre	-0.020	-0.010	-0.020
26	Regulatory Services and Environmental Health ICT procurement	-0.009	-	-
27	CCTV migration to wireless networks	-0.085	-	-

Appendix A - MTFS approved February 2021

Open

Fair

Green

Ref No	Detailed list of proposed budget changes – service budgets - Open	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m
29	Orbitas income and management fee	0.021	-	-
31	Everybody Sport and Recreation Annual Management Fee	-0.042	-0.041	-0.040
34	Brighter Futures Together Programme Customer Experience	-0.133	-0.081	-
37	Establish an Education Psychologist traded service to enable a proactive early support and intervention offer	-0.025	-0.075	-
38	Establish a traded service for non-statutory elements of Attendance Service	-0.035	-0.035	-
39	Review of governance of ASDVs and seeking increased opportunities for savings/ commercial opportunities	-0.225	-0.100	-
42	Strategic Leisure Review	-0.250	-	-
43	Infrastructure Investment Programme	0.127	0.224	-
44	Unified Communications	Revised [see proposal number 7]		
45	People Directorate - ICT Procurements	Revised [see proposal number 9]		
46	Place Directorate - ICT Procurements	Revised [see proposal number 9]		
47	Corporate Directorate - ICT Procurements	Revised [see proposal number 9]		
48	Productivity and Efficiency in Adult Social Care	-0.500	-0.500	-
49	Estates Transformation - Office Accommodation	-0.100	-0.460	-
50	Prevention and Early Help Service – Locality working and changes to the management structure of the Family Service	Revised [see proposal number 21]		
51	Neighbourhood Estate Review	-0.260	-	-
Total service budget change (February 2021)		-4.394	-1.656	0.076

Appendix A - MTFS approved February 2021

Open

Fair

Green

Ref No	Detailed list of proposed budget changes – service budgets - Fair	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m
57	Investment in Adult Social Care	Revised [see proposal number 13]		
61	Direction of travel for the Communities Team to focus more on the Intervention and Prevention Agenda to make cost savings, growth and future cost avoidance	-0.500	-0.750	-
63	Day Opportunities, Redesign, Strategy and Savings	-0.070	-0.150	-
64	Mental Health Services Review	-0.500	-	-
67	Electronic Call Monitoring Reclamation	-0.030	-	-
72	Move to Integrated Early Help Locality Service model	Revised [see proposal number 21]		
73	Learning Disabilities Future Service Development and Review	-1.000	-1.250	-
75	Reduction in cost of external placements for cared for children	Replaced [see proposal number 15]		
76	Development and Partnerships Service	-	-0.300	-
77	Investment in Cared for Children and Care Leavers	Revised [see proposal number 15]		
Total service budget change (February 2021)		-2.100	-2.450	0.000

Appendix A - MTFS approved February 2021

Open

Fair

Green

Ref No	Detailed list of proposed budget changes – service budgets - Green	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m
80	Tatton Park	-0.006	-0.028	-0.046
81	Asset / Service Transfer	-0.030	-0.020	-
84	Waste Contract Inflation and Tonnage Growth	0.644	0.657	0.613
85	Environment Strategy and Carbon Neutrality	0.020	-0.081	-
86	Tree Risk Management	0.500	-	-
87	Carbon Reduction - Replacement of existing illuminated signs and bollards with LED units	0.030	-0.004	-0.031
88	Parking Strategy	Replaced [see proposal number 23]		
89	Local Supported Buses	Replaced [see proposal number 24]		
[NEW]	Review of Children and Families Transport Policies and delivery arrangements	Replaced [see proposal number 25]		
	Total service budget change (February 2021)	1.158	0.524	0.536



Working for a brighter future together

Corporate Policy Committee

Date of Meeting:	12 January 2022
Report Title:	Communications Plan for Residents
Report of:	Jane Burns, Executive Director – Corporate Services
Report Reference No:	CP/24/21-22
Ward(s) Affected:	All wards

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1.** This report sets out proposals for how the Council will meet its Corporate Plan commitment to communicate effectively with residents.
- 1.2.** It explains the approach for communicating with residents and highlights priority communications activity for January 2022 – March 2023.
- 1.3.** The Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authority Publicity states that: "Publicity about local authorities and the services they provide should be freely available to anyone who wishes to receive such information in a format readily accessible and understandable by the person making the request or by any particular group for which services are provided."
- 1.4.** Additionally, Cheshire East Council's Corporate Plan 2021-2025 sets out the organisation's priorities, including being: an open and enabling organisation, that will:
 - Ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision-making;
 - Listen, learn and respond to our residents, promoting opportunities for a two-way conversation; and
 - Promote and develop the services of the council through regular communications and engagement with all residents.
- 1.5.** The Corporate Plan states that, by 2025, we want:

- Residents and staff to be aware of the council and the services we provide, and
- Resident satisfaction with the council to be in line with similar councils.

1.6. The Corporate Plan identifies the specific actions of:

- A communications plan which is targeted at residents (especially those who are hard to reach) to include digital opportunities; and
- Review the style of communications to give a contemporary and effective approach.

1.7. This report addresses those requirements, setting out the approach we will take to ensure that the organisation's communications are effective, targeted, inclusive and accessible.

1.8. Central to this is the proposed development of a comprehensive communications strategy for the organisation, bringing together the various complementary strands of communications activity to support corporate plan priorities and the Council's statutory duties, and to help people to access council services.

2. Recommendations

2.1. It is recommended that Corporate Policy Committee:

- 2.1.1.** Approve the development of a communications strategy for residents, including undertaking a survey of residents and customers to understand their communications preferences and needs.
- 2.1.2.** Approve the principles and approach for communications activity set out in paragraphs 5.7 and 5.8.
- 2.1.3.** Note the planned priorities for the communications programme for 2022-23.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

3.1. To enable the development of a communications strategy for Cheshire East Council that:

- supports the strategic aims and objectives in the council's Corporate Plan 2021-25;
- supports effective operational delivery of services;
- helps people, including those who are under-served, access those services; and
- informs the effective use of council resources.

3.2. A planned, strategic approach for communications, based on sound professional principles that align to the priorities and vision of the organisation, will be more effective than an ad hoc, uncoordinated approach to communicating with residents and customers.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. The Council could continue to operate without a defined and documented strategic approach to communications and media activities. However, unplanned, ad hoc, reactive communications activity is rarely effective in the long-term in delivering required outcomes or offering real value for money. A comprehensive communications strategy, based on sound principles, that prioritises activity around the subjects that are most important to residents, customers and to the organisation's aims, will enable us to prioritise resources, simplify, clarify and coordinate our messages, and react more effectively to emerging issues in the context of a wider strategic approach, firmly aligned to the Corporate Plan. Without a strategy it is more difficult to ensure and evidence effective use of council resources in communicating with the public.
- 4.2. A strategy could be developed without asking our audiences about their communications preferences via a survey. However, the audience insight gained from a good, up to date survey, alongside other sources of insight, will be crucial in understanding how we can communicate most effectively with our audiences – including those people and communities who may have been under-served by conventional approaches.

5. Background

- 5.1. The importance of effective council communications has been highlighted and reinforced throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Communications has had, and continues to have, a central role in informing residents, businesses, partners, Members and staff, and enabling emergency response, service delivery and recovery. Beyond the pandemic, communications will continue to be important in enabling residents and customers to understand the Council, its priorities and policies, and to access its services.
- 5.2. The [Local Government Association's regular national polling of resident satisfaction](#) identifies the following key drivers of resident satisfaction:
- Overall satisfaction with local area
 - Overall satisfaction with local council
 - Perception of value for money
 - Council responsiveness
 - How informed people feel about the council
 - How much they trust the council
- 5.3. Fundamentally, communications activity seeks to change what people **know, think, feel and/or do**. 'Communications' in this regard includes the following disciplines:
- 5.3.1. **Public relations** is the range of deliberate activities that seek to inform and influence perceptions of an organisation, idea or individual with a view to protecting and enhancing reputation and/or consolidating or

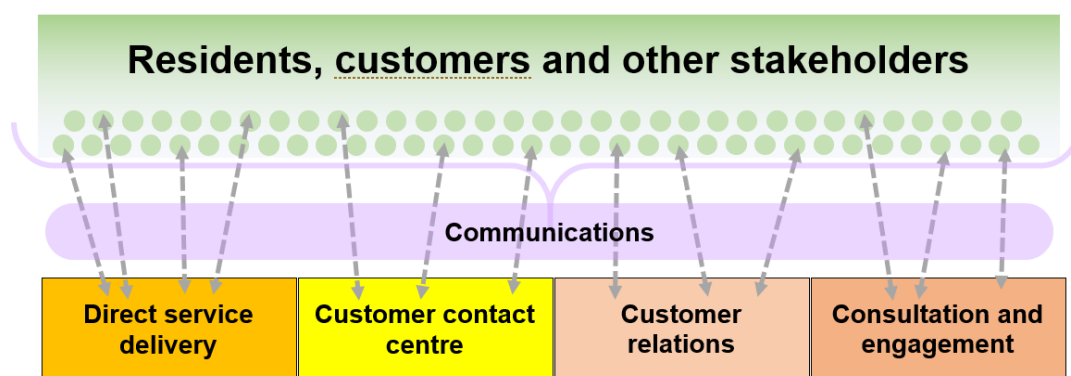
shifting position in relation to, or of influence over, the general public or publics.

- 5.3.2. **Media relations** - 'Media' in this context is printed press, broadcast (TV and radio) and online journalism. Despite the well-publicised changing media landscape, media relations remains a significant and substantial discipline within public relations.
- 5.3.3. **Marketing** is the range of activities that together identify, access and influence individuals to buy, or otherwise access, products and services. Equally, marketing techniques and technology can be used to raise awareness and affect behaviour change.
- 5.3.4. **Social and digital media** - Web content and social media content are now firmly established as some of the most, if not the most, influential and effective means to inform and engage individuals and communities. Digital spaces are the go-to destination for many people wanting to learn about anything and everything.
- 5.3.5. **Branding** is the range of activities, products, principles and standards that together define how the organisation presents itself, its work and its priorities. It includes all aspects of visual identity and 'tone of voice'.
- 5.3.6. **Events** can include everything from focus groups to community meetings, staff conferences, civic occasions, festivals etc. Effective event management requires a thorough understanding of a wide range of disciplines from risk management, health and safety and logistics to branding, entertainment and engagement.
- 5.3.7. **Emergency / crisis communications and major incidents** - Communications activity has a vital role to play during emergencies and crises in terms of outcomes for individuals and the organisation. The council is supported by a 24/7 emergency media relations services and regularly participates in emergency planning and crisis communications exercises to hone and develop skills.
- 5.3.8. **Internal communications** includes employee engagement. It can encompass all the above disciplines with the distinction of being focussed entirely around the internal audience.
 - 5.3.8.1. There is a real focus on enabling meaningful two-way conversation so that employee voices, at all levels of the organisation, can be heard, in line with our employee deal.
 - 5.3.8.2. Where staff are well-informed about the council's aims and activities, and where they fit in, they can become valuable ambassadors for the organisation.
 - 5.3.8.3. Communication with elected Members is an important part of communicating within the organisation, ensuring that Members have the information necessary to fulfil their community leadership and decision-making responsibilities.

5.4. Communications activity, as defined above, works as part of a wider range of communications, engagement activity and customer interactions, including:

- Customer services and direct communication to customers and service users, as part of service delivery;
- Public affairs and stakeholder relationship management; and
- Consultation and engagement.

In order to present a clear and cohesive customer experience and public profile for the organisation, all these disciplines need to work together. This is particularly relevant to listening, learning and responding to our residents, promoting opportunities for a two-way conversation, as set out in the Corporate Plan. Therefore, communications activity cannot be planned, considered or undertaken in isolation – relationships between individuals, teams, council services and partnerships are essential.



The ongoing work to develop the Council's approach to consultation and engagement is an example of such an interdependency, and our work to improve communications activity, must complement our approach to consultation and engagement activity, and vice versa.

5.5. Communications activity, as described above (5.3), is chiefly planned, managed and delivered by the council's communications and media team. However, teams and individuals, and commissioned providers, delivering services in many parts of the council may deliver some communications and engagement activities directly to residents and customers as part of their work. For example, they may manage and attend engagement events, produce promotional materials, produce social media content or send direct emails to customers and other stakeholders. It is important that this service-led activity is understood and valued as a key part of the council's relationship with its customers and the general public, and as part of the council's wider communications activity.

5.6. External partnerships are also crucial in effective communications about Council services and priorities. Key relationships include:

- Local NHS agencies

- Cheshire Police
- Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Other local authorities, town and parish councils
- Commissioned service providers (which may include wholly-owned companies, private contractors, voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise)
- Local businesses and investors
- Government departments

5.7. The code of recommended practice for local authority publicity is a key government document that sets out parameters for how local councils should communicate. It states that publicity by local authorities should:

- be lawful;
- be cost effective;
- be objective;
- be even-handed;
- be appropriate;
- have regard to equality and diversity; and
- be issued with care during periods of heightened sensitivity, for example elections.

5.8 Our approach

Building on this, we propose an approach which includes the following additional and complementary considerations, reflecting the vision of the Corporate Plan. Council communications should:

- be accessible;
- be inclusive;
- be honest, open and transparent;
- be timely;
- be useful and relevant;
- be evidence-based, using insight and intelligence;
- be targeted to the key audiences;
- be planned;
- be evaluated; and
- promote the organisation's priorities.

5.9. Priorities for 2022/23 programme

The Council is a complex organisation, delivering many different services, making many decisions, operating within a complex policy framework and delivering a number of strategic objectives. Communications activity can help to people to navigate this complexity, but to do so it must be planned effectively and prioritised.

5.10. The Council's communications requirements come from the following sources – (noting that there is significant overlap between these sources):

- Corporate Plan priorities;
- Service committee work programmes;
- Directorate and service business plans; and
- Priority operational customer service information – informed by customer requests and feedback.

5.11. For 2022/23 it is anticipated that the Council's communications will include the following subjects – reflecting Corporate Plan priorities:

- Key universal services, including development management and building control; regulatory services and enforcement; waste and recycling; green spaces and countryside; highways maintenance; leisure services; revenues and benefits, education.
- COVID response and recovery, including outbreak management / test and trace; economic recovery (including visitor economy); workplace recovery.
- Corporate Plan 2021-2025 – helping people understand the organisation's priorities and our progress to achieve them.
- Helping people understand council funding and how the Council plans and spends public funds.
- Integrated Care System (ICS) – Cheshire East place health and care integration and adult social care recruitment.
- Reducing health inequalities in the borough.
- Fostering, adoption and social worker recruitment.
- Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) strategy.
- Carbon neutral plan and environment strategy.
- Strategic infrastructure programmes, including HS2 hub station; Middlewich Eastern Bypass; Poynton Relief Road.
- Key regeneration programmes.
- Key events, including HRH the Queen's jubilee; 2023 elections; Remembrance Sunday; Annual Council and Mayor Making.
- Communications activity will support the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, and will raise awareness about key issues that align to Council priorities. The Council will support a number of national and international awareness campaigns, including: LGBT History Month, Black History Month, International Women's Day; Carers' Week, Mental Health Awareness Week; Armed Forces Week; November Children's Rights Month.

5.12. Audiences

Key audiences and stakeholders for our communications activity will include:

- Residents and customers;
- Young people;
- Under-served communities;
- Staff;
- Councillors;
- Community, voluntary and faith sector;
- Key community influencers;
- Businesses (local, regional and national);
- Developer and investor community;
- Service delivery partners;
- Schools, colleges, early years providers;
- Town and parish councils;
- MPs; and
- Local, regional and national public sector agencies.

Note: The stakeholders and audiences listed here are generalised in terms of the general communications and media activity of the council. Specific projects and campaigns will each require tailored understanding of audience and stakeholder relationships as related to the specific subject matter and context.

Further work needs to be undertaken to update our understanding of the wants, needs and preferences of our audiences, which can change over time. This is particularly true of under-served communities. A targeted survey and potentially other engagement activity can help inform us.

We can also use and (through a communications survey) build on the customer groupings and segmentation as set out in the [Customer Experience Strategy](#) (p7), and insight from the emerging Digital Strategy. Both these documents will be important in informing our approach to engaging different audiences, alongside work with our business intelligence colleagues to access other audience insight, including customer demographics information such as [Acorn](#) or [Mosaic](#).

5.13. Improvement work

We will also work to continually improve and build on our communications activity, to better engage and inform our key audiences. Key improvement activities include:

- Development of a communications strategy for Cheshire East Council
- Undertake a communications survey of residents

- Undertake a comprehensive equalities impact assessment to analyse and understand accessibility and inclusion needs of our audiences and deliver inclusive communications.
- Improving our digital communications offer, including social media presence, communications content on website(s) and e-mail and text options. This includes 'push' notifications, delivering key information for customers accessing our services, with a view to pre-empting the information customers may need, reducing reactive demand from incoming customer service enquiries. This supports both Digital and Customer Experience Strategies.
- Supporting a new approach to consultation and engagement, promoting opportunities for two-way conversations and telling people how their responses and contributions contribute to decision-making.
- Developing stronger links between customer service demand and general operational communications output.

5.14. Measuring effectiveness

One of the key principles underlying this approach is that communications activity will be evaluated. This is to ensure effectiveness and value for money and to enable continual, measurable improvement. Key measures include:

- Number of media releases published
- Take-up of media releases (the number of media releases that appear in print, broadcast or online media)
- Sentiment of media coverage
- Following and engagement rates across a range of social media
- E-newsletter subscribers and engagement (opens, clicks)
- Responses to the communications survey of residents
- Resident satisfaction polling responses:
 - Number of people who are satisfied with the local Council.
 - Number of people who say they feel informed about the Council.

6. Consultation and Engagement

6.1. The Council consults residents, customers and service users on a regular basis. In the last twelve months, this has included the following consultations:

- Medium-Term Financial Strategy;
- Corporate Plan;
- Household Waste and Recycling Centres;
- Safety of Women in Public Places; and

- Equality Objectives.

6.2. In 2017, the [Council surveyed local residents regarding their preferences about communication](#) with them by the Council. Headline findings included:

- 6.2.1. 34% of respondents felt ‘well-informed’ about the Council; 66% felt ‘not well-informed’.
- 6.2.2. 47% of respondents felt that the Council clearly communicated what it does.
- 6.2.3. 65% of respondents felt that the amount of communication received from the Council was too little.

6.3. Since then a lot of work has been undertaken to address these matters, and we know that the COVID-19 pandemic, nationally, has changed people’s perceptions of local public services and that communication [from local councils has been a crucial source of valued information](#). However, we have not since directly gone back to Cheshire East residents to ask them of their views about how we communicate.

6.4. In order to develop an effective, targeted, inclusive and accessible communications strategy, it is proposed that both a new audience survey and a public consultation are undertaken regarding a draft communications strategy, based on the principles set out in this report (paragraph 5.7).

6.5. Extensive engagement with senior officers in the council is also required to ensure that communications are aligned to the delivery of key projects and programmes.

7. Implications

7.1. Legal

7.1.1. The communications and engagement activities covered by this report and strategy are subject to the following guidance and legislation:

- Data Protection Act 2018
- Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988
- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000
- Libel and defamation law
- Code of recommended practice for local government publicity
- Advertising Standards Authority’s advertising codes.
- Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018
- Civil Contingencies Act 2004

7.2. Finance

7.2.1. The recommendations in this report have been proposed in the context of agreed 2021/22 budget for communications and engagement activity.

7.3. Policy

7.3.1. The communications and media activities of Cheshire East Council are subject to the following policies:

- Media relations protocol
- Social networking policy
- Social media abuse policy
- Visual identity guide
- Brand protocol

7.3.2 There are also important connections to key council strategies, that are being considered by this committee, including:

- Customer Experience Strategy
- Digital Strategy
- Approach to consultation and engagement
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy

7.4. Equality

7.4.1. The strategic principles proposed in this report will ensure that all communications material will consider the needs of the individual it is targeted at, with consideration given to alternative formats and channels where required.

7.4.2. The principles set out in paragraph 5.7, state that all communications activity must be inclusive and accessible.

7.4.3. An Equality Impact Assessment will be prepared/attached to ensure that individuals and groups with protected characteristics are not directly or indirectly discriminated against as a result of our communications activity and strategy.

7.5. Human Resources

7.5.1. There are close connections with the council's human resources service in respect of delivering internal communications and employee engagement, and workforce strategy.

7.6. Risk Management

7.6.1. An effective communications strategy will support the organisation to ensure that it is represented fairly, that it is transparently and clearly accountable and accredited for its decisions and actions, reducing the risk of reputational damage through misrepresentation, misinformation and/or disinformation.

- 7.6.2. The principles set out here support management of the Strategic Risk Register SR13 – Reputation.

7.7. Rural Communities

- 7.7.1. Effective and planned communications activity and communications strategy are necessary tools to ensure that the council's communications resources are well-managed, and that engagement activity and opportunities are available across a range of channels, reaching individuals and communities in all geographies across Cheshire East, including rural areas.

7.8. Children and Young People/Cared for Children

- 7.8.1. Children and young people are identified in the strategy as a priority audience for the council. The strategy will include specific objectives that seek to improve levels of engagement between the council and young people, ensuring that their voices are heard and have the opportunity to influence decision making.

7.9. Public Health

- 7.9.1. Effective and planned communications activity and communications strategy are necessary tools is a necessary tool to ensure that the council's communications resources are well managed and that engagement activity around Public Health priorities can be prioritised appropriately. Communications activity will support positive behaviour change to influence and support an improvement in population and individual health and wellbeing.
- 7.9.2. Communications has played a key role in the Council's response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

7.10. Climate Change

- 7.10.1. Communications and media activity will be central to the Council's work to address the climate change emergency and deliver the ambitions of the council's Environmental Strategy. The communications strategy is a necessary tool to ensure that the council's communications resources are well managed and that engagement activity around climate change and environmental strategy can be prioritised appropriately.
- 7.10.2. Our communications approach recognises the opportunities that the accelerating shift towards increasingly digital channels of engagement offers. While not all engagement activity can, or should, be undertaken through digital channels, they are now established as the default for a significant proportion of the population and are, in general, a 'greener' alternative to, for example, print.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Michael Moore, head of communications Michael.moore@cheshireeast.gov.uk 01270 686581
Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Local Government Association's regular national polling of resident satisfaction 2. Cheshire East Council Customer Experience Strategy 3. Cheshire East Council Communications Survey 2017 - The Results Magazine 4. Cheshire East Council Media Relations Protocol 5. Cheshire East Council Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 6. Code of recommended practice on local government publicity

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Working for a brighter future together

Corporate Policy Committee

Date of Meeting:	12 th January 2022
Report Title:	Health and Safety Update Quarter 2
Report of:	Jane Burns, Executive Director Corporate Services
Report Reference No:	CP/32/21-22
Ward(s) Affected:	All

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to ensure Members of the Corporate Policy Committee are briefed on the health, safety and wellbeing of the organisation and understand how the Council's responsibilities as an employer are met. The Corporate Health and Safety Forum, which consists of representatives from management and the Trade Unions, meets on a quarterly basis and provides both an overview and a route for escalation.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. This report and the Appendix provide a summary of data regarding accident and information data for the Council and maintained schools for Quarter 2 2021/22, the year to date and comparative data for the same periods in the last two years.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. That the Corporate Policy Committee note the update.

4. Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1. To ensure that Members are aware of Health and Safety activity and developments in line with the Committee's terms of reference.

5. Other options considered

5.1. Not applicable

6. Background

- 6.1. Whilst the response to Covid-19 has been a significant element of the Health and Safety team's work in recent months, the "traditional" aspects of ensuring the Council's responsibilities for the health, safety and wellbeing of its staff remain, and colleagues have continued with regular liaison and support across the organisation.
- 6.2. Appendix 1 provides a range of data regarding accident and incident information for the Council and maintained schools for Quarter 2 2021/22 and the year to date.
- 6.3. Table 1 sets out the key accident and incident data for Quarter 2 2021/22.
- 6.4. Comparative data for the last two years is included to recognise the impact of lockdown restrictions across Council services and maintained schools during 2020/21.
- 6.5. For most areas, accident and incident rates have increased by comparison to the previous year but are still lower than the same period in 2019/20.
- 6.6. The exception to this is in maintained schools. There are no areas of concern in terms of trends or sites to bring to the Committee's attention; we have noticed an overall increase in recording of accident and incidents in schools in 2021/22 to date.

Table 1 - Quarter 2 Accident and Incident Figures

Council (EMPLOYEES)	Q2 21/22	Q2 20/21	Q2 19/20
Average Head Count	3,585	3,660	3,593
Accidents	46	42	67
RIDDOR Reportable	3	1	5
Incident Rate	13	11.5	18.6

Schools (EMPLOYEES)	Q2 21/22	Q2 20/21	Q2 19/20
Average Head Count	2,994	3,113	3,079
Accidents	19	15	13
RIDDOR Reportable	2	-	2
Incident Rate	6.3	4.8	4.2

Council (MOTP)	Q2 21/22	Q2 20/21	Q2 19/20
Accidents	114	93	200
RIDDOR Reportable	1	1	4

Schools (MOTP)	Q2 21/22	Q2 20/21	Q2 19/20
Accidents	95	27	71
RIDDOR Reportable	1	-	3

Total Accidents	Q2 21/22	Q2 20/21	Q2 19/20
Council	160	135	267
Schools	114	42	84

Incidents	Q2 21/22	Q2 20/21	Q2 19/20
Council	96	131	122
Schools	5	-	7

Total Accidents and Incidents	Q2 21/22	Q2 20/21	Q2 19/20
Council	274	177	351
Schools	101	131	129
Overall	375	308	480

- 6.7.** The data in Table 1 includes events which have been reported under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases, or Dangerous Occurrence Regulations (RIDDOR).
- 6.8.** These regulations require the employer to report certain categories of accident, injury, certain diseases, and certain types of dangerous occurrences (those which had the potential to cause injury) to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Also reportable are accidents where the injury results in the person being off work for more than 7 days. The HSE may choose to further investigate these reports.
- 6.9.** An incident is an event where no physical injury occurs, although this may still be reportable under RIDDOR depending on the circumstances. Data is provided on events reported from Council staff, School Staff and Members of the Public (MOTP).
- 6.10.** In a school context, accidents and incidents to pupils are treated and recorded as members of the public. As the RIDDOR reporting guidance is to record when a person is taken directly to hospital for treatment, many accidents are initially flagged as RIDDORs as pupils attend hospital as a precaution. The Health and Safety Executive advice is for these to be reported under RIDDOR only where there is a fault with equipment, facilities or the accident arose as a lack of supervision.
- 6.11.** High level information about the RIDDOR reportable incidents which occurred in Quarter 2 is included in Appendix 1. There are no accidents or incidents involving the HSE from Council or School figures during the year to date.
- 6.12.** Data relating to the Council's Alternative Service Delivery Vehicles is not reflected in these figures. This information is reported to and considered by

their respective Boards. Data relating to Academies is also excluded; Academies are responsible for their own accident and RIDDOR reporting.

- 6.13.** A range of Health and Safety related training is co-ordinated by the Health and Safety team, in conjunction with the Council's Workforce Development team. This is provided to Council and School delegates. Course provision usually includes a variety of first aid training, including refresher and requalification training, and courses such as "Leading Safely" and "Managing Safely" supported by the Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH).
- 6.14.** During the pandemic, and whilst colleagues are supported to work from home wherever possible, essential training to support service delivery, such as first aid has been prioritised and conducted following Covid secure practices. We have been working with our training provider to identify where training can be effectively delivered using remote means, and further courses will be delivered during using this from Quarter 3 onwards. Details of courses and attendance for Quarter 2 are provided in the Appendix.
- 6.15.** Support to maintained schools is supplemented by a bought back advice and guidance service provided by the Health and Safety team. This is also available to Academies. Visits to schools were paused during the first national lockdown and have been subsequently provided through a combination of 'virtual' and physical site visits, which have been positively received. Most school visits during Q2 have been on-site, although the decision for remote or on-site visit is made between the school and the Schools Health and Safety advisor prior to the visit. Advice and guidance has been provided throughout the pandemic, to the Council's Education team, and individual schools as needed.
- 6.16.** The Health and Safety team undertake reviews of policies on a rolling basis to ensure they reflect relevant legislation, current best practice, and the operation of the Council. Updates to existing policies are made following consultation with the Corporate Health and Safety Forum; in 2021/22 to date, the Drugs and Alcohol, Management of Contractors, New and Expectant Mothers and the Fire Prevention Policy have been refreshed.

7. Implications

7.1. Legal

- 7.1.1.** Activity relating to the summaries in this report contributes to ensuring that the Council's statutory responsibilities as an employer are met.

7.2. Finance

- 7.2.1.** There are no implications for the Council's MTFS arising from this report.

7.3. Policy

7.3.1. Policy implications are covered in the body of the report.

7.4. Equality

7.5. There are no direct equality implications arising from this update report.

7.6. Human Resources

7.6.1. There are no direct HR implications arising from this report; the activity outlined in this report is to ensure the health, safety, and wellbeing of employees.

7.7. Risk Management

7.7.1. There are no specific risks arising as a result of this update report.

7.8. Rural Communities

7.8.1. There are no direct implications for rural communities arising from this update report.

7.9. Children and Young People/Cared for Children

7.9.1. There are no direct implications for children and young people arising from this update report.

7.10. Public Health

7.10.1. There are no direct implications for public health arising from this update report.

7.11. Climate Change

7.11.1. There are no direct implications for climate change arising from this update report.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Josie Griffiths Head of Audit and Risk Management Josie.griffiths@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	1.0: Q2 Accident and Incident Statistics
Background Papers:	n/a

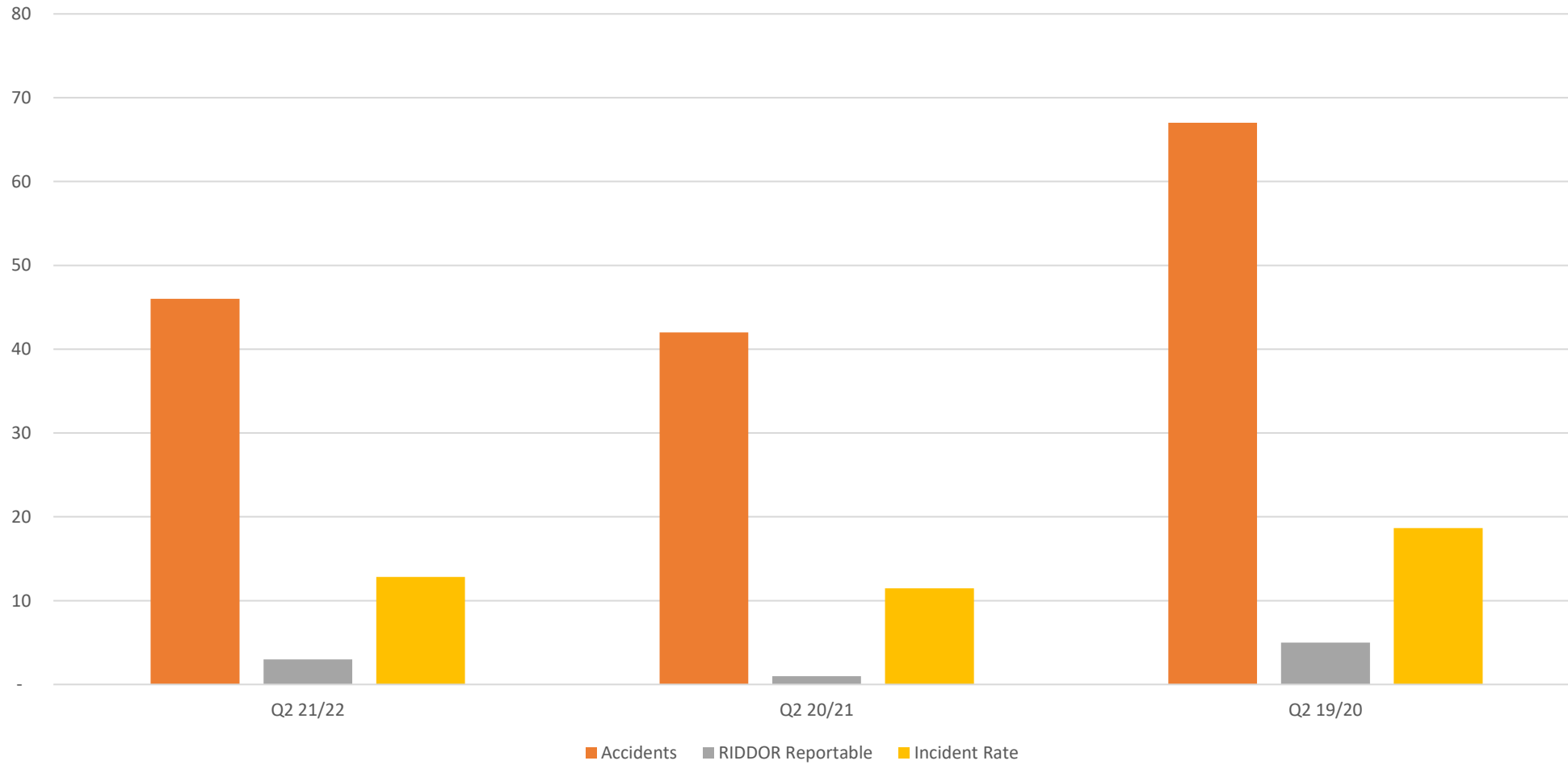
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Accident and Incident Statistics– Q2 2021/22

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Schools	5	-	7

Council Employee Accident Information

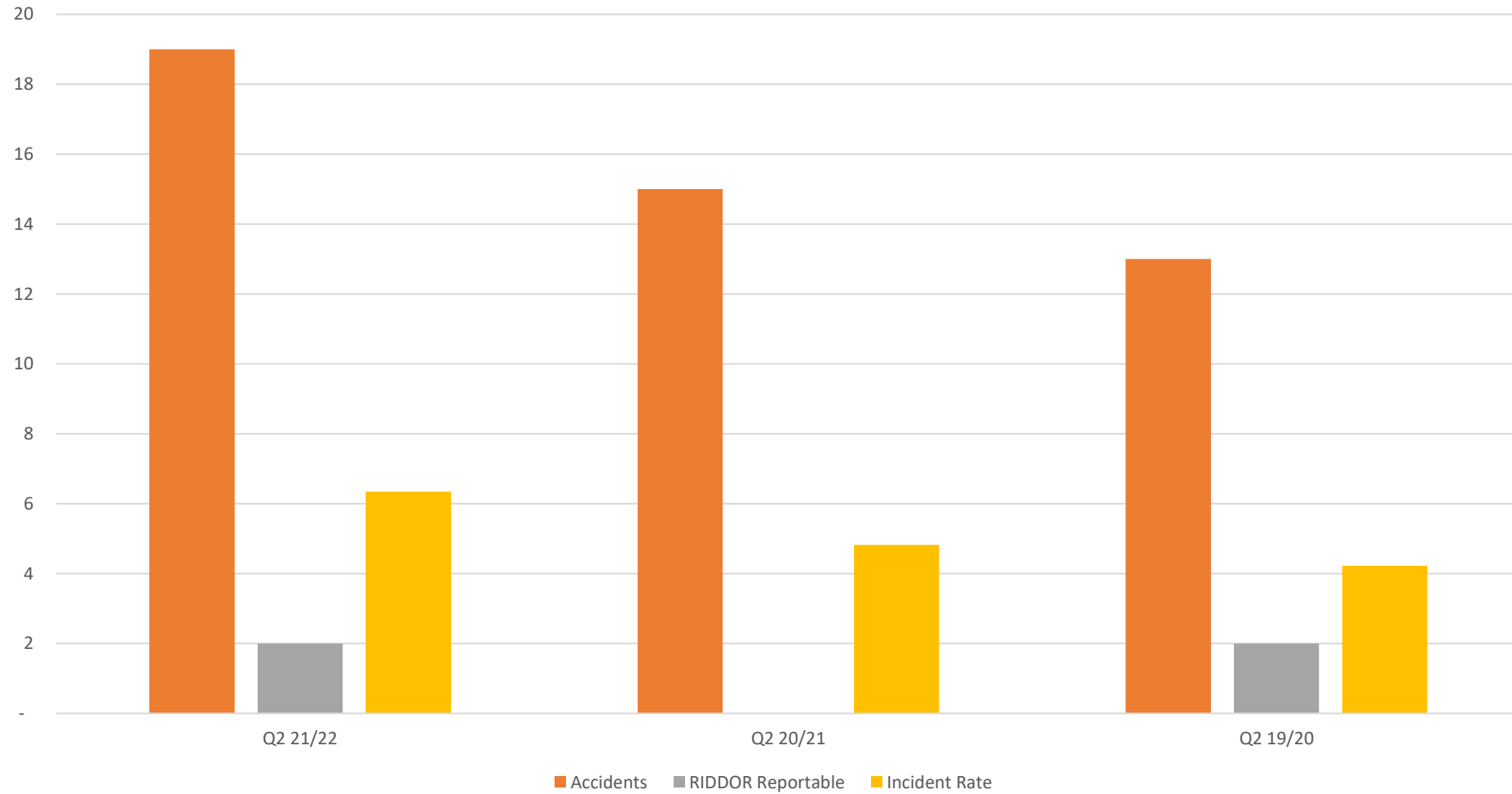
Q2 2021/22



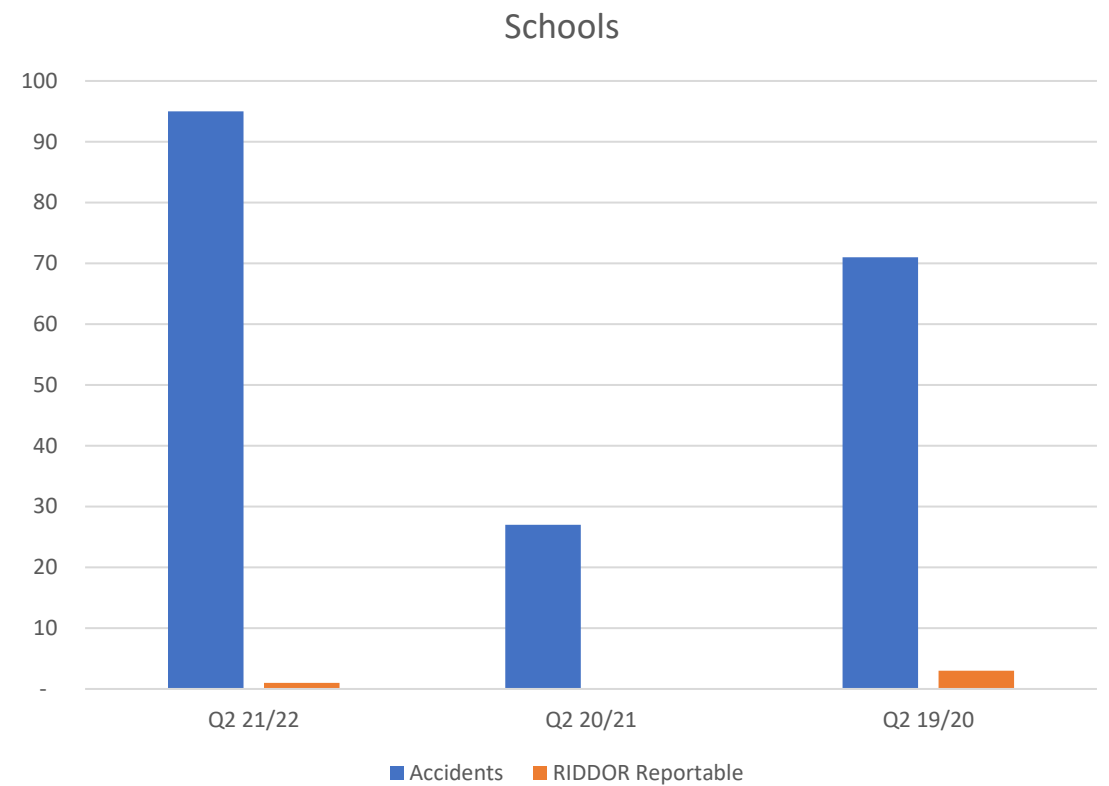
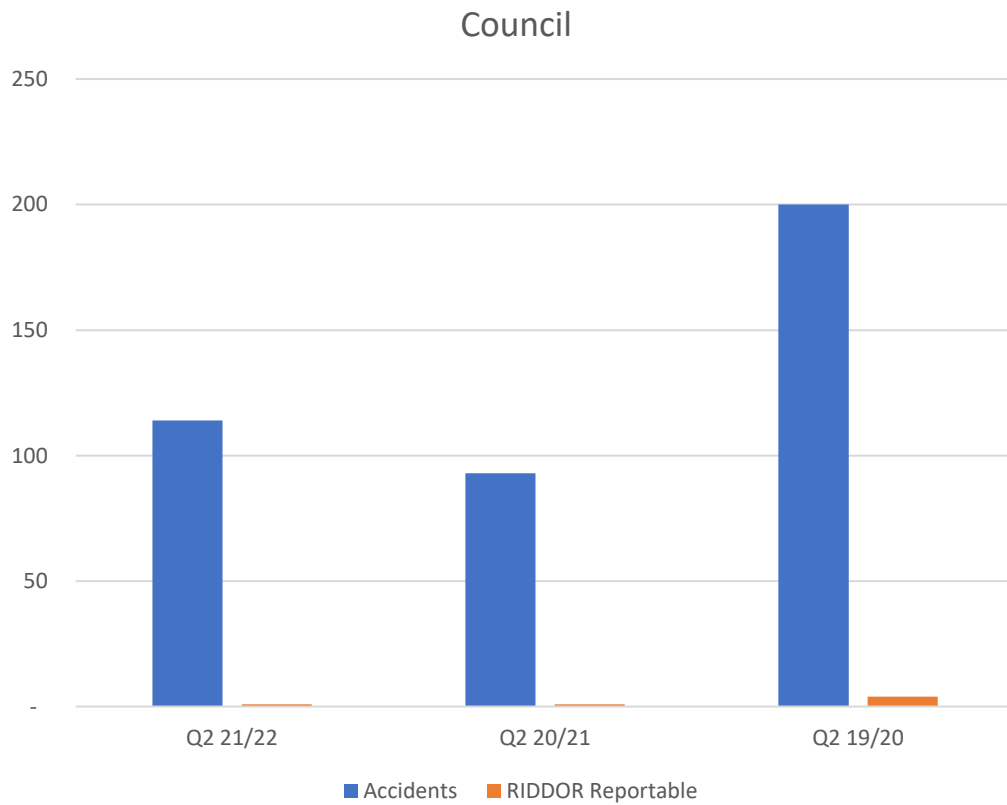
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School Employee Accident Information

Q2 2021/22

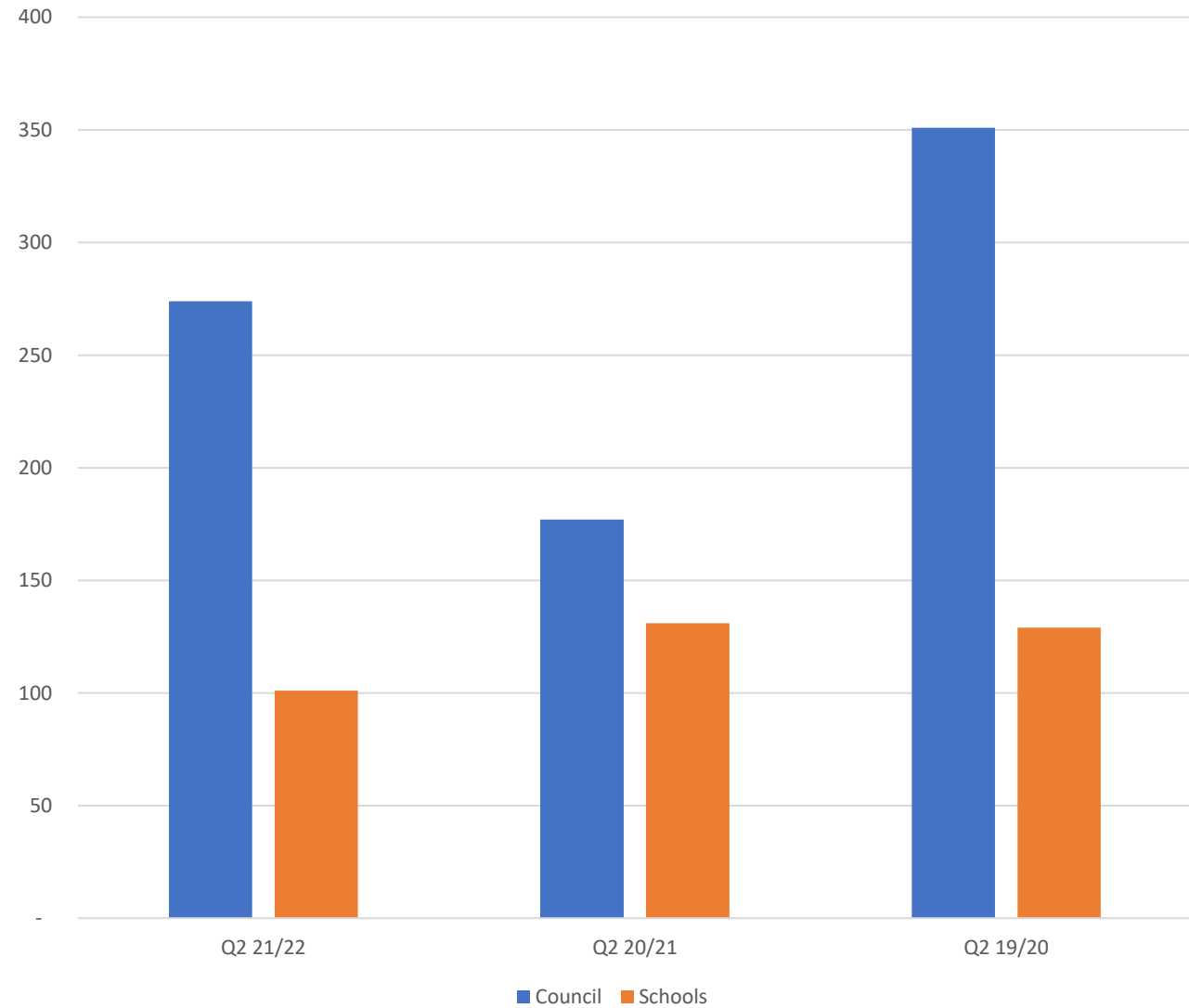


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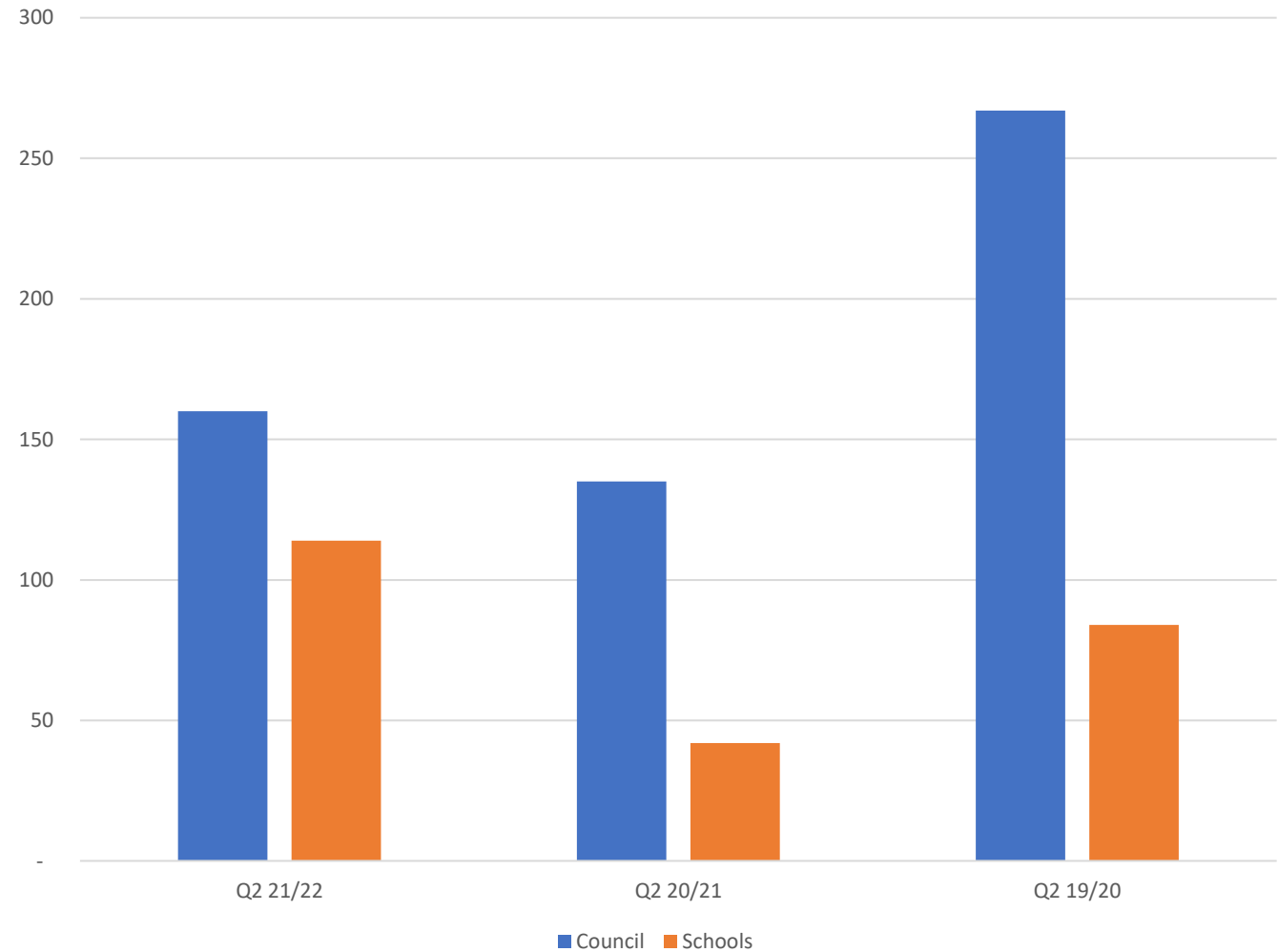


Members of the Public (MOTP) – Accident Numbers (Q2 2021/22)

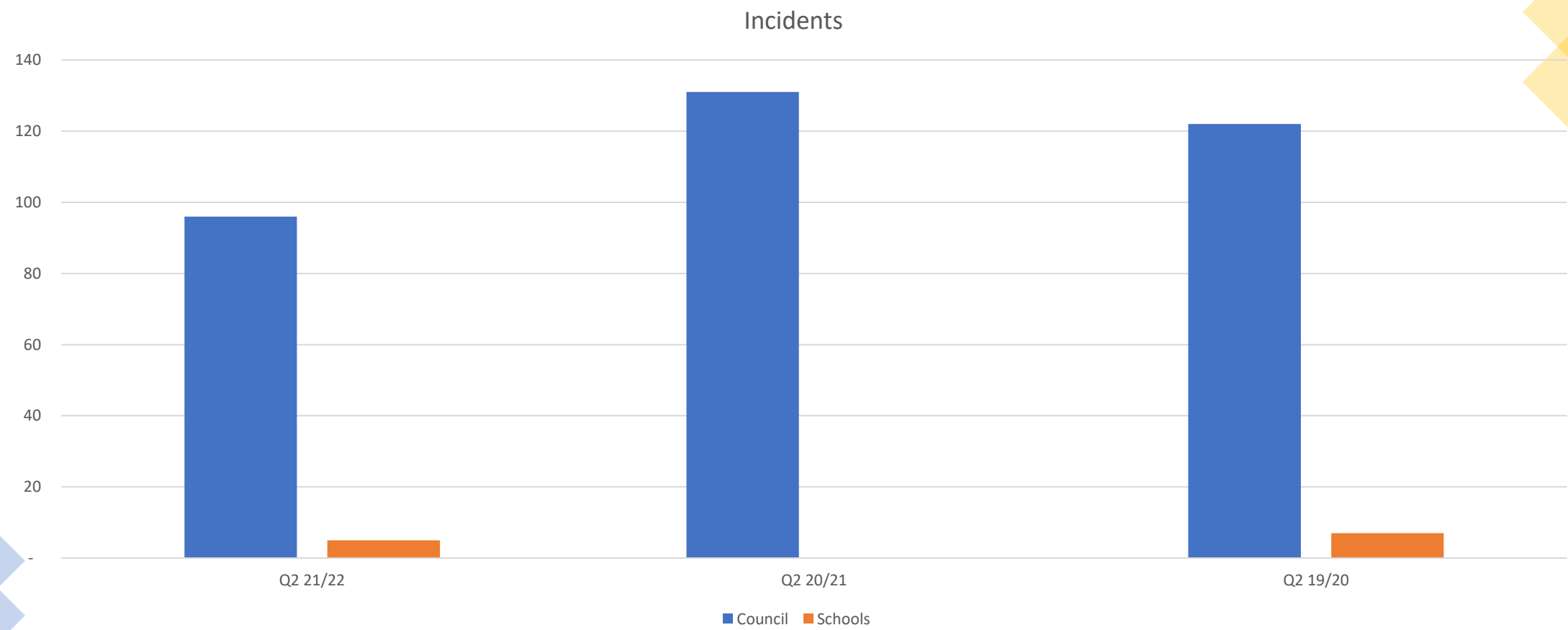
Total accident numbers – Council and Schools Q2 2021/22 (Employees and MOTP)



Total accident numbers – Council and Schools Q2 2021/22 (Employees and MOTP)

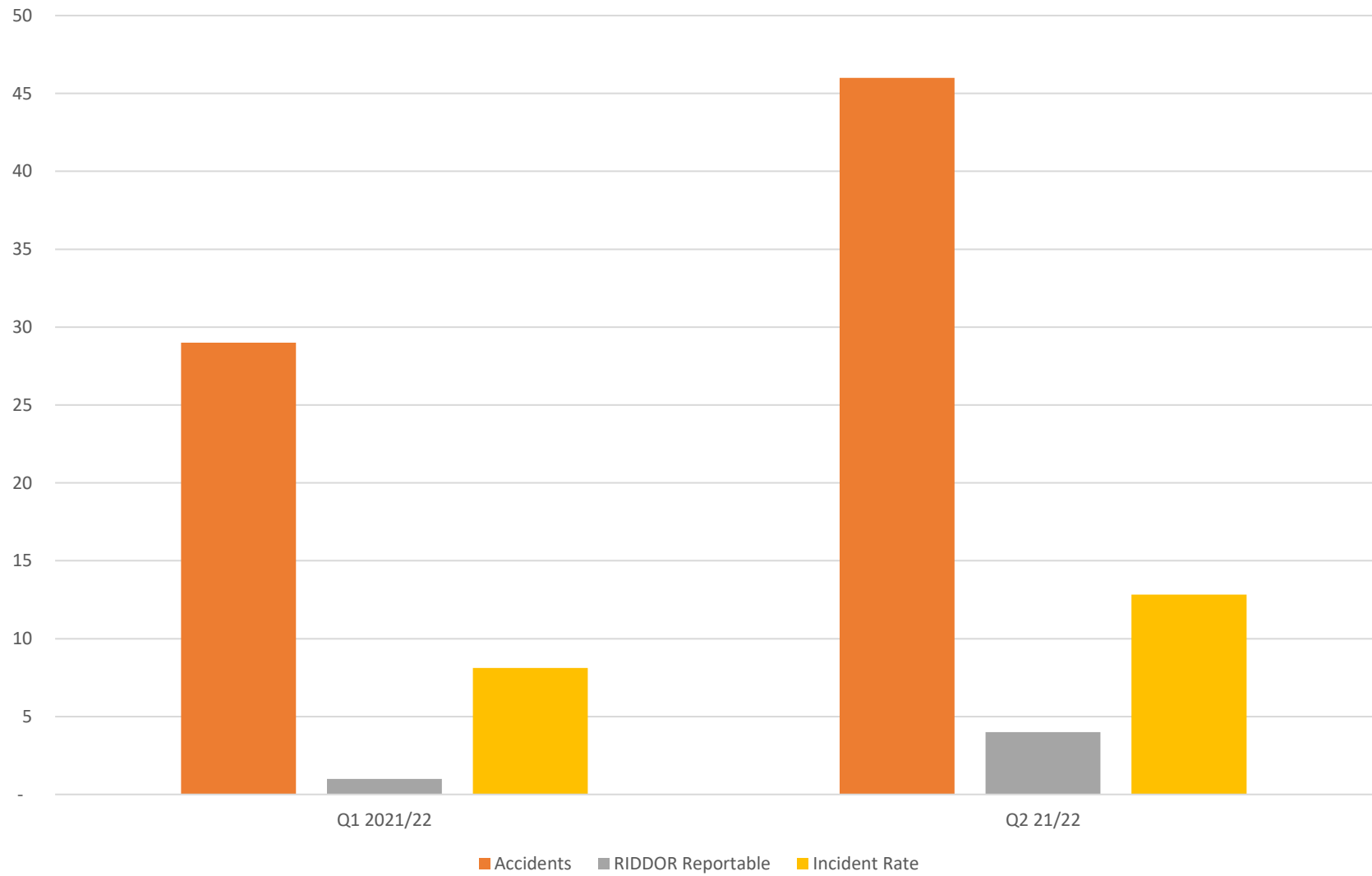


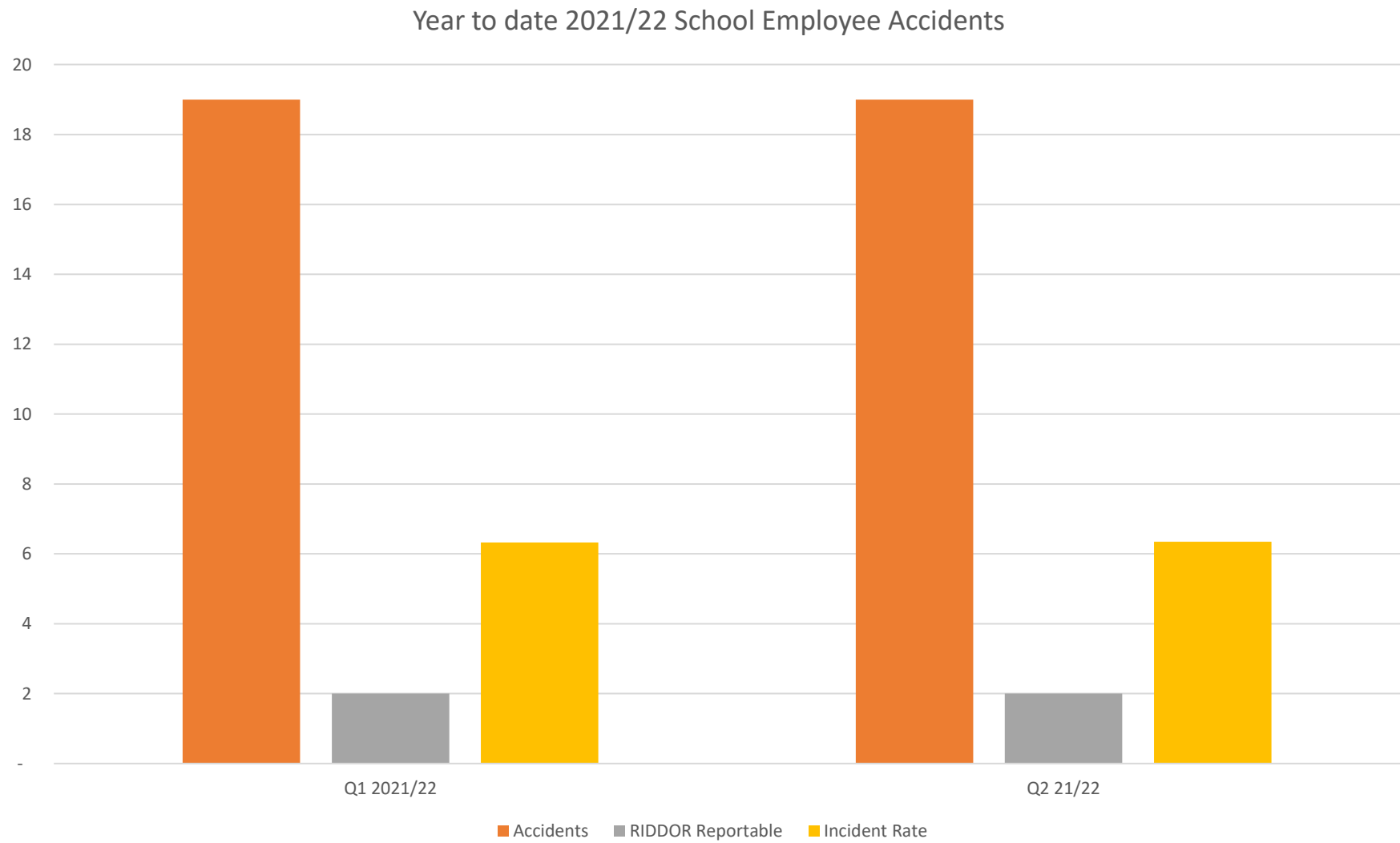
Total incident numbers Q2– Council and Schools





Year to date 2021/22 - Council Employee Accidents





RIDDOR details – Council and Schools

School MOTP

September 2021: 12 year old pupil at high school jumped over a log outside during a PE lesson and fell onto a fence causing a cut to their left arm. Injured person (IP) received first aid at school and was taken to hospital from site for treatment. Activity was supervised.

School Employee

September 2021: Member of school staff had a cut to their thumb when the lid of a baked potato oven shut while they were moving it. IP was treated by school nurse and taken to hospital, and was absent from work for over 7 days because of their injury.

September 2021: Midday Assistant at school site slipped entering the school and bumped their head and knee. IP received first aid and attended hospital from the site. There were no site issues of concern and IP has acknowledged they were rushing.

Council MOTP

September 2021: Adult service user was burnt when they dropped part of the meal they were eating. First aid was given on site, and IP taken to hospital. Service user was supervised.

Council Employee

July 2021: Community Support Worker in road traffic accident during course of work. Police and ambulance attended at scene; IP was allowed to go home with advice to attend hospital if symptoms worsened. As a result of concussion the IP was unable to work for more than 7 days.

July 2021: Care4CE support worker in road traffic accident during course of work. Attended to at scene of accident by paramedic and didn't require further treatment but suffered shock, and bruising and swelling to a leg and was unable to work for more than 7 days.

July 2021: Member of staff at Tatton Park farm was injured by an animal, resulting in a fractured wrist. IP went directly to hospital and received treatment. Risk assessments reviewed and new handling system introduced from September 2021.

School Visits

Type of School	Q1 Visits carried out	Q2 Visits carried out
Primary Maintained	16	8
Primary Academy	12	7
Secondary Maintained	0	0
Secondary Academy	5	0
Special	1	1
Special Academy	0	1
Local Exhaust Ventilation Tests - D&T	0	2
Local Exhaust Ventilation Tests – Science	0	2

Training Provision

Course	Number of courses held	Council staff attendees	School staff attendees
First Aid at Work (blended delivery, 3 days)	2	4	5
First Aid at Work Re-qualification (2 days)	2	6	4
Emergency First Aid at Work (1 day)	3	17	0
Emergency First Aid at Work (Blended learning and school site)	1	0	11
Total	8	27	20

Work Programme – Corporate Policy Committee – 2021/22

Reference	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
CP/37/21-22	10 Feb 2022	Shared Services Review	To update on the key milestones and benefits.	Executive Director Corporate Services	Ongoing engagement with staff and Trade Unions	Yes	Yes	An open and enabling organisation	No
CP/35/21-22	10 Feb 2022	Medium Term Financial Strategy	To recommend the MTFs and budget for approval at Council.	Director of Finance and Customer Services (s151 Officer)	Full budget engagement process, including all Service Committees	Yes	Yes	An open and enabling organisation	No
CP/27/21-22	10 Feb 2022	Best4Business Programme Post-Implementation Review with Cheshire West and Chester Council	To approve the scope and process for a post-implementation review of the project and review lessons learned.	Executive Director Corporate Services	Shared Services Joint Committee	TBC	Yes	An open and enabling organisation	No
CP/59/21-22	10 Feb 2022	Calendar of Meetings 2022/23	To consider the draft calendar of meetings for 2022/23 and make recommendations to Council.	Executive Director Corporate Services	All Committees and Council	No	No	An open and enabling organisation	No
CP/47/21-22	10 Feb 2022	EDI Strategy and Objectives	To develop and agree an action plan with at least six-monthly updates.	Executive Director Corporate Services	EDI Board	TBC	Yes	An open and enabling organisation	No
CP/60/21-22	10 Feb 2022	Pay Policy Statement (PPS 2022/23)	To seek approval of the Pay Policy Statement 2022/23. Changes from 2021/22 will be highlighted in the report.	Executive Director Corporate Services	Trade Unions – December 2021	No	Yes	An open and enabling organisation	No
CP/34/21-22	3 Mar 2022	Emergency Assistance Scheme	To approve the final scheme for 2022/23.	Director of Finance and Customer Services (s151 Officer)	Yes	Yes	Yes	An open and enabling organisation	No
CP/38/21-22	3 Mar 2022	Health and Safety and Workforce Reporting	To consider a quarterly report on health and safety and workforce for Quarter 3.	Executive Director Corporate Services	Corporate Health and Safety Forum	No	Yes	An open and enabling organisation	No

Reference	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
CP/39/21-22	3 Mar 2022	Open Data - Annual Report	For implementation in March 2022.	Executive Director Corporate Services	TBC	TBC	No	An open and enabling organisation	No
CP/40/21-22	3 Mar 2022	Performance Reporting Update	To review a report on arrangements for performance reporting.	Executive Director Corporate Services	No	No	No	An open and enabling organisation	No
CP/41/21-22	3 Mar 2022	Terms and Conditions Review	To consider a progress update on the Terms and Conditions Review.	Executive Director Corporate Services	Trade Unions	TBC	No	An open and enabling organisation	No
CP/57/21-22	3 Mar 2022	Digital Strategy	To approve the Digital Strategy.	Director of Finance and Customer Services (s151 Officer)	Completed	Yes	Yes	An open and enabling organisation	No
CP/28/21-22	3 Mar 2022	Approach to Consultation and Engagement	To develop a new approach to consultation and engagement methods/processes.	Executive Director Corporate Services	Yes	Yes	Yes	An open and enabling organisation	No
CP/42/21-22		Commercial/Enterprise Strategy	To approve a new strategy as part of the BTFP.	Executive Director Corporate Services	Yes	Yes	Yes	An open and enabling organisation	No
CP/43/21-22		Ways of Working with Town and Parish Councils	TBC	Executive Director Place	Yes	Yes	Yes	An open and enabling organisation	No
CP/44/21-22		Local Members' Say in Local Decisions	TBC	Director of Governance and Compliance (Monitoring Officer)	TBC	TBC	Yes	An open and enabling organisation	No
CP/45/21-22		MoD Employer Recognition Award - Gold and Silver Schemes	TBC	Director of Commissioning	TBC	TBC	Yes	An open and enabling organisation	No
CP/48/21-22		Corporate Peer Challenge Annual Update	TBC	Executive Director Corporate Services	TBC	TBC	Yes	An open and enabling organisation	No

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Finance Sub-Committee**
held on Wednesday, 1st December, 2021 in the Council Chamber, Municipal
Buildings, Earle Street, Crewe CW1 2BJ

PRESENT

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

Councillors D Brown, J Clowes, S Gardiner, N Mannion, B Puddicombe and
J Nicholas (for Cllr Abel)

OFFICERS

Alex Thompson, Director of Finance and Customer Services
Peter Skates, Director of Growth and Enterprise
David Brown, Director of Governance and Compliance
Joanne Sutton, Acting Head of Integrated Commissioning
Julie Gregory, Legal Team Manager
Paul Mountford, Democratic Services

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillors B Evans and J Saunders

APOLOGIES

Councillors Q Abel

The Chair welcomed Councillor N Mannion to his first meeting as a member of the Sub-Committee.

24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor N Mannion declared a personal interest in relation to a matter referred to in Item 10, an Appendix to the Asset Management report which contained exempt information and would be considered in Part 2 of the meeting. Councillor Mannion would provide specific details of the declaration when the meeting had moved into Part 2.

Councillor S Gardiner declared a non-pecuniary and non-prejudicial interest in relation to a piece of land referred to in Item 10 which was currently the subject of a planning application which would be considered by the Strategic Planning Board. The land was also situated within his ward. Councillor Gardiner made the declaration both as local ward member and as the Vice-Chair of the Strategic Planning Board.

Councillor B Puddicombe declared a personal interest in relation to a matter to be considered in Part 2.

25 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

There were no public speakers.

26 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd September 2021 be approved as a correct record.

27 2021/22 FINANCIAL YEAR REVIEW

The Sub-Committee considered a report outlining how the Council was managing resources to provide value for money services during the 2021/22 financial year. The report set out the financial performance of the Council with and without the impact of Covid-19.

Further details of how the Council was performing in 2021/22 were set out in Annex 1 to the report.

Arising from members' consideration of the report, the following comments were made:

- There was a need for the relevant service committees to address significant overspends and underspends arising from, among other things, increasing social care costs, reduced car park income and staff recruitment and retention issues.
- It was recognised that each service committee had responsibilities to work with officers to manage its allocated budget.
- Members noted the potential implications of the national local government pay award, which had not been fully factored into the budget for this year as a public sector pay freeze had been assumed.
- Consideration should be given to whether the assumptions underlying the budget remained realistic or required further review.
- It was noted that the non-domestic rates and Council tax collection rates had improved although the full impact of non-domestic rates had yet to be determined.
- The position with the General Reserves would be kept under review, and it may be necessary to consider further financial savings in future to ensure that the Reserves remained at an appropriate level.
- Members noted that the overall position with the budget, excluding Covid-related expenditure, represented a projected variance of less than 1% which had been achieved in challenging circumstances.

Arising from the discussion, the Director of Finance and Customer Services undertook to ask the Council's Corporate Leadership Team to consider the options for addressing staff recruitment and retention.

RESOLVED (unanimously)

That the Sub-Committee

1. notes the contents of the report and each appendix;
2. approves:
 - (a) supplementary revenue estimates for general purpose grants coded centrally up to and including £1,000,000 in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report, Section 3 Corporate Grants Register, Table 1; and
 - (b) capital virements up to and including £5,000,000 in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules as detailed in Appendix 1, Section 5 Capital Strategy, Table 5;
3. recommends that Council approve:
 - (a) fully funded supplementary revenue estimates for general purpose grants coded centrally over £1,000,000 in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report, Section 3 Corporate Grants Register, Table 1;
 - (b) fully funded supplementary revenue estimates for specific grants coded directly to services over £1,000,000 in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules as detailed in Appendix 1, Section 3 Corporate Grants Register, Table 2; and
 - (c) supplementary capital estimates over £1,000,000 in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules as detailed in Appendix 1, Section 5 Capital Strategy, Table 6;
4. recommends that Service Committees:
 - (a) note the financial update and forecast outturn relevant to their terms of reference;
 - (b) note that officers will seek to improve outcomes and the financial outturn across all Committees to mitigate the overall forecast overspend of the Council; and
 - (c) approve supplementary revenue estimates for specific grants coded directly to services up to and including £1,000,000 in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules as detailed in Appendix 2-7, Section 3 Corporate Grants Register, Table 2.

28 WHOLLY-OWNED COMPANY BUSINESS PLANS

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Shareholder Working Group The Shareholder Working Group which had met on 24th November 2021 to consider the Ansa Business Plan 2021-2024 and a report on wholly-owned company governance and decision-making responsibilities in light of recent public interest reports. The report was presented by the Working Group's Chair, Councillor S Carter.

In their presentation, Ansa had referred to risk management measures, including ensuring service continuity during the critical winter operating period (mindful of the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on staff), and noting their proposal to make exceptional incentive payments to their employees. In accordance with the Shareholder Agreement, this required Shareholder approval. Payments would be funded from company profits and were estimated to cost in the order of £50,000.

Councillor Carter had, at the Sub-Committee's request, discussed with Ansa a proposal for a dividend. The company representatives undertook to discuss the matter with their Board.

It was proposed that the Shareholder Working Group would meet again to complete its review of the Ansa business plan, consider the implications of the ASDV review in relation to Orbitas, and complete the review of the public interest reports. The Working Group would then report back to the Sub-Committee's next meeting in January under part 2 of the agenda to enable a full discussion to take place. A final decision on Orbitas would be taken by the Corporate Policy Committee.

RESOLVED

That the Sub-Committee

1. notes the update from the Chair of the Shareholder Working Group;
2. asks the Shareholder Working Group to meet again at its earliest convenience to:
 - (a) complete the review of the Ansa Business Plan by resolving any outstanding matters raised at the meeting of 24th November 2021;
 - (b) review the implications of the ASDV Review as they relate to Orbitas; and
 - (c) complete the review of the Public Interest Reports to identify any implications for CEC and its Group Structure; and

and report back to the Sub-Committee at its meeting in January; and

3. provides approval as Shareholder to Ansa making exceptional incentive payments to staff linked to performance during the critical winter operating period.

29 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered its work programme for 2021/22.

The work programme would be amended to include the report back to the Sub-Committee's meeting in January by the Shareholder Working Group.

RESOLVED

That the work programme be noted.

30 **CARE AT HOME RECOMMISSION**

The Sub-Committee considered a report on a matter referred to it for scrutiny by the Children and Families Committee on 8th November 2021. This related to the redesign and recommissioning of a new Children's Care at Home Purchasing System.

Although not constitutionally required to review the report, the Finance Sub-Committee was being provided with the opportunity to comment on the report, with additional information being provided, before the matter was referred back to the Children and Families Committee for further consideration at its next meeting.

At the invitation of the Chair, Councillor J Saunders, a member of the Children and Families Committee, spoke on this matter.

Members agreed that this was a matter for the Children and Families Committee and that that Committee's officers should be asked to provide answers to the questions raised by the Committee.

RESOLVED

That the Sub-Committee

1. notes the report and recommendations of the Children and Families Committee meeting of 8th November 2021;
2. notes the additional briefing material provided at Appendix 2 to the report;
3. notes that the Care at Home Recommission was not presented as a variation to the Budget Framework approved by Council; and
4. refers the matter back to the Children and Families Committee, together with Appendix 2 and the Sub-Committee's comments.

31 ASSET MANAGEMENT

The Sub-Committee considered a report providing context and activities linked to the Council's assets acquisitions and disposals of land and property.

The report provided information on the property acquisitions and disposals undertaken by the Council in the period 1st April 2020 to 30th September 2021. It also provided information on pending transactions and a potential pipeline of further activity.

A schedule showing active disposals for the balance of the current year and for future years was set out in Appendix D. The Appendix contained commercially sensitive information and would be considered in Part 2 of the meeting.

Members requested a full list of the highways schemes referred to in Appendix A to the report. They also asked to whom the properties referred to in Appendix B had been sold and for what purpose. The Director of Growth and Enterprise undertook to provide the information in writing to all members of the Sub-Committee.

In response to questions by members, officers advised as follows:

- The approach to the sale of assets was full market value subject to any constraints such as community use.
- Income from the sale of assets could not be used for day-to-day expenditure. Capital could be used for revenue purposes in certain one-off cases such as transformation projects but this was not factored into the budget.
- Any income over and above the target of £1m in capital receipts would be used to offset the cost of borrowing.
- Capital receipts did not go into the General Reserves which were a revenue fund.

Councillor N Mannion as Chair of the Economy and Growth Committee reported that the Committee at its meeting on 30th November 2021 had approved the process and timetable for a draft Asset Management Policy to be brought back to the Committee for endorsement.

RESOLVED (unanimously)

That the Sub-Committee

1. notes the acquisition and disposal activity of the Council for the period 1st April 2020 to 30th September 2021, and identified within the Appendices:
 - Appendix A - Summary of Acquisitions
 - Appendix B - Disposals completed in 2020 to 2021 Financial Year.

- Appendix C - Disposals completed in the current Financial Year, 2021 to 2022.

2. notes the pipeline of property transaction activity and the potential impact on the MTFS.

32 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items pursuant to Section 100(A)4 of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 and public interest would not be served in publishing the information.

33 ASSET MANAGEMENT

The Sub-Committee considered Appendix D of the Assets Management report.

Having declared personal, non-pecuniary interests earlier in the meeting, Councillors S Gardiner, N Mannion and B Puddicombe specified the nature of those interests, which the officers recorded.

Officers sought approval from the Sub-Committee to proceed with the sale of land in Handforth, detailed on page 173, subject to final valuation.

RESOLVED (unanimously)

That the Sub-Committee

1. notes the contents of the Appendix; and
2. delegates to the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer and on the advice of the Director of Growth and Enterprise, authority to take all necessary actions to settle on the best terms possible all claims in relation to the land in Handforth as detailed on page 173 of the agenda.

34 EXTRA CARE PFI SCHEME UPDATE

The Acting Head of Integrated Commissioning gave an oral update on renegotiations of the Cheshire Extra Care PFI contract.

A briefing paper was shared with members at the meeting.

RESOLVED (unanimously)

That the update be noted.

35 PROPOSED SHAREHOLDER RESOLUTION

The Director of Governance and Compliance gave an oral update on a matter discussed at the Sub-Committee's meeting on 27th July 2021.

RESOLVED (unanimously)

That the update be noted.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 5.24 pm

Councillor A Stott (Chair)

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **General Appeals Sub Committee**
held on Tuesday, 7th December, 2021 in the Committee Suite 1,2 & 3,
Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor S Edgar (Chair)
Councillor L Anderson
Councillor H Faddes
Councillor D Murphy

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Neil Roberts, Accessibility Officer, Transport Policy
Nicola Burke, Adults and Education Lawyer
Karen Shuker, Democratic Services

OFFICERS ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Joanne Bowkett, Admissions, Transport and Fair Access Team Manager
(Witness)
Ian Marshall, Operations Support Manager, Transport (Observer)

13 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

RESOLVED

That Councillor S Edgar be appointed as Chair of the meeting.

14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Councillor A Harewood.

15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

16 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public present.

17 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

That the press and public be excluded from the virtual meeting during consideration of the following item pursuant to Section 100(A)4 of the

Local Government Act 1972 as amended on the grounds that it involves the likely discussion of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 and the public interest would not be served in publishing the information.

18 SCHOOL TRANSPORT APPEALS

Consideration was given to the following transport appeals.

(a) Case 1 - 10:05am

Case one

The Sub-Committee considered an appeal against a decision of the Council not to offer assisted school transport.

The Sub-Committee heard the appeal based on the written and oral evidence of the Presenting Officer, who detailed the local authority's case, and the written and oral evidence of the Appellant. Members of the Sub-Committee asked questions by way of clarification.

The Presenting Officer and the appellant withdrew from the meeting, following which the Sub-Committee reached its decision.

RESOLVED

That the appeal be dismissed.

19 CASE 2 - 10.35AM

Case Two

The Sub-Committee considered an appeal against a decision of the Council not to offer assisted school transport.

The Sub-Committee heard the appeal based on the written and oral evidence of the Presenting Officer, who detailed the local authority's case, and the written evidence of the Appellant. Members of the Sub-Committee asked questions by way of clarification.

The Presenting Officer withdrew from the meeting, following which the Sub-Committee reached its decision.

RESOLVED

That the appeal be dismissed.

(a) Case 3 - 11.05am

Case Three

The Sub-Committee considered an appeal against a decision of the Council not to offer assisted school transport.

The Sub-Committee heard the appeal based on the written and oral evidence of the Presenting Officer, who detailed the local authority's case, and the written and oral evidence of the appellant and the appellants supporter. Members of the Sub-Committee asked questions by way of clarification.

The Presenting Officer, the appellant and the appellants supporter withdrew from the meeting, following which the Sub-Committee reached its decision.

RESOLVED

That the appeal be upheld.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 12.20 pm

Councillor S Edgar (Chair)

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