

# Corporate Policy Committee

## Agenda

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**Date:** Thursday, 21st March, 2024  
**Time:** 10.00 am  
**Venue:** Committee Suite 1, 2 & 3, Westfields, Middlewich Road,  
Sandbach CW11 1HZ

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

It should be noted that Part 1 items of Cheshire East Council decision making and Overview and Scrutiny meetings are audio recorded and the recordings will be 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 interests, other registerable interests, and non-registerable interests in any item on the agenda.

3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting** (Pages 5 - 14)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 February 2024.

4. **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

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**Contact:** Paul Mountford, Democratic Services  
**Tel:** 01270 686472  
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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.

5. **Officer Boards, Peer Challenge and Decision-Making Review Update** (Pages 15 - 34)

To consider a report which sets out three of the preliminary activities required to allow the development of the future transformation programme.

6. **Cheshire East Approach to Transformation** (Pages 35 - 46)

To consider a report which sets out the proposed transformational approach the Council will take to deliver the Cheshire East Council Plan and support the Medium-Term Financial Strategy budget savings of £100m over the next 4 years.

7. **Review of Committee Structure** (Pages 47 - 58)

To consider a report on proposed improvements to the committee system.

8. **Proposed Changes to the Constitution** (Pages 59 - 68)

To consider proposed changes to the Constitution, as agreed and recommended by the Council's Constitution Working Group, and to note other amendments made by the Monitoring Officer.

9. **Appointments to Outside Organisations** (Pages 69 - 74)

To make appointments to a number of outside organisations.

10. **Council Nominations to the Board of Peak and Plains Housing Trust** (Pages 75 - 82)

To consider a request from Peaks and Plains Housing Trust to remove the Council's opportunity to nominate a Member to sit on the Peaks and Plains Housing Trust Board.

11. **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - Annual Review** (Pages 83 - 114)

To provide an update on progress with the delivery of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021-2025.

12. **Performance Report - Q3 2023/24** (Pages 115 - 166)

To provide an oversight of organisational performance against the priorities and vision set out within the Council's Corporate Plan 2021-25.

13. **Work Programme**

The work programme for 2024-25 will be presented to the Committee's first meeting of the new municipal year.

14. **Minutes of Sub-Committees** (Pages 167 - 172)

To receive the minutes of the following sub-committees:

Finance Sub-Committee – 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024  
General Appeals Sub-Committee – 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024

15. **Strategic Risk Register - Assurance Report Q3 2023/24** (Pages 173 - 230)

To consider an update on the activity of the Council's Strategic Risk Register for Quarter 3 2023/24.

16. **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

The reports relating to the remaining items on the agenda have been withheld from public circulation and deposit pursuant to Section 100(B)(2) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the matters may be determined with the press and public excluded.

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

**PART 2 – MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITHOUT THE PUBLIC AND PRESS PRESENT**

17. **Strategic Risk Register - Assurance Report Q3 2023/24** (Pages 231 - 242)

To consider that part of the Strategic Risk Register report relating to Ansa, including Appendix B.

**Membership:** Councillors C Bulman, D Clark, J Clowes, S Corcoran (Chair), M Goldsmith, M Gorman (Vice-Chair), A Harrison, N Mannion, C O'Leary, J Pearson, J Rhodes, J Saunders and M Warren

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**CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the **Corporate Policy Committee**  
held on Tuesday, 13th February, 2024 in Committee Suite 1, 2 & 3,  
Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

**PRESENT**

Councillor S Corcoran (Chair)  
Councillor C Browne (Vice-Chair)

Councillors C Bulman, D Clark, J Clowes, M Goldsmith, A Harrison,  
C O'Leary, J Pearson, J Rhodes, J Saunders, M Gorman and F Wilson

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Rob Polkinghorne, Chief Executive  
David Brown, Director of Governance and Compliance  
Alex Thompson, Director of Finance and Customer Services  
Deborah Upton, Solicitor  
Michael Moore, Head of Communications  
Peter Skates, Interim Executive Director, Place  
Nick Billington, Policy Officer  
Brian Reed, Head of Democratic Services and Governance  
Katie Small, Democratic Services Manager  
Nikki Bishop, Democratic Services Officer

**77 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor N Mannion and  
Councillor M Warren. Councillors F Wilson and M Gorman attended as  
substitutes.

**78 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**79 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING****RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024 be approved as  
a correct record.

**80 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION**

Councillor Tony Dean addressed the committee as a visiting member in  
relation to the warding proposals for Knutsford. Councillor Dean spoke in  
favour of the proposals from the Electoral Review Sub Committee for  
Knutsford, and urged the committee to vote against any new proposal to

split Knutsford into a two-ward area as he felt this was not in the best interests of the local communities in Knutsford.

Haf Barlow, Town Clerk, Poynton Town Council spoke in relation to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and highlighted the impact that any temporary closure to the Household Waste and Recycling Centre (HWRC) in Poynton would have on residents. Ms Barlow stated that the HWRC in Poynton was an important and well used community asset and highlighted that residents felt there had been no consultation or engagement on this proposal.

Councillor Glen Williams, Congleton Town Council, addressed the committee in relation to the Electoral Review warding proposals. Cllr Williams spoke in favour of the Electoral Review Sub Committee's proposals for Congleton and the positive impact these would have on the Bromley Farm neighbourhood in Congleton. Cllr Williams stated that Bromley Farm had strong geographical and social links to other areas in the proposed Congleton East ward.

Mr Jo Godden spoke in relation to the Electoral Review warding proposals in relation to Knutsford. Mr Godden stated that he felt Knutsford would be better represented by a split two-person ward, rather than one. Mr Godden highlighted that one particular area of Knutsford had very low voting levels, and those residents did not feel well represented due to the three-member ward system. It was suggested that those residents in the most deprived area being represented by one ward member would be a positive step for the local community.

## **81 CHESHIRE EAST ELECTORAL REVIEW - WARDING PROPOSALS**

The committee considered the recommendations of the Electoral Review Sub-Committee in respect of warding proposals for Cheshire East, which was undertaken in response to an electoral review of Cheshire East Council's electoral arrangements by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. The final approval of the Council's submission was intended to be given by full Council on 27th February 2024.

A number of visiting members addressed the committee in relation to the proposals, summarised below.

Councillors Liz Wardlaw, Sally Holland and David Brown each addressed the committee in relation to the proposals for Congleton. Each councillor highlighted the positive benefits of maintaining the current two-ward arrangements for Congleton (as the Sub-Committee's recommendations would). This arrangement was felt to be inclusive, well known amongst local communities and promoted improved social, economic and health benefits, as well as evenly dividing elector numbers and councillor workloads. It was stated that any splitting of wards would create a division within communities and therefore committee members were encouraged

to support the warding proposals for Congleton, as recommended by the Electoral Review Sub Committee.

Councillors Sarah Bennett-Wake, Liz Braithwaite, Mary Brooks, Brian Puddicombe, Judy Snowball, Rob Vernon each spoke against the proposals for Macclesfield, as recommended by the Electoral Review Sub Committee and urged the committee to support the proposed amendment to be put forward by Cllr Wilson (Warding Option 1), which was supported by 9 out of the 12 Macclesfield Ward Councillors. Members highlighted the impact that both proposals for Macclesfield would have on local communities and on Councillors' workloads and asked the committee to take into consideration the views of local ward members and residents.

Councillor David Edwardes addressed the committee on behalf of Councillor Emma Gilman and stated that both local ward councillors for Tytherington were in support of the proposals of the Electoral Review Sub Committee. Councillor Edwardes indicated that supporting the proposed amendment for Macclesfield (Option 1) would have a detrimental impact on Tytherington resulting in a loss of community identity.

Councillor Ken Edwards spoke in relation to the proposed Bollington and Rainow ward. Councillor Edwards spoke against the proposals of the Electoral Review Sub Committee which he felt would divide Bollington between two wards, reduce electoral equality and reduce the sense of community cohesion.

Members debated the proposals put forward by the Electoral Review Sub Committee and a number of amendments put forward by committee members in relation to Macclesfield, Knutsford and Wilmslow. It was proposed, seconded and subsequently resolved that the proposed "Wilmslow East" ward name be changed to "Wilmslow East and Dean Row" to retain the identity of Dean Row.

**RESOLVED** (by majority)

That the Committee

1. Recommends to Council that Council approve the proposals for the future warding of Cheshire East as set out in Appendix 1 to the report as the Council's submission to the Boundary Commission; with the following amendment: that Wilmslow East" ward name be changed to "Wilmslow East and Dean Row", to retain the identity of Dean Row.
2. Delegates authority to the Electoral Review Sub-Committee to make any further required changes to the proposals, and to approve any outstanding proposals and to deal with any matters which arise, following the Corporate Policy Committee's meeting and prior to the consideration of the proposals by full Council, and also in respect of any outstanding proposals which have not been finalised in time for consideration by Council.

3. Recommends to Council that the Electoral Review Sub-Committee be granted delegated authority:
  - (a) to make any further changes to the proposals arising from the Council meeting on 27th February, or which become necessary after that meeting; and
  - (b) to respond on the Council's behalf to any further informal or formal consultation by the Boundary Commission which relates to the second period of consultation.

## 82 **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2024/25-2027/28**

The committee received the report which presented the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for Cheshire East Council for the four years 2024/25 to 2027/28. The committee considered the feedback from the budget consultation and proposals recommending a balanced budget for 2024/25 to the full Council meeting on 27 February 2024.

Councillor Ken Edwards addressed the committee as a visiting member and asked the committee to consider an amendment to the proposals that stated "where a parish or town council expresses an interest in the devolution of a car park, that negotiations are undertaken according to Cheshire East devolution policy in order to protect both Cheshire East and local town and parish council interests".

The committee acknowledged the extremely difficult financial challenges facing the local authority, particularly in relation to inflation, HS2 programme costs and DSG. Members raised concerns in relation to the inadequate council reserves. Officers confirmed that the MTFS included several proposals that had not yet been costed which could result in additional savings but highlighted that more needed to be done to recover reserves. Members requested that each proposal be worked up fully and subsequently added to the relevant committee work programme to ensure scrutiny and oversight.

### **RESOLVED** (by majority)

That the Committee

1. Notes the year-end forecast outturn position for 2023/24 (Appendix C, Section 2).
2. Notes the summary results of the Budget Consultation and Engagement exercise undertaken by the Council, as set out in the attached (Appendix C, Annex 2a and 2b).
3. Notes the report of the Council's Section 151 Officer, contained within the MTFS report, regarding the robustness of estimates and level of

reserves held by the Council based on these budget proposals (Appendix C, Report from the Director of Finance and Customer Services (Chief Finance Officer)).

4. Notes the Council's Finance Procedure Rules remain unchanged and will always apply to ensure proper approval should any changes in spending requirements be identified (Appendix C, Annex 14).
5. Recommends to full Council the items at Appendix A.

### **83 URGENT DECISION - EXCEPTIONAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

The committee considered an urgent report, under powers set out in the Local Government Act 1972, Section 100B (4), which was not published with the agenda papers. It was confirmed that the report, which was necessitated by an opportunity which arose after the publication of the Committee agenda, sought approval to apply for exceptional financial support from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), in the light of the Council's budgetary pressures.

Some concerns were raised by Members in relation to recommendation 2, set out within the report. It was stated that the council already had a negative reserve for high needs, and the report proposed further borrowing to get through the financial crisis, with a payback period of 20 years. Officers confirmed that agreement in principle would not necessarily mean the application would be implemented. It was highlighted that the council would not draw down funds unless needed and that every effort would continue to be made to seek reimbursement for HS2 programme costs, and a settlement grant via the Safety Valve Programme for high needs.

#### **RESOLVED** (by majority)

That the Committee:

1. Agrees that the Chief Executive shall continue to seek resolution of financial issues related to the abortive costs of HS2 and the financial deficit in High Needs education budgets.
2. Agrees that the Chief Executive finalise and submit a request for exceptional financial support in the form of an in-principle capitalisation direction for 2023/24 and 2024/25 to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up for up to £17.6m.

### **84 PEER REVIEW/CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE**

The Committee received the report prepared in response to a Notice of Motion proposed at Full Council on 13 December 2023 that requested that the Council embrace an urgent Peer Review. The motion, which had been proposed by Cllr Rachel Bailey and seconded by Cllr Russell Chadwick,

proposed that the Council urgently engaged with the Local Government Association (LGA) to seek guidance through a Financial Peer Review or Corporate Peer Challenge to investigate it's in year overspend of £18.7m.

Councillor Rachel Bailey addressed the committee as the proposer of the Notice of Motion and urged committee members to seek clarity on the type of peer review being considered. Cllr Bailey stated that this had been intended as a friendly motion in order to promote good practice, drawing on the resources of the LGA. Cllr Bailey highlighted that such a review was important to ensure residents and staff were informed of how the council's budget overspend had incurred, and the steps that needed to be taken to correct it.

Councillor Russell Chadwick, addressed the committee as the seconder of the Notice of Motion and spoke in favour of the recommendations of the report stating that an LGA review would help to improve service delivery across the council.

Councillor Liz Wardlaw addressed the committee as a visiting member. Cllr Wardlaw requested that the scope and timing of the peer review be clarified. It was requested that any review be based upon the recommendations arising from the 2020 Peer Review.

It was stated that the intention was to ask that LGA to undertake a full corporate Peer Challenge which focused on five fixed key areas however it was within the council's gift to ask the peer review team to explore particular areas, such as budget reserves, further. The Chief Executive confirmed that subject to the availability of the peer reviewers, a Peer Challenge could be arranged to start within six weeks.

**RESOLVED** (unanimously)

That the Committee

1. Authorises the Chief Executive to make arrangements for a local government peer review to take place.
2. Delegates to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Council's political group leaders the finalisation of the scope, terms of reference and timing of the peer review.

## 85 **DEVELOPING THE NEW CHESHIRE EAST PLAN**

The committee considered the report which provided an update on progress made in relation to developing a new strategic plan for Cheshire East following consultation undertaken between September – December 2023.

**RESOLVED** (unanimously)

That the Committee

1. Notes the outcomes of the public consultation and engagement on the Cheshire East Plan.
2. Agrees that the new Cheshire East Plan will be finalised following the approval of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and awareness of available resources.

## **86 TRANSFER OF LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP FUNCTIONS TO LOCAL AUTHORITY CONTROL**

The committee considered a report which set out the changes needed to implement the requirements of government guidance on Local Enterprise Partnership functions, which would become the responsibility of Local Authorities from 1 April 2024.

The committee debated the report and queried the member oversight and scrutiny of the proposals. It was confirmed that member briefings had taken place in September 2023 and January 2024 to provide members of the council with an overview of the direction of travel. Members noted that a joint committee would be established with representation across the three local authorities.

Cllr O’Leary queried the objectives of the LEP to provide subsidy. Officers committed to providing a written response.

### **RESOLVED** (by majority)

That the Committee recommends that Council:

1. Agree the retention of the partnership approach between Warrington Borough Council, Cheshire West and Chester Council and Cheshire East Council in respect of sub-regional functions.
2. Agree that Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership (including Marketing Cheshire) functions should continue to be delivered by a Company jointly owned by all three Councils, based on the business case set out in Appendix A.
3. Agree to set up a Joint Committee (JC) by 1 April 2024 with Terms of Reference as set out in Appendix B.
4. Agree that a Cheshire and Warrington Business Advisory Board be created to ensure a continued influential business voice in sub-regional economic strategy and priorities following the end of the Cheshire and Warrington LEP Board. Terms of Reference be agreed by the Joint Committee.
5. Grant delegated authority to the Director of Growth, in conjunction with the Council’s Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer, to

effect non-material changes to the proposed changes to the Articles of Association of C&W LEP as referenced in Appendix C of this report.

6. Recommend to the Joint Committee that they then make changes to the Articles of Association and that the name of Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership be changed to Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington (ECW).
7. Agree the findings of the due diligence report undertaken and set out in Appendix D, including finances, risks and liabilities that the Council will incur in respect of LEPCo.
8. Recommend to the Joint Committee that when established, one officer from Cheshire East Council, with appropriate corporate skills and experience is appointed as a Director of LEPCo. That the officer is identified through consultation with the Council's Monitoring Officer, Place Director and Section 151 Officer.
9. Agree to enter into a Service Agreement with Cheshire West and Chester Council, Warrington Council and LEPCo on the terms set out in Appendix E, and to delegate final approval of the terms of the Service Agreement to the Director of Governance and Compliance in consultation with the Place Director and S151 Officer.
10. Recommend the Business Plan of the LEPCo to the Joint Committee as set out at Appendix F.
11. Agree that Cheshire East Council should continue to be the Accountable Body for the purposes of funding, and that the Director of Governance and Compliance be authorised to make any necessary changes to the Collaboration Agreement.
12. Agree that the Council's Monitoring Officer be given the authority to make any consequential changes to the Council Constitution to give effect to these recommendations.

## **87 TARGETED REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES**

The committee considered the report which set out the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel in respect of a targeted review of Members' Allowances in the context of the budget consultation on the Council's financial position.

Members sought clarity on recommendation 1e which proposed that the allowances scheme be amended to allow for two special responsibility allowances to be claimed by any one Councillor. This recommendation was debated by the committee, both the positive impact this would have for working members and also the impact this could have on the budget

and the MTFs proposal to reduce the costs of democracy, was highlighted.

**RESOLVED** (by majority)

That the Committee recommends that Council:

- 1a) Agree that the Constitution Working Group reviews the job descriptions for the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, Service Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs and Opposition Spokespersons.
  - b) The Working Groups recommendations in respect of these job descriptions to be submitted to the Independent Remuneration Panel.
  - c) The Independent Remuneration Panel consider and review these job descriptions and report back to Constitution Working Group; the Working Group to consider if the job descriptions should be referred onwards.
  - d) A full review of all member allowances by the new Independent Remuneration Panel be carried out after the actions set out in a) to c) have been completed.
  - e) The allowances scheme be amended, to allow for two special responsibility allowances to be claimed by any one Councillor.
2. Agree that, where the annual NJC officer pay award is for a flat rate and percentage increase to salaries and other allowances respectively, the percentage increase applicable to other allowances will be regarded as that year's uplift in respect of Cheshire East's Scheme of Members' Allowances.
  3. That no uplift to the Scheme of Members' Allowances be implemented in 2023/2024.

**88 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2024-2025**

The Committee considered a report on the Calendar of Meetings for 2024-2025.

It was proposed, seconded and subsequently carried that, as a trial over the course of the next municipal year, every Service Committee, including the Finance Sub Committee, arranged one twilight meeting scheduled over the cycle of its meetings. It was agreed that individual Service Committees should determine the start time (twilight being between 4-6pm).

**RESOLVED** (unanimously)

That

1. The draft calendar of meetings for Cheshire East Council for the municipal year 2024/25 be recommended to Council for approval, subject to delegated powers being granted to the Director of Governance and Compliance, in consultation with committee chairs and vice chairs, to make any changes to the calendar of meetings which might arise from the review of the committee structure.
2. Council be recommended that each Service Committee, including the Finance Sub-Committee, arrange one twilight meeting over the course of its scheduled cycle of meetings during 2024-25.

Councillor Craig Browne left the meeting at 5.38 pm and did not return.  
Cllr James Pearson left the meeting at 5.41 pm and did not return.

## 89 **WORK PROGRAMME**

Members considered the Work Programme. It was highlighted that the July 2024 meeting had been removed from the calendar of meetings. Members discussed if an additional meeting would be needed between June and October 2024.

Officers agreed to look into the implications of moving the June 2023 meeting to July and feedback to the Committee. It was also highlighted that the calendar of meetings would be approved by Council and therefore members had another opportunity to request amendments for the 2024-25 calendar.

### **RESOLVED**

That the Work Programme be received and noted.

## 90 **MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES**

### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the Finance Sub-Committee held on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024 be received and noted.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 5.54 pm

Councillor S Corcoran (Chair)

OPEN

## Corporate Policy Committee

21 March 2024

### Officer Boards, Peer Challenge and Decision Making Review Update

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**Report of: David Brown, Director of Governance and Compliance  
(Monitoring Officer)**

**Report Reference No: CP/76/23-24**

**ALL Wards Affected**

#### **Purpose of Report**

- 1 The report sets out three of the preliminary activities required to allow the development of the future transformation programme. This report is to inform Members of the initial work undertaken by the Chief Executive Officer to prepare the organisation for change.

#### **Executive Summary**

- 2 There are three defined workstreams contained within this report:
  - (a) Activity 1: Creation and implementation of Council wide Officer Boards. This is to promote a Council wide approach to strategy, performance, and risk. This will be supplemented by a further Transformation Board when required.
    - (i) The Officer Boards will determine how the Council will transform and execute the Cheshire East Plan's vision and mission over the next four or five years. These will commence in March 2024.
  - (b) Activity 2: Local Government Association (LGA) review of decision making accountability (DMA). [Creating effective organisational structures \(DMA approach\) | Local Government Association](#)

- (i) The Council are currently working with the LGA who are conducting a review to make sure that we have organisational structures that are effective at taking decisions, with clear accountabilities and roles. This review will also strengthen and stabilise our management structure so that we have the right management capacity for a council that will need to change quickly to address our financial position, and be robust enough to deal with future challenges.
  - (ii) This process will involve management staff to Head of Service level. Information has been shared with them during the week of 26 February to commence on the 4 March with a view to completion of the field work by 15 March 2024.
- (c) Activity 3: LGA Peer Challenge. [Peer challenges we offer | Local Government Association](#)
- 8 Cheshire East Council's submission for the peer challenge will be submitted on 11 March 2024. The peer challenge will commence on the 25 March 2024 and conclude on Maundy Thursday, 28 March 2024.
- 9 Member briefings will be aligned with the Transformation Programme.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corporate Policy Committee is recommended to:

1. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Corporate Policy Committee, to take all necessary steps to respond to any recommendation of the review and note the commencement of the Decision Making Accountability Review.
2. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer, Chair and Vice Chair of Corporate Policy Committee, to take all necessary steps in the preparation for the review and to take all necessary steps to respond to any recommendation of the Peer Challenge, and note the progress of, and the Council submission to, the Local Government Association Peer Challenge.
3. Note the creation and operation of the Officer Boards.

## Background

### Officer Boards

- 10 Four officer boards are proposed. The Boards are designed to be cross-Council structures. The Council has very well defined 'vertical' management structure in place primarily through the line management function. The vertical structures are supplemented by ad hoc cross cutting Boards, which are usually focused on specific issues or projects. The new Boards will embed a 'horizontal' structure designed to improve cross-Council working and help to eliminate introspective or silo working.
- 11 Initially, three Boards will be established:
- a. Strategy, Policy & Legislation Management Board
  - b. Performance & Improvement Management Board
  - c. Risk & Assurance Management Board

The fourth Board, Transformation, will be established following further development by the Corporate Leadership Team.

- 12 The Boards will commence in March 2024 and will report to the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT). CLT will retain the role of the Transformation Board until the completion of the peer challenge and DMA review.
- 13 Initially, each Board will be chaired by an Executive Director with a single Head of Service or Director in support. Each Board has established Terms of Reference (Appendix 1). The Boards will be advisory and not have independent decision-making powers. The Boards will rely on the existing scheme of individual officer delegations for authority to undertake activities.
- 14 The Boards will be used to recommend activity, support interventions, and where change is required, to set up task and finish groups, to monitor risk and give assurance on wider progress. The desired impact is to create a level of accountability and empowerment that will engender swift progress in supporting the future transformation agenda.
- 15 The initial meetings of the Boards will be used to identify remaining Board Members and develop a work programme and progress will be reviewed in three months.

## Decision Making Accountability

16 The LGA describe the Decision Making Review as:

*“The decision-making accountability (DMA) approach is an organisational design tool which establishes the number of layers of management that an organisation needs – and the units within it – to achieve its purposes most effectively, and the decision rights that managers in different layers require to be empowered. This can be used at a whole organisation or individual service level.”*

and

*“It is a proven way of creating an effective organisation and services, and an efficient management structure. The aim of DMA is to create a healthy and effective organisation.”*

17 The DMA approach will follow a standardised method:

- (a) Briefings: To give an opportunity to engage with contributors to promote and highlight the DMA process and the benefits. This commenced on 26 February 2024.
- (b) (Stage 1) The LGA have completed a desktop review, which will analyse the current senior organisational structure and will produce a report with findings and recommendations. The final report will include beneficial quantitative information and include examples of where over layering occurs.
- (c) Feedback: Feedback sessions to go through the findings and recommendations, together with Cheshire East Council to agree the timeframe for Stage 2.
- (d) (Stage 2) DMA review: Approximately 30 one to one interviews, and a facilitated drop-in session where colleagues can attend to have their say. One to ones from Head of Service to Chief Executive. The 30 members of staff have been identified and the interviews commence from 8 March 2024.
- (e) Report and Findings: The information from Stage 2 will inform the final report that includes findings and recommendations. The report will include common themes and suggestions of future structures.
- (f) Feedback: The LGA can hold further feedback sessions on the findings and recommendations.

- 18 It is anticipated that the DMA report will be available around the end of March 2024, and will inform the decision on resourcing and capacity for the transformation programme.

### **Corporate Peer Challenge**

- 19 At Council on 13 December 2023, a motion was put forward seeking a Peer Challenge. The Peer Challenge was referred to the Corporate Policy Committee on 13 February 2024, had cross-party support and was unanimously agreed. The Chief Executive Officer has arranged for the commencement of the Peer Challenge, to be progressed swiftly.
- 20 The Peer Challenge will provide an insight to the next steps to prepare for a transformation programme.
- 21 The Peer Challenge process requires an introductory position statement by Cheshire East Council to support the peer reviewer. This takes the form of a written submission covering five core areas:
- Local priorities and outcomes
  - Organisational and place leadership
  - Governance and culture
  - Financial planning and management
  - Capacity for improvement
- 22 The methodology is set out in the Scope and Preparation document together with the class of potential interviewees by role or position. Full details of a peer challenge can be found [here](#).
- 23 The Peer Challenge visit should be concluded by 28 March 2024. The final report will be published on the Council's website by 25 June 2024.

### **Impact**

- 24 Each of the activities identified in the report are required to inform the approach to transformation. The structural elements around the Boards are necessarily fluid and will be informed by the DMA and Peer Challenge.
- 25 The recommendations that arise from these activities will require an expeditious and timely response. The response may also require undertaking a wide range of activity and the report recommendations provide for the Chief Executive Officer to take all necessary steps to embed the changes required to facilitate the future transformation programme.

## **Consultation and Engagement**

- 26 The different activities have a wide range of communication and engagement channels. The Peer Challenge was agreed in a public meeting at Committee. Staff engaged in the DMA review have been briefed. The implementation of the Board structures is part of a wider communication and familiarisation plan across the organisation.
- 27 Further staff and Member engagement/briefings and communication will be required as information and reports become available. It is possible that organisational change may be required. Organisational change to support transformation may engage a requirement for both formal and informal consultation and engagement with staff at all levels of the organisation.

## **Reasons for Recommendations**

- 28 The recommendations inform the Committee of a wide range of activity being undertaken. This activity is a precursor to further transformational change. It has a direct impact to the success of any transformation programme.
- 29 The current operating environment for local government in general, and for Cheshire East Council, in particular requires the Council to adapt to circumstances. The fiscal pressure also requires the speed of adaptation to be swift and the recommendations authorise the Chief Executive Officer to move forward at pace.

## **Other Options Considered**

- 30 The Council always has a “do nothing” option. A do nothing option in the current fiscal environment is unlikely to achieve effective service delivery for the residents of Cheshire East.

## **Implications and Comments**

### *Monitoring Officer/Legal*

- 31 The recommendations give authority to the Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Corporate Policy Committee for the delivery of the activity and to make the progress required that will arise from these activities.
- 32 Further decisions will be required to enable the future transformation programme to be delivered, and where necessary, an update can be provided to the committee on 13 June 2024.

*Section 151 Officer/Finance*

- 33 There are nominal financial implications associated with the content of this report. However, there may be financial implications associated with any changes to the senior management structure and recommendations from the peer challenge.

*Policy*

- 34 Every aspect of the delivery of the Corporate Plan is engaged as the activities are a reflection on the whole Council and will inform service provision for the future.

<p><b>An open and enabling organisation</b></p>	<p><b>A council which empowers and cares about people</b></p>	<p><b>A thriving and sustainable place</b></p>
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*Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion*

- 35 No direct impact

*Human Resources*

- 36 The whole workforce of Cheshire East Council will be engaged in understanding of the public reporting and the whole work force will ultimately be engaged in the delivery of any changes required.

*Risk Management*

- 37 Failure to have appropriate management structures and to follow through on wider recommendations presents a significant risk to the Council of being unable to meet the aim of the corporate plan and support long term sustainability.

*Rural Communities*

- 38 No direct impact

*Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)*

- 39 No direct impact

*Public Health*

- 40 No direct impact

*Climate Change*

41 No direct impact

<b>Access to Information</b>	
Contact Officer:	David Brown – Director of Governance and Compliance
Appendices:	Appendix 1 Board Terms of Reference
Background Papers:	<a href="#"><u>Peer Review report Corporate Policy Committee 13 February 2024</u></a>

# Terms of Reference for the Strategy, Policy and Legislation Board

The Strategy, Policy and Legislation Board has no constitutional decision-making powers in its own right, but will make recommendations to the Corporate Leadership Team, other boards, through to Committees where necessary.

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## Purpose and objective

Ensures that the strategy and policy setting within council, its group structure, and, where appropriate partnerships, is aligned to agreed organisational (and partnership) priorities and objectives, and current legislation – responding and adapting to changing economic and demographic context. This is not a decision-making board however will provide strategic oversight, support and challenge to the directorates and onwards to CLT to ensure there is a well understood and aligned landscape across the council’s strategies and policies.

## Meeting Frequency

Monthly

## Membership

**Chair** Executive Director - Childrens Services  
Deborah Woodcock

**Key Officer** Director of Public Health - Dr Matt Tyrer

## Membership:

## Reports to

Corporate Leadership Team on a monthly basis

## Receives reports from

- Business intelligence team (demographic and related data e.g. census, that may affect strategy and policy development)
- Public health team (JSNA)
- Economic development team (Economic intelligence and performance data)
- DMTs – (updates on in-directorate strategy and policy development work)
- Democratic services (on constitutional changes that may affect strategy and policy development)

## Responsibilities

- Oversight and coordination of the overarching Cheshire East Council plan
- Oversight and coordination of the council's strategies to deliver the council plan, with partner, sub-regional and regional strategies, reflecting and supporting the Cheshire East's plan and reflecting changing economic and demographic context.
- All proposed strategies and policies to deliver on the Cheshire East plan should be considered and approved at this board
- Review partnership strategies to determine impact on council strategy, policy and operations and direct as appropriate.
- Define a strategy framework for the council and its operating context
- Oversight and coordination of the council's policies in the context of constitutional, partnership and legislative/statutory frameworks.
- Map legislation as applies to the council and its interests
- Track and monitor legislative changes and identify impact on policy and strategy.
- Reviewing stakeholder engagement and involvement opportunities in strategy and policy development (consultation, co-production, co-design).
- The chair to work with the other management boards on a regular and routine basis to ensure that the synergies across the boards is maintained.

## Key outputs

Key output	Relevant committee*
Cheshire East Council plan	Corporate Policy Committee
Strategy framework	Corporate Policy Committee
Policy framework	Corporate Policy Committee

Legislative framework	Corporate Policy Committee
Partnership framework	Corporate Policy Committee
Strategy programme	Corporate Policy Committee
Policy review programme	Corporate Policy Committee
Partnership working reporting	Corporate Policy Committee
Public and community involvement reporting	Corporate Policy Committee
Strategy template(s)	All
Policy template(s)	All

\*specific work may align to the work of other service committees

## Meeting Agenda

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Minutes of the last meeting
3. Update on actions from the last meeting
4. Matters arising
  - a. Strategy review programme
  - b. Policy review programme
  - c. Legislation developments
  - d. Business intelligence reports
5. Draft reports for committees – review points and feedback
6. AOB

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# Terms of Reference for the Performance Board

The Performance Board has no constitutional decision-making powers in its own right, but will make recommendations to the Corporate Leadership Team, other boards, through to Committees where necessary.

## Contents

Purpose and objective.....	1
Meeting Frequency.....	1
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## Purpose and objective

The Board is authorised to ensure that the Council's financial and performance strategies and underpinning policies, leadership and behaviours are aligned with the Cheshire East Plan, with the aim of ensuring that effective governance, risk management and internal control systems are in place to ensure the achievement of sustainable strategic and tactical performance.

The Board will identify opportunities for training and development which will support the delivery of its key responsibilities.

## Meeting Frequency

Monthly

## **Membership**

### **Chair**

Executive Director of Adults Health and Integration -  
Helen Charlesworth-May

### **Key officer(s)**

Head of Financial Services - Paul Goodwin  
Head of Customer Services - Jane Farnworth  
Head of Business Change - Phil Christian

### **Membership**

## **Reports to**

- Corporate Leadership Team on a monthly basis
- Other boards by exception, for information sharing and/or escalation of issues arising

## **Receives reports from**

- Directorate Performance leads
- Directorate Finance leads
- Customer Service leads
- High Level Business Case owners and project managers
- Directorate attendees

## **Responsibilities**

- Overseeing the development and implementation of the financial and performance strategy, ensuring that these deliver the strategic objectives, as set out in the Cheshire East Plan and to ensure delivery of financial and performance targets.
- Oversee the ongoing development of the Integrated Performance Report.
- Receive and monitor monthly reports on quality performance, noting any trends, exceptions and variances against plans on a Council-wide and directorate basis and reviewing in detail any major performance variations, providing constructive challenge as appropriate.
- Review forecast performance against operational targets and improvement trajectories, escalating issues of non-delivery, and monitoring against achievement.
- Receive and monitor monthly reports on financial performance, including cost improvement programmes and use of resources, noting any trends, exceptions and variances against plans.

- Receive and monitor monthly reports on workforce performance, noting any trends, exceptions and variances against plans on a Council-wide and directorate basis and reviewing in detail any major performance variations, providing constructive challenge as appropriate.
- Receive and monitor monthly reports on contract performance, noting any trends, exceptions and variances against plans on a Council-wide and directorate basis and reviewing in detail any major performance variations, providing constructive challenge as appropriate.
- Receive and monitor monthly reports on High Level Business Case progress and performance, noting any trends, exceptions and variances against project plans and wider programme management activities. Reviewing in detail any major performance variations, providing constructive challenge as appropriate.
- Advising the Council of key strategic risks relating to performance and consider plans for mitigation, providing constructive challenge as appropriate.
- To provide and develop mechanisms and processes which enable the Council to become an evidence and intelligence led organisation, delivered via appropriate training and development within the Council.

## Key outputs

Key output	Relevant committee
Quarterly Performance Reports	Corporate Policy Committee
Quarterly HLBC monitoring	CLT
Monthly reports	CLT

## Monitoring and Review

- The Terms of Reference of the Board will be reviewed at least annually and submitted to the Board for approval.
- The Board will undertake an annual review of its performance, via self-assessment by its members and any agreed actions, will be reported to the CLT.

## Planning and Next Steps – next three months

- Development of example balanced scorecard
- Agree TOR for Performance Board
- Assess maturity of Council to use its data
  - [LGA | Rate your organisation's data management skills](#)
- Focus upon:
  - Culture and Structure
  - Skills and capability
  - Systems and Tools
  - Use and Process

## **Planning and Next Steps – Three to six months**

- Links with Cheshire East Plan to be created to ensure SMART KPI's
- Service plans to be redrafted to support use of balanced scorecard reporting

## **Meeting Agenda**

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Minutes of the last meeting
3. Update on actions from the last meeting
4. Matters arising
5. Draft reports for committees – review points and feedback
6. AOB

# Terms of Reference for the Risk and Assurance Board

**The Risk and Assurance Board has no constitutional decision-making powers, but will make recommendations to the Corporate Leadership Team, other boards, through to Committees where necessary.**

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## Purpose and objective

Ensures robust monitoring of strategic and operational risk, completion of internal and external audit and inspection recommendations, development, testing and review of the organisation's assurance frameworks, including the internal audit workplan, business continuity and the council's emergency response plan.

## Meeting Frequency

Monthly

## Membership

### Chair

Acting Executive Director, Place  
Peter Skates

### Key Officers

Josie Griffiths - Head of Audit and Risk  
Janet Witkowski - Head of Legal Services  
Paul Goodwin - Head of Finance

## Membership

## Reports to

- Corporate Leadership Team on a monthly basis
- Other boards by exception, for information sharing and/or escalation of issues arising.

## Receives reports from

- Health and Safety Forum
- Strategic Information Governance Group
- Internal Audit team
- Risk and Business Continuity
- Insurance Team
- Directorate attendees

## Responsibilities

- Monitoring performance of the strategic risk register and monitoring performance of the operational risk registers.
- Reviewing the chief internal auditors draft annual internal audit workplan, ensuring it is risk based and aligned to the content of the strategic and operational risks of the organisation.
- Oversee the preparation of the Council's draft and final Annual Governance Statement, identifying significant governance issues for inclusion.
- Organisational review of the Code of Corporate Governance, including identifying amendments as needed.
- Monitoring completion of internal and external audit, inspection and AGS recommendations, receiving assurance that changes have achieved required improvements.
- Develop and own the organisation's assurance framework, which explains what assurances exist and who is responsible for them outlining the key areas of the assurance required by those charged with ensuring good governance and identifying the assurance process and providers.
- Consider the assurances available regarding the adequacy and effectiveness of the governance arrangements for the council's partnership arrangements, including shared service arrangements, wholly owned companies, commercial arrangements with private sector partners and service delivery arrangements with community groups and social enterprises.
- Ensuring that business continuity and emergency response plans are in place, tested and that these support the wider local resilience forum plan.
- Ensuring that the organisation discharges its responsibilities in relation to the stewardship of public money and safeguarding against losses due to fraud and corruption and promoting the link between effective counter-fraud arrangements and the expected ethical standards for members and officers expected by the public.

- To consider arrangements in place to ensure the organisation in its entirety has regard to the Seven Principles of Public Life: the Nolan Principles
- Be informed by the work of the External Auditor and use the planned work programme and update reports provided to understand how this relates to the overall coverage of assurances. The Group should contribute to the organisation's response to the annual audit letter.

## Key outputs

<b>Key output</b>	<b>Relevant committee</b>
Draft and final Annual Governance Statement	Audit and Governance Committee
Quarterly and annual Strategic risk reports	Corporate Policy Committee/Audit and Governance Committee
Draft Internal Audit Plan	Audit and Governance Committee
Recommended Code of Corporate Governance	Audit and Governance Committee
Assurance Framework for CEC, identifying key delivery partners/wholly owned companies/shared service arrangements	
Counter Fraud strategy	
<b><u>Key indicators/dashboards</u></b>	
Implementation of agreed internal audit recommendations	
Implementation of external audit recommendations	
Implementation of inspection/review recommendations	
% completion of risk registers at Head of Service level	
Frequency of review of risk registers	
% completion of business continuity plans at Head of Service level	

## Meeting Agenda

1. Welcome and introductions.
2. Minutes of the last meeting
3. Update on actions from the last meeting
4. Matters arising
  - a. Risk register updates
  - b. Progress on inspection and audit recommendations
  - c. Health and Safety forum report
5. Draft reports for committees – review points and feedback
6. AOB

OPEN

## Corporate Policy Committee

21 March 2024

### Cheshire East Approach to Transformation

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**Report of: Rob Polkinghorne – Chief Executive**

**Report Reference No: CP/76/23-24**

**All Wards are Affected.**

#### **Purpose of Report**

This report sets out the proposed transformational approach the Council will take to deliver the Cheshire East Council Plan, support the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) budget savings of £100m over the next 4 years, and implement the overarching Policy and Strategy Framework, with an emphasis on Digital Assurance and Performance Management.

#### **Executive Summary**

- 1 The report sets out a high-level ambition of the transformation programme along with the required resource both from a capacity and capability point of view that will be needed to effectively deliver the programme.
- 2 The transformation programme will facilitate deeper and broader service redesign, supported where appropriate by the investment in enhanced digital capabilities, which will be required to contribute to the savings required for the next 5 years from 2024/25 to 2028/29 as set out in the MTFS. The primary objectives being:
  - (i) Support the Council to address the 4-year funding gap of £100m as outlined in the MTFS.
  - (ii) Invest in digital technologies to enable services to adopt technology for various activities and processes, thus enabling the Council to fully leverage technological opportunities to accelerate its processes.

- (iii) Develop an organisational workforce that is flexible ensuring all staff have the necessary skills to work effectively within a transformed Council.

- 3 The financial situation of the council means that it has no option but to transform the way it delivers its services, the requirement for a transformation programme has been established through the approval of the MTFs, the S151 officers' section 25 report and through the conditions that need to be met as part of the Exceptional financial support from DLUHC (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities).
- 4 The report also highlights and brings to members attention several initiatives that whilst not strictly part of the future facing transformation programme are an integral element in the preparation for it.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. To approve the transformation approach for the council.
- 2. Delegate to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair & Vice Chair, authority to take all necessary steps to implement a whole organisation transformation programme as outlined in sections 11-19, 24-30 of this report.
- 3. To provide committee and all member briefings on progress against key milestones of the programme.
- 4. To note the S151 officers' section 25 report that states that the Council must transform to create sustainable services.
- 5. To note the acceptance of the Exceptional Financial Support and recognise the conditions of that support, namely a transformation plan to be provided to DLUHC by August 2024
- 6. To note the acceptance of a LGA (Local Government Association) grant by the Chief Executive and Chief Financial Officer in accordance with the rules on Supplementary Revenue Estimates set out within the Councils constitution.
- 7. To note the progress to date on the formation of the transformation programme by the Chief Executive and approve the procurement of Phase 1 and Phase 2 required to facilitate the programme.
- 8. To note the progress of the other work activities that are underway that are needed in support of the transformation programme which

include the Decision-Making Accountability work and the LGA's Corporate Peer Challenge review.

## Background Information

- 5 The ability of the Council to meet its fiscal challenges is a product of the functioning of the whole Council. It is therefore important to review the functioning of the Council as an effective organisation and the efficacy of the Council in delivering services.
- 6 The Council is embarking on an ambitious transformation programme to strengthen and improve public outcomes, create an organisation that can adapt to changing priorities in an agile way, be fit for the future, deliver the Cheshire East Council Plan, and achieve the MTFS budget savings.
- 7 The primary aim in the short term must be to ensure that the Council is financially stable, it will achieve this by being the best, most effective and efficient organisation it possibly can be, to achieve this the Authority needs to be:
  - (i) Reprioritising to create an opportunity to invest in critical areas but also disinvest from areas.
  - (ii) Delivering Customer engagement and experience through using technology to streamline service delivery enabling self-service available 24/7 whilst ensuring specialised support and guidance is given to those that need it.
  - (iii) Achieving value for money in, and across all services, by reducing manual, repetitive tasks through automation of systems and processes.
  - (iv) Reviewing organisational structures and operating models to maximise performance and outcomes.
  - (v) Developing the right skills and behaviours across the entire workforce to achieve high productivity and a culture that is more inclusive and shaped by revised set of values and behaviours that builds from the Brighter Futures Programme work.
  - (vi) Achieving financial targets through the effective implementation of well informed and clear decisions informed by data and insight.

- (vii) Developing the Asset Management Plan to align it to service requirements and dispose of surplus assets. Which in turn can be used to fund transformational activities.
  - (viii) A genuinely great place to work for every member and employee of the council, with opportunities for progression.
- 8 The Council has committed to undertaking a LGA Corporate Peer Challenge, part of which will be a review based on the LGA's Transformation Capability Framework, this will assess the organisations' ability to manage and drive change and we will be allocated a maturity assessment base on a scale of 1 (Tactical) to 5 (Optimised).
  - (a) A self-assessment was undertaken in January this year against the LGA Transformation framework in preparation of the formal review commencing on the 25 March.
  - (b) The initial findings were that the Council would score towards the top end of 1 (Tactical) with some pockets in level 2 (Defined) and level 3 (Integrated)
  - (c) The outcome of the LGA peer review will be the production of an improvement plan and make recommendations on the key steps the council will need to take to further enhance its capability around transformation.
- 9 The case for change has been set, through the adoption of the Councils MTFS ([Cheshire East Budget](#)) and through the obligations of DLUHC to access the 'Exceptional Financial Support', which is explained below within the finance section of this report.
- 10 Over the past 18 months Adults, Health and Integration, Children's Services and the Place Directorate have all been undertaking bespoke, service specific programmes of improvement, change and transformation. Place has reviewed and developed a targeted programme of change in Planning. A full review of Library Services and Leisure Services has been undertaken and proposals brought forward for potential re-commissioning and re-configuration and Housing Services are currently restructuring.
- 11 Whilst each of these standalone programmes will individually deliver efficiencies and improve outcomes, we are missing opportunities to identify those changes that will deliver the greatest benefit, ensure we adopt consistent approaches to change, deploy time and resource

appropriately and so ensure that we prioritise the actions that will make the biggest difference and deliver savings and change most quickly.

- 12 The first stage of the transformation process will enable us to identify those opportunities that offer the greatest value and the resource that will be required to implement those changes. Additional support will be required across all services to support the change process and implement new ways of working, particularly if this is to happen at the pace required to ensure financial stability in the short-term as well as over the longer-term.
- 13 The Council will instigate the transformation programme as soon as possible. There is not sufficient capacity within the organisation to enable this and the council will procure a delivery partner, to support the transformation in the short to medium term.
- 14 The delivery partner would be procured in two distinct but related phases:
- (a) Phase 1: 3-6 months

### **Outputs**

- Providing dedicated resource to support phase 1 including the undertaking of benchmarking services against comparator authorities.
  - Examination of all service areas to identify areas for improvement, including deep dive reviews into those areas that will provide the greatest opportunity for driving efficiency including the introduction of zero-based budgets.
  - A workforce development strategy for the transformation programme that looks at the required capacity and capability within the organisation including the implementation of cross cutting reporting.
  - A whole organisation transformation programme with clear outputs that can be presented to DLUHC by August 24
- (b) Phase 2: 6-36 months- Whole organisation transformation programme
- A programme that is clear on how the Council's vision, outcomes, and measures are in line with the Cheshire East Council Plan, along with timelines and key deliverables that are required for a transformed Authority that goes out to 2027. This is to include key service design principles, with every service to undertake a whole systems redesign, incorporating a fundamental review of systems and processes.

- 15 It is proposed that the Council's transformation will be monitored and facilitated by the transformation board which in turn will be supported by the various management delivery boards all of which will have a clear term of reference, chaired, and sponsored by a member of Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) with the Chief Executive chairing the brighter futures cultural programme, the details of these boards are subject to a separate report.
- 16 The transformation programme will also require internal capacity to:
- (i) Function as a single point of contact for any delivery partner and ensure they are delivering the required products and meeting the agreed milestones.
  - (ii) Co-ordinate existing programmes to ensure they are integrated into the whole organisation transformation programme.
  - (iii) That any reporting tools are appropriate and consistent with revised organisational reporting tools.
  - (iv) Ensure that the future work programme is realistic and achievable.

### **Reasons for Recommendations**

- 17 The Council must ensure that it fulfils its statutory duties in relation to the approved budget set by council on the 27<sup>th</sup> February, the only way to do this is by changing systems and process to achieve the stated savings published within the MTFS.
- 18 A transformation programme is a key requirement that has been stipulated by DLUHC to access the exceptional financial support and must be provided to them within six months of acceptance of the letter from DLUHC which was sent on 29<sup>th</sup> February.
- 19 The transformation programme, needed to help address the financial deficit, will focus on the elements highlighted in the background section of this report.
- 20 The Council will need to consider as part of any transformation programme, how the organisation should run at a future point in time when the transformation from the 'As-Is' state to the 'To-Be' has been achieved, the basic parameters that need to be considered are:
- (i) The value proposition of what we offer, including Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- (ii) The target client(s), customer(s), and resident(s) that the model is looking to address.
- (iii) Relations with key stakeholders including the motivations to work in partnership.
- (iv) The structure of the organisation to ensure that the core capabilities are in place to deliver.
- (v) Configuration of activities and services and how we deliver systems through the use and adoption of technology.
- (vi) The overall cost and core financial Structure

21 It should be recognised that the transformation programme is in addition to the already established in year spend controls such as CEBERT (CE Budget Emergency Response Team) and the Spending Review Board, it is essential that these are embedded and continue, to ensure that the business-as-usual activities have the appropriate level of controls in place.

22 Furthermore, the High-Level Business Cases (HLBC) must be an integral part of the transformation programme moving forward, these will ensure that the activities already identified as part of the MTFS are achieved.

**Other Options Considered**

23 The Council, to achieve the required savings identified within the MTFS must transform how it currently delivers its services, there is not an option to do nothing, the only viable option to enact the transformation programme as quickly as possible is to bring in additional capacity and expertise.

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing	The council would not meet the conditions for Exceptional Financial Support. There would be no access to the capitalisation of revenue expenditure that was required to manage in-year financial risks.	Insufficient funding to fulfil statutory requirements of the council. This could lead to unlawful activity that required the

	Without the change required to create sustainable finances the council may be unable to fulfil its statutory obligations.	issue of a s114 report.
Transformation, resourced in house	Reduced costs associated with procurement of a delivery partner, development, and ownership within existing resource.	Insufficient capacity and/or capability to deliver the transformation programme resulting in the required level of savings not being achieved.
Transformation resourced completely externally	Rapid deployment of resources to achieve savings, up-front cost required and ongoing costs.	This option is not sustainable in the long term
Hybrid of Externally support for phase 1 whilst gearing up the organisation to undertake the wider transformation programme (Phase 2)	Addresses short term need around capacity and capability, Achieves the required savings and builds capacity for the future.	That insufficient internal capability can be identified and reprioritised.

## Implications and Comments

### ***Monitoring Officer/Legal***

The council will need to procure an appropriate delivery partner in line with the contractual and procurement regulations of the council.

There are no further direct legal implications of this report, the legal implications will be considered on a case-by-case basis of the individual activities.

**Section 151 Officer/Finance**

- 24 The council has set a balanced budget for 2024/25 the section 25 report of the section 151 officer stated:
- The Council must transform to create sustainable services and support infrastructure projects that reflect 'whole life' costs. This must cover the medium to long term and be backed by reserves that can manage any emerging risks.
  - It is highly likely that the Council will require additional capacity to manage this programme, in a way that is yet to be determined, but it will inevitably require additional funding, which will need to be met from within existing resource.
- 25 The Council has received a grant award from the LGA for £100,000 to support the transformation programme. The Chief Executive has approved the Supplementary Estimate for this funding in accordance with the constitution. This is welcome recognition from the LGA of the importance of the Council's need to transform. But further funding will be needed for this programme of activity, especially whilst the Council is managing capacity shortfalls in important parts of the organisation.
- 26 Phase 1 will require further virement from reserves, which could be as much as £350,000. In compliance with the constitution this is within the scheme of delegation of the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Relevant Member of CLT, which in this case would be the Chief Executive.
- 27 It should be noted that any external partner will be required to identify savings that far exceed the above figure and a Return on Investment (ROI) of some were between 3:1 and 5:1 would be expected.
- 28 The council has received confirmation from DLUHC that they are minded to approve the Council's request for exceptional financial support. However, there are several conditions that will need to be met prior to formal approval, in summary the council must:
- Undergo an external assurance review on the Council's financial position and financial management policies, and the Council's work to improve its productivity and efficiency.
  - Produce an improvement and transformation programme within six months (August 24) that is focused on delivering the Council's key objectives and securing the medium-term financial position.
  - The programme should incorporate any recommendations identified as part of the external review.

**Human Resources**

29 It is important to recognise when an organisation embarks on transformation of this scale, it can either have a positive or negative impact on culture depending on the approaches taken therefore, it is critical that the transformation programme builds on the brighter futures work which is already embedded into the organisation and this alongside the decision-making accountability work will help to stabilise the organisation, ensuring that there is buy in from all levels of the organisation and contribute to the success of the overall programme.

**Policy**

30 The principle and themes of the Transformation programme are aligned with the Council’s vision, priorities and values as outlined in the Corporate Plan 2021-2025.

31 The Transformation programme seeks to directly support the aims of being An Open and enabling organisation, A Council which empowers and cares about people, working together with residents and partners, and A thriving and sustainable place.

<p><b>An open and enabling organisation.</b></p> <p><b>(Include which aim and priority)</b></p>	<p><b>A council which empowers and cares about people</b></p> <p><b>(Include which aim and priority)</b></p>	<p><b>A thriving and sustainable place</b></p> <p><b>(Include which aim and priority)</b></p>
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**Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion**

32 The fundamental principles underpinning the need to transform have equality, diversity, and inclusion as a golden thread at the heart of all plans for change.

33 At all stages of transformation, consideration is given to the Public Sector Equality Duty under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010 and it is recognised that we must remove or minimise disadvantage and take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing protected all protected characteristics such as a disability or age.

34 The duty also provides that public authorities must encourage persons with a protected characteristic to participate and influence where participation and engagement by such persons is disproportionately low.

- 35 The previous periods of public service change have impacted disproportionately across communities. At times, those stakeholders and residents who have the greatest needs have lost out relative to others. The Transformation programme has an aim to improve the experience of all customers when interacting with the Council and will seek to ensure that the Council recognises and addresses individual needs and/or barriers to accessing services now and in the future, TO-BE state.
- 36 It is expected that an Equality Impact Assessments will be completed at key stages of the Transformation programme and will ensure that the impacts of change, on both internal and external stakeholders, will from an essential part of decision making.

### ***Risk Management***

- 37 The councils Strategic Risk Register cites A red risks associated with the organisations ability to transform:
- **SR08: Ability to Achieve Organisation Change:** The council is unable to achieve organisational change due to a lack of resources and capacity to focus on transformation as people focus on the delivery of business as usual. Recently received advice from government commissioners advised that organisational change capacity is a key ingredient to support the council in delivering transformation to achieve medium to long term change that will support achievement of savings and also, in the event of a section 114 notice being issued, organisational change capacity is also essential to deliver necessary actions arising from interventions.
- 38 The council showed during the COVID-19 pandemic that as an organisation we can adopted different techniques for driving change. The organisation delivered at pace during this time, due to adopting a more positive risk-taking framework and to deliver the transformation programme we need to redefine the overall risk appetite of the organisation.

### ***Rural Communities***

- 39 Any impact on rural communities will be considered as part of the transformation programme.

### ***Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)***

- 40 In Children's Services significant work reviewing SEND services has been undertaken in conjunction with the Department of Education to

identify what change is required to ensure long-term financial affordability and sustainability of services for the council.

- 41 Also, a broader programme of service transformation under the banner of the Together Strategy – a 4-year programme to excellence is part of the MTFs to ensure we are doing different for less with further integration and practice improvement.
- 42 Adults, Health, and Integration have reviewed social work practice and commissioned care services. Through targeted activities they are supporting more people to stay in their own homes where that is the most cost-effective option, supporting more people to train to work in social care services, and developing business cases to build new accommodation so that people are able to have the right home for each stage of their lives. The department is also adopting new tools to support the development of pricing strategies and negotiating approaches for commissioned services.

**Public Health**

- 43 A key consideration of the transformation programme must be on addressing the large difference in residents’ health across the borough, this will involve the Council working with partners to improve health outcomes.
- 44 Health improvements will only be made by embedding public health considerations across all local authority functions where appropriate.

**Climate Change**

- 45 The transformation programme will focus on all aspects of the council’s plan, this must include the activities that are required to achieve carbon neutrality by 2027.

<b>Access to Information</b>	
Contact Officer:	Chris Allman – Head of Neighbourhood Services Christopher.allman@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	None

OPEN

## Corporate Policy Committee

21 March 2024

### Review of Committee Structure

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**Report of: David Brown – Director of Governance and Compliance**

**Report Reference No: CP/75/23-24**

**Ward(s) Affected: All Wards**

#### **Purpose of Report**

- 1 This report updates the Committee on the progress with delivering the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) saving to reduce the cost of democracy and proposes a number of recommendations for Council to consider as improvements to the future functionality of the Committee System, taking into account the MTFS saving agreed by full Council in February 2023.

#### **Executive Summary**

- 2 At its meeting on [13 December 2023](#), Council resolved that;  
  
‘the functions of the Scrutiny Committee, Audit and Governance Committee and any other committee, sub-committee, panel or working group are reviewed to consider opportunities for streamlining and efficacy of delivery. The outcome of the review is presented to an all-member briefing in February 2024 and presented to Council. The following recommendations be adopted, subject to due process, to be overseen by the Corporate Policy Committee, committees will be either removed, modified or amalgamated and their functions re-distributed to alternative committees in a logical extension of the related functions of those alternative receiving committees.  
  
A1) Cared for Children and Care Leavers Committee: to be amalgamated into the Children and Families Committee.  
A2) Governor Nomination Panel: to be amalgamated into the Children and Families Committee.

A3) General Appeals Sub-Committee: The roles and responsibilities of this Sub-Committee (as identified below), will be disaggregated and allocated to be heard by the relevant service committees as and when required.

A4) General Licensing Sub-Committee and Licensing Act Sub-Committee be amalgamated:

A5) Where appropriate, only the Regulatory or Statutory Officers (as required by good practice) need attend committee meetings. Other officer attendance is to be rationalised and mitigated by their virtual attendance at meetings if needed’.

- 3 As agreed at full Council, an all-member briefing took place in February 2024 and the feedback and officer recommendations are now contained within this report.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Corporate Policy Committee recommend to Council that:

1. The Scrutiny Committee either:
  - 1a. remain in place, or
  - 1b. Its remit be incorporated within the relevant Service Committees.
2. The functions of the School Governor Nomination Panel be delegated to the Executive Director of Children and Families in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Children and Families Committee.
3. The Cared for Children and Care Leavers Committee remain in place.
4. The General Appeals Sub-Committee remain in place.
5. The General Licensing Sub-Committee and Licensing Act Sub-Committee be amalgamated to form one Sub-Committee.
6. Normally, only Directors, Regulatory or Statutory Officers (as required by good practice) should attend committee meetings.
7. Working Groups and Boards be supported by the relevant service area and not Democratic Services.
8. Reports “for noting” should not be placed on agendas, unless there is a statutory requirement to do so, or where they relate to Performance Monitoring, Finance, Risk or LGO complaints. Instead, they will be placed on the Members’ Bulletin, stored on the Councillors Hub and made available to the public on the Council’s Open Data and Transparency Webpage.
9. The Director of Governance and Compliance be empowered to make any necessary changes to the Constitution to reflect the resolution of full Council.

## Background

### **Incorporating the functions of the Scrutiny Committee into those of the Audit and Governance Committee**

- 4 Local authorities that operate under a committee system are not required to have a bespoke scrutiny committee, nor required to allocate all scrutiny functions to a single committee. There is no legal obstacle to the incorporation of scrutiny functions into those of another committee.
- 5 Therefore, each relevant service committee could become responsible for the statutory scrutiny functions of crime and disorder, flood risk management and health.
- 6 The scrutiny of the external functions, currently undertaken by the Council's bespoke Scrutiny Committee<sup>1</sup> could be allocated to the Audit and Governance Committee or the relevant service committees.

### **National Guidance**

- 7 CIPFA guidance on Audit Committees<sup>2</sup> recommends that the audit committee should be “established so that it is independent of executive decision making and able to provide objective oversight” and “...in local authorities be independent of both the executive and the scrutiny functions”. This guidance is supported by DHLUC and the Home Office.
- 8 The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny guidance 2021 “Audit committees and scrutiny committees: working together”. This guidance recommends practical ways of the two committees working together to complement the roles of each committee but ensuring clear distinction in responsibilities and resources. The report recognised the concerns that a single committee risks conflicts of interests, spreading the resource of both councillors and officers too thinly and losing clarity over the distinct statutory functions of each function; “blurring the roles of these functions puts a council at significant risk of weak governance”.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The discharge of the Council's responsibilities under section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006, section 244 of the National Health Service Act 2006, and section 9JA and 9JB of the Local Government Act 2000 in relation to flood risk management

<sup>2</sup> [Audit Committees: practical guidance for local authorities and police](#) (CIPFA, 2022)

<sup>3</sup> [Audit committees and scrutiny committees: working together](#) (CfGS, 2021)

## Considerations

- 9 The issues identified are:
- The skills and knowledge desirable for an effective Audit and Governance Committee are not aligned with those needed by Scrutiny Committee Members; significant further training would be required.
  - In accordance with national guidance, as highlighted above, the committee should be independent of the Scrutiny Committee.
  - Meetings would be lengthy, and the frequency of meetings may need to be increased, particularly if there are also standards/code of conduct matters to be considered.
  - The functions of the Scrutiny Committee would be more easily disaggregated to the relevant service committee agenda and there would be less impact on the workload of those committees.
  - The new committee responsible for both functions would need to consider whether a single function meeting would be required for scrutiny or audit. This may require the new committee schedule to retain or combining the meeting schedules of the previous committees.
  - The role of the two Co-opted Independent Members of the Audit and Governance Committee in a “combined” committee would need to be subject to policy and guidance development.

## Savings

- 10 The financial savings associated with the transfer of the Scrutiny Committee to the Audit and Governance Committee, or Service Committees, would include:
- The special responsibility allowance (Scrutiny Committee Chair) - £7,959
  - Potentially associated meeting expenses: mileage claims, some administrative resource dependent upon how the new committee chooses to administer itself.
- 11 A Scrutiny Officer would still be required to support the delivery of the scrutiny function through preparation of reports etc; this expertise/capacity is not available in the services which support the Audit and Governance Committee.
- 12 The potential cost of additional training may reduce the saving in the initial years.

**Member Feedback:** Previous member feedback from the Audit and Governance Committee - The Audit and Governance Committee request that full Council note our concerns and defer the decision relating to the proposals recommended by the Corporate Policy Committee to merge the functions of the Audit and Governance and Scrutiny Committees, which is contrary to advice from CIPFA and the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny.

**Officer Recommendation:** Incorporating the functions of the Scrutiny Committee into those of the Audit and Governance Committee is not recommended by officers, for the reasons highlighted above. The officer preference would be to merge the functions of the Scrutiny Committee with those of the relevant service committees.

**Recommendation A1) Cared for Children and Care Leavers Committee:  
To be amalgamated into the Children and Families Committee.**

- 16 The Council has a statutory responsibility as a Corporate Parent. This function is currently undertaken by the Cared for Children and Care Leavers Committee. This function could be undertaken by the Children and Families Committee, however, an analysis of the impact on workload of that committee has been undertaken below:
- 17 During this municipal year, the Children and Families Committee will have considered 52 substantive items of business, and the Cared for Children and Care Leavers Committee will have considered 13 substantive items of business.
- 18 On average, Children and Families Committee meetings last approximately 3 hours. Merging the Children and Families Committee and the Cared for Children and Care Leavers Committee would increase the meeting of Children and Families Committee by approximately 1 hour.

**Member Feedback** - Concern was expressed about the potential for Children and Families meetings to become too lengthy if the committees were merged. Members also considered there was a risk of the corporate parenting role being diminished. Members supported keeping the committees separate but suggested that consideration be given to scheduling meetings on the same day as the Children and Families Committee to save time and expenses; this might also benefit working Members, who would only need to take a single day off work.

**Officer Recommendation:** That the Cared for Children and Care Leavers Committee remain in place, retaining the same function.

**Recommendation A2) Governor Nomination Panel: To be amalgamated into the Children and Families Committee.**

- 19 This function lies within the remit of the Children and Families Committee and could either be amalgamated within Children and Families Committee, or it could be a function delegated to Officers.

**Member Feedback** - The proposal that the function be delegated was supported by Members but in the interests of democracy, it was suggested that the Chair and Vice Chair of Children and Families Committee be consulted on nominations.

**Officer Recommendation:** That in order for the Children and Families Committee workload to be kept to a minimum, therefore allowing the Committee to concentrate on those matters of strategic importance and meeting the aims of the Corporate Plan, the functions of the School Governor Nomination Panel be delegated to Officers.

**Recommendation A3) General Appeals Sub-Committee:** The roles and responsibilities of this Sub-Committee will be disaggregated and allocated to be heard by the relevant Service Committees as and when required. When there is a Stage 2 appeal to be heard, the Sub-Committee (five Members drawn from a pool of ten) is legally required to convene a meeting within 40 working days and provide notification of the outcome within five working days.

- 20 Between 1 January 2023 and 31 December 2023, six meetings took place over which a total of 15 appeals were heard, which were all related to Transport Appeals - the average length of a meeting was 2.5 hours.
- 21 The Children and Families Committee would have to convene outside of the scheduled meetings to hear appeals within the 40-day timescale.
- 22 Each agenda for Children and Families Committee has an average of eight substantial items. The average length of these meetings is 3 hours. Incorporating General Appeals Sub-Committee into Children and Families Committee would extend the meeting on average by approximately 2.5 hours.

**Member Feedback** - Due to the operational nature of the General Appeals Sub-Committee, Members considered that it would be difficult to disaggregate its functions and supported the officer recommendation of retention.

**Officer recommendation:** That the General Appeals Sub-Committee remain in place.

**Recommendation A4) General Licensing Sub-Committee and Licensing Act Sub-Committee: These will be amalgamated into a single Committee reflecting the intermittent nature of their requirements.**

- 23 In addition, the new “General Licensing and Licensing Act Sub-Committee” will be scheduled either before or after the Licensing Committee wherever possible.
- 24 This will maximise best use of officer and member time and reduce the chronic difficulties currently experienced in terms of member availability from the recruitment ‘pool’.

**Member Feedback** - Members expressed no opinion upon whether to retain or merge the Sub-Committees but stated that, if they were to be retained as at present, the same suggestion proposed at A1 regarding the sequential scheduling of meetings should be considered.

**Officer Recommendation:** General Licensing Sub-Committee and Licensing Act Sub-Committee be amalgamated and arranged on an ad hoc basis due to objections to applications needing to be heard within 10 days.

### **Further Proposals**

- 25 **Working Groups and Boards** - In total, the Democratic Services Team spend around one day per week in total servicing Working Groups and Boards.

**Member Feedback** - This approach (no support via Democratic Services) was supported by Members with the proviso that:

- i) Notes should be taken by service area officers at informal meetings but that alternative solutions be considered (e.g., transcripts);
- ii) The use of technology be employed (online meetings); and
- iii) Directorates be invited to review/justify the need for these Working Groups and Boards.

**Officer Recommendation:** It is proposed that the Democratic Services Team no longer support Working Groups or Boards, except for the

Shareholder Working Group, Constitution Working Group, Member Input Panel, Crewe Town Board and Enhancement Partnership Board.

- 26 **Reports “for noting”** – All committees regularly receive reports “for noting” where no decision is required. These take a great deal of Officer and Member time.

**Member Feedback** - There was some support amongst Members for the proposed approach, but it was suggested that reports “for noting” should be listed on a separate part of the agenda as, if they were only to be added to a central point such as a Hub, they may be overlooked, and it would also remove the opportunity to ask questions or raise concerns. If using a “Central Hub” was necessary, an alert system needed to be put into place to let Members know that a report was available for viewing.

**Officer Recommendation:** A report “for noting” only should not be placed on a committee agenda, unless there is a statutory requirement to do so, or where they relate to Performance Monitoring, Finance, Risk or LGO complaints. Instead, they will be placed on the Members’ Bulletin and stored in the Councillors Hub, and made available to the public on the Council’s Open Data and Transparency Webpage.

- 27 **Officer attendance at meetings should be limited** – Officers regularly attend the various committees of the Council, providing advice and support to Senior Officers and Members.

**Member feedback** - That the following general principle should apply:

- The essential Officers in attendance to be the Service Director and/or Executive Director, representative from legal, representative from finance, and Democratic Services officer.
- Presenting officers to be called into the meeting for their agenda item if the officer was working at the venue where the meeting was taking place.
- If working elsewhere, the officer to attend the meeting via Microsoft Teams for their item.

**Officer Recommendation:** Where appropriate, in addition to the Legal Adviser and Democratic Services Officer, only Executive Directors, Directors, Regulatory or Statutory Officers (as required by good practice) need attend committee meetings. Other officer attendance is to be rationalised and mitigated by their virtual attendance at meetings if

needed. This will be dependent on technology working on the day, which may create risks for timely decision-making.

### Consultation and Engagement

- 28 The proposal to reduce the costs of democracy was consulted upon in January 2023 as part of the Council’s MTFS budget engagement. The MTFS consultation received a total of 2,267 engagements with 665 survey responses made in relation to the proposal to reduce the costs of democracy. The proposal received strong net support (82%) during the consultation. Consultation responses highlighted that residents were supportive of this proposal as it was felt to have a lesser impact on local communities. If no change was made following a period of consultation, please explain why this is the case.
- 29 An All-Member briefing has been held following the resolution of full Council on 13 December 2023.

### Reasons for Recommendations

- 30 To ensure that the Committee System remains fit for purpose, meeting the requirements of Cheshire East Council, partners, and residents.
- 31 To partially meet the saving identified in the MTFS.
- 32 It is best practice to regularly review the Council’s Constitution.
- 33 To comply with the resolution of Full Council on 13 December 2023.

### Other Options Considered

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing	The required MTFS saving will not be met. The Constitution is a living document, which needs to be kept under review to ensure that it is fit for purpose and that it meets the needs of the Council. Doing nothing is not appropriate, as this would not result in the Council learning from experience and improving.	Negative impact on the MTFS. That the Council will not implement changes to its decision-making structure in response to what it has learned from the experience of the last two years. Failure to meet Corporate Plan Priorities.

## Implications and Comments

### *Monitoring Officer/Legal*

- 34 The specific legal implications of the proposals are set out within the report. In addition, the reduction in the number of committees would have direct positive impact on the budget in relation to Member allowances, Member and Officer time and travel, etc. The removal of two substantive committees would enable a vacant post within the Democratic Services Team to be removed from the structure, which would save approximately £52,500. This position cannot be achieved from recommendations highlighted within this report alone.
- 35 The proposals give effect to the saving highlighted in the MTFS and the associated High Level Business Cases. If Members do not agree the proposals contained in this report, consideration would need to be given to additional changes to the MTFS to ensure that its proposals balance.
- 36 The proposed amendments to the Constitution are part of the continuing development and review of the Committee System, as well as required to meet the MTFS proposals as agreed by Council in February 2024. Although predominately to ensure consistency with a committee style of governance, changes require approval of Full Council such as those specifically relating to the amendments to terms of reference.
- 37 The Constitution contains details of how the Council works, how and by whom decisions are made as well as being the functioning rule book used by all Officers and Members in driving forward the business of the Council. Like any set of rules, it needs to remain current and consistent with the intent of Council and practicable in the delivery of the Council's objectives.
- 38 The core elements of the Constitution are set through various legislative regimes and the current Constitution appears to meet the substantive legal requirements. In the areas in which the Council has a discretion, the Constitution must also remain broadly reasonable and consistent with the objectives of the Council. Failure to keep the Constitution under review and adapt to the changing needs of the organisation will build in levels of risk into the decision-making process. Those risks may manifest themselves as delay, poor quality decisions or ultimately a challenge to the decision itself.

### *Section 151 Officer/Finance*

- 39 It would not be possible to lose the full-time vacancy in the Democratic Services Team, as these proposals equate to approximately 7.5 hours per week in officer time.

- 40 Since Council agreed to the £135,000 budget saving in relation to the cost of Democracy, only one sub-committee has been removed from the committee structure. The proposals within this report, and the merger of Public Rights of Way Sub-Committee within the remit of the Highways and Transport Committee, do not equate to the loss of one post.
- 41 The proposals do not achieve any savings in relation to Special Responsibilities Allowances.

*Policy*

**An open and enabling organisation**

**Ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision making.**

*Equality, Diversity and Inclusion*

- 42 An Equality Impact Assessment was completed for the original decision to change governance. The accessibility and intelligibility of the Constitution has remained at the forefront of the drafting process. Accessibility and transparency are core design principles and additional learning has been incorporated through the changes to and the review of remote meetings.

*Human Resources*

- 43 Further Officer and Member training may be required resulting from any changes to the Constitution and committee structure.

*Risk Management*

The review of the operational effectiveness of the Committee System and supporting Constitution is an essential component of ensuring an open and enabling organisation and ensuring that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision making.

*Rural Communities*

- 44 There are no direct implications in relation rural communities.

*Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)*

- 46 The removal of the Cared for Children and Care Leavers Committee from the structure may impact on the responsibility of members as corporate parents.

*Public Health*

- 47 There are no direct public health implications.

*Climate Change*

- 48 There are no direct implications for climate change, although the Council would continue to pursue its climate change response by promoting paperless options to its approach to decision-making. Fewer committees would contribute to this.

<b>Access to Information</b>	
Contact Officer:	Brian Reed  brian.reed@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	Previous report to Corporate Policy Committee and Full Council and hyperlinked throughout this report.

OPEN

## **Corporate Policy Committee**

**21 March 2024**

### **PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION**

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**Report of: David Brown, Director of Governance and Compliance**

**Report Reference No: CP/77/23-24**

**Ward(s) Affected: all wards**

#### **Purpose of Report**

- 1 The purpose of the report is to recommend the proposed changes to the Constitution, as agreed and recommended by the Council's Constitution Working Group, and to note other amendments made by the Monitoring Officer.
- 2 The proposed changes relate to various matters relating to notices of motions, committee terms of reference and delegations to the Executive Director Place.

#### **Executive Summary**

- 3 The Constitution sets out the governance framework for decision-making within the Council. This provides for the consideration and recommendation for approval, of any proposed changes to Full Council.
- 4 The Council's CWG has received a series of reports detailing proposed changes to the Council's Constitution and the reasoning for such changes. These related to various matters that are in line with the Council's corporate priorities.
- 5 After careful consideration of each proposal, the CWG agreed with the proposals and that they should be recommended to the Corporate Policy Committee for consideration and in turn recommended to Full Council. These proposals relate to the following matters;
  - (a) Amendments to the provisions regarding notices of motion
  - (b) Amendments to the provisions regarding rescission of earlier resolution

- (c) Amendments to provisions regarding committee terms of reference for matters that cover more than one committee
- (d) Amendments by way of clarification as to the application of the 3 day Rule for Motions

6 In addition, the report advises the committee of proposed amendments to the Constitution to be made by the Monitoring Officer in respect of the delegations to the Executive Director Place, following the governments decision regarding the HS2 rail link.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Corporate Policy Committee is recommended to:

1. Approve the amendments to the provisions regarding notices of motion in Chapter 3 Part 1 Section 1 of the Council's Constitution as set out in paragraph 9 of the report.
2. Approve the amendments to the provisions regarding rescission of earlier resolution in Chapter 3 Part 1 Section 1 of the Council's Constitution as set out in paragraph 9 of the report.
3. Approve the amendments to committee terms of reference for matters that cover more than one committee in Chapter 2 Part 2 of the Council's Constitution as set out in paragraph 10 of the report.
4. Approve the amendments to the Rules of Debate for Motions and Amendments in Chapter 3 Part 1 Section 1 of the Council's Constitution as set out in paragraph 11 of the report.
5. Approve the amendments to the application of the 3 day rule for notices of motion of in Chapter 3 Part 1 Section 2 the Council's Constitution as set out in paragraph 12 of the report.
6. Note the proposed amendments to be made by the Monitoring Officer to the delegations to the Executive Director Place in Chapter 2 Part 5 of the Council's Constitution as set out in paragraph 13 of the report.

### **Background**

6 The Constitution sets out the governance framework for decision-making within the council.

7 On 5 February 2024 the Council's Constitution Working Group (CWG) received a series of reports detailing proposed changes to the Council's Constitution.

8 After careful consideration of each proposal, CWG agreed with the proposals and that they should be recommended for approval by the Corporate Policy Committee.

9 Chapter 3 Part 1 Section 1

The proposed amendments are set out in red below:

***Notices of Motion***

1.34 A Motion which, in the opinion of the Monitoring Officer;

- is inappropriate, frivolous, derogatory, offensive, vexatious or otherwise improper;
- is related to a Council employment or staffing matter;
- is potentially defamatory; or
- **Subject to the provisions of Paragraph 1.58**, is substantially the same as any motion submitted to a meeting of Council during the preceding 6 months will be returned to the Councillor who submitted it along with an explanation in writing to the Councillor about why it will not be included on the agenda for the meeting.

***Rescission of Earlier Resolution***

1.57 Subject to paragraph ~~1.60~~**1.58**, no motion or amendment shall be moved at a meeting of the Council to rescind any resolution of the Council which was passed within the preceding 6 months, or which is to the same effect as one which has been rejected within that period.

1.58 Such a motion may be moved if:

1.58.1 it is recommended by a Committee, or

1.58.2 notice of such motion has been given under paragraph ~~1.33~~**1.31** and signed by at least 8 Councillors.

**Reasons for Recommendations**

- a. The Constitution makes provisions for how Notices of Motion should be dealt with by Full Council. The currently worded provisions of Chapter 3 Part 1 Section 1 paragraph 1.34, give the Monitoring Officer power to return and therefore refuse motions and includes a motion if it covers matters which have been decided within the last six months. Rule 1.58 states that a decision of Council can be considered.
- b. within six months if (a) a committee recommends this reconsideration or (b) a motion is submitted under rule 1.32 to Council that is signed by 8 councillors. This results in a conflict. The proposed amendments therefore provide further clarity as to the power of the Monitoring Officer, by making that power subject to the provisions of 1.58.

- c. In addition, due to a typographical error, changes are required to the numbering of Chapter 3 Part 1 Section 1 paragraphs 1.57 and 1.58, so as to provide for the correctly numbered paragraphs as referenced.

## 10 Chapter 2 Part 2

### **Introduction to Decision Making**

The current wording of Chapter 2 Part 2 paragraph 3 states;

*Where a matter covers numerous Committee Terms of Reference or there is any dispute or disagreement between Committees on:*

- *Whether something falls within a Committee's Terms of Reference; or*
- *A proposed course of action;*

*the matter shall be referred to the Corporate Policy Committee (or full Council if more convenient) to resolve and decide upon a way forward.*

The proposed new wording is;

*Where a matter covers more than one Committee's Terms of Reference or there is any lack of clarity, dispute or disagreement as to which is the appropriate committee on:*

- *Whether something falls within a Committee's Terms of Reference; or*
- *A proposed course of action;*

*The matter shall, in consultation with the relevant Committee Chair, vice chair and main opposition group member, be placed on the agenda of the Committee where the majority of the matter, report or recommendations/s fall within a particular Committee's terms of reference or where there is the greatest impact on the budget for which the Committee has responsibility ('the majority committee'). Prior to the matter being placed on the agenda, the report on the matter will be circulated to the non-majority committee members ('the minority committee') for comments, which will be provided by way of a verbal update to the majority committee, when the matter is presented. The Chair or any other member of the minority committee may attend that meeting to speak on the item and the Chair of the majority committee will exercise their discretion in favour of allowing them to do so, subject to time constraints and the effective conduct of the meeting. In the event of a failure to agree to the matter being placed upon the agenda of the majority committee, the matter will be placed upon the agenda of the Corporate Policy Committee (or full Council if more convenient) to resolve. This provision shall also apply to matters referred from external bodies and/or partners.*

### **Reasons for Recommendations**

- a. The Council's Constitution makes provision for matters that cover the terms of reference of various committees, or if there is a dispute or disagreement between

committees, to be referred to Corporate Policy Committee (CPC) or Full Council 'if more convenient'. This would appear to also cover where a matter is presented by external bodies and/or partners.

- b. This provision has proved problematic and caused confusion and in addition, places a burden on CPC, which is already a very busy committee and may lead to matters going to Full Council unnecessarily. The proposal is to amend the provisions within the Constitution to provide further clarity as to when and where such matters should be referred and provide that referral to CPC or Full Council should be as a last resort.

11 Chapter 3 Part 1 Section 1

The proposed amendments are set out in red below;

**Rules of Debate**

**~~Motions and Amendments~~**

No ~~motion or~~ amendment shall be discussed unless it has been proposed and seconded. Except where the Mayor determines that a proposed amendment is exceptional (for example, where the proposer of the amendment could not reasonably have foreseen that they would wish to propose the amendment until after the deadline set for submission), ~~motions or~~ amendments shall be put in writing and submitted to the Monitoring Officer not less than three clear working days before the Council meeting. The Monitoring Officer will be responsible for validating the amendment as lawful, in which case the amendment may be proposed and seconded as part of the debate upon the agenda item in question. The Monitoring Officer may only disallow an amendment on the grounds that it is unlawful. Where the Mayor determines that a proposed amendment is exceptional, it may be proposed at the Council meeting and, if seconded, will be debated and voted upon at the Council meeting. The Mayor may require the amendment to be submitted in writing to him or her during the meeting unless the Mayor has concluded that the wording of the amendment is understood by all members of the meeting.

**Reasons for Recommendations**

12 Chapter 3 Part 1 Section 2

The proposed amendments to rule 2.30 are set out in red below;

**Rules of Debate at Committees and Sub-Committees**

Rules of debate shall be the same as for Council meetings *except that the requirement for amendments to be submitted to the Monitoring Officer not less than three clear days before the meeting shall not apply to meetings of committees and sub-committees.*

## Reasons for Recommendations

- a. As part of the Annual Review of the Committee System, consideration was given to the wording and operation of parts of the Constitution. One part in was that relating to motions and amendments as set out in the Rules of Procedure in Chapter 3 Part 1 Section 1 and specifically rule 1.41, which deals with Motions and Amendments. Amendments were approved by Full Council on 19 July 2023, which in particular included a requirement for three clear days notice.
- b. However, it has now been noted that Rules of Procedure in Chapter 3 Part 1 Section 2 rule 2.30 states that the rules of debate shall be the same as for Council meetings. This means that the 3 days requirement applies to committees and sub-committees. As this was not intended, the proposed amendments mean that the 3 days requirement only applies to amendments of matters to be dealt with by Full Council.
- c. In addition, rule 1.41 refers to 'Motions and Amendments' and the timescale now conflicts with that in 1.31, which provides for 7 clear days notice. It is therefore proposed, to avoid confusion, that that the reference in paragraph 1.41 to 'motions' and 'motion' is removed.

## 13 Chapter 2 Part 5

The Monitoring Officer has powers under Chapter 1 paragraph 40, to make minor adjustments to the Constitution. The proposed amendments he proposes to make to paragraph 53 are set out in red below;

### Delegations to Executive Director Place

#### Infrastructure and Highways

- Strategic Transport Planning and Local Transport Pla Infrastructure and Highways
- Strategic Transport Planning and Local Transport Plan
- Public Transport including local bus and rail services
- Walking, Cycling and Active Trave Parking Services - Operations and Enforcement
- Traffic Management • Highways Management and Maintenance
- Highways Service Contract Management
- Highways and Transport Capital Programme
- Flood Risk Management
- ~~HS2 Crewe Hub Railway Station~~ Redevelopment
- ~~HS2 Line-of-Route~~
- ~~HS2 Schedule-4 approvals and consents~~
  - Northern Powerhouse Rail
  - Network North

**Reasons for Recommendations**

- a. At the meeting of Full Council on 13 December 2023, a report was considered regarding the cancellation of HS2 and the implications for Cheshire East.

The decision of Council was;

**RESOLVED:** *That Council*

*1 note the implications of the HS2 cancellation and introduction of Network North for Cheshire East.*

*2 continue to support the principles of HS2 as a catalyst for growth across the North.*

*3 authorise the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the HS2 Member Reference Group, to negotiate with central government for an appropriate compensation and alternative investment package for Cheshire East to deliver transport improvements and unlock regeneration across the Borough.*

*4 approve the amendments to the remit of the HS2 Member Reference Group proposed in the report.*

The decision to add these to the list of delegations ensures that they become constitutional officer delegations enabling the officer to act quickly to make decision in the best interests of the Council.

**Consultation and Engagement**

- 14 All proposed changes have been considered and approved for recommendation to committee by the Constitution Working Group or noted in relation to those made by the Monitoring Officer.

**Reasons for Recommendations**

- 15 As set out above.

**Other Options Considered**

- 16 Another option would be to leave the constitution unchanged and not achieve the outcomes identified within the reasons for the recommendations.

Option	Impact	Risk
1. Do nothing	This is not considered to be a suitable alternative option as there needs to be clarity within the constitution to enable the effective and	Failure to achieve the outcomes identified and impacts stated.

<p>2. Adopt only some of the proposed amendments.</p>	<p>efficient operation of the organisation and its committees. The Constitution is a living document, which needs to be kept under review to ensure that it is fit for purpose and that it meets the needs of the Council. As for option 1.</p>	<p>As for options 1.</p>
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**Implications and Comments**

*Monitoring Officer/Legal*

17 The legal implications are as set out in the report.

*Section 151 Officer/Finance*

18 There are no financial implications arising directly from the report.

*Policy*

19 The recommended changes to the Constitution will, if agreed, result in constitutional change. They will facilitate an open and enabling organisation and ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision making.

<p><b>An open and enabling organisation</b></p> <p>Ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision making</p> <p>The council to be seen as being a fair open and transparent organisation and able to demonstrate it</p> <p>To increase local democracy</p>
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*Equality, Diversity and Inclusion*

*Human Resources*

20 There are no direct implications arising from this report.

*Risk Management*

21 There are no risks arising from the report.

*Rural Communities*

22 There are no implications arising from the report.

*Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)*

23 There are no implications arising from the report.

*Public Health*

24 There are no implications arising from the report.

*Climate Change*

25 There are no implications arising from the report.

<b>Access to Information</b>	
Contact Officer:	Janet Witkowski - Head of Legal Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer  Janet.Witkowski@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	N/a
Background Papers:	N/a

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## Corporate Policy Committee

21 March 2024

### Appointments to Outside Organisation

#### Report of: Director of Governance and Compliance (Monitoring Officer)

Report Reference No: CP/78/23-24

Ward(s) Affected: All Wards

#### Purpose of Report

- 1 The report invites the Corporate Policy Committee to make appointments to the outside organisations from which Councillor Craig Browne is standing down.

#### Executive Summary

- 2 The Corporate Policy Committee, at its meeting on 15 June 2023, approved a revised procedure for dealing with vacancies on outside organisations. This required a report to be submitted to the Corporate Policy Committee to approve the appointment of a replacement councillor to the outside organisation, upon a vacancy arising.
- 3 The report seeks approval to make an appointment to Alderley Park Holdings Ltd, the Transport for the North Partnership Board, the Transport for the North Rail Committee, and the County Councils Network.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee approve that:

- 1 Councillor Michael Gorman be appointed as the Council's representative on Alderley Park Holdings Ltd.

- 2 Councillor Mark Goldsmith be appointed as the Council's representative on Transport for the North Partnership Board.
- 3 Councillor Mark Goldsmith be nominated for the sub-regional representative on Transport for the North Rail Committee.
- 4 Councillor Mick Warren be appointed as a Council's representative on the County Councils Network.

## **Background**

- 4 Following the decision of Councillor Craig Browne to take stand down as Deputy Leader of the Council, and Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee and associated outside organisation appointments, there is a requirement for the Corporate Policy Committee to approve the replacement appointments to the outside organisations.
- 5 The Committee is invited to make alternative appointments to Alderley Park Holdings Ltd, Transport for the North Partnership Board, Transport for the North Rail Committee, and the County Councils Network.
- 6 The criteria for appointments to the Transport for the North Board for non-mayoral constituent authorities is that the Lead Member must be either the Leader, Chair, or elected Member responsible for Transport.
- 7 The membership to the Rail North Committee accords with regional groupings. Rail North Committee Members and substitutes must also be a Lead Member or substitute Member for the Transport for the North Board. Cheshire East Council is in the Potteries grouping with Cheshire West and Chester Council, Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Warrington Borough Council. Any nomination for the position on the Rail Committee will need the agreement of the other local authorities.

## **Consultation and Engagement**

- 8 There is no requirement for public consultation on this report. The Political Groups have been contacted for nominations.

## **Reasons for Recommendations**

- 9 It is important for the Council to appoint members to outside organisations to ensure that it continues to represent the interests of both the Authority and the wider community.

## Other Options Considered

- 10 An alternative option would be not to make an appointment.
- 11 Not appointing to outside organisations would not be of benefit to the Council, as making appointments ensures that the interests of the Council and wider community are represented.

## Implications and Comments

### *Monitoring Officer/Legal*

- 12 Whilst membership of outside organisations carries with it the potential for personal liability for elected Members undertaking such roles as ancillary to their status as a Councillor, particularly in respect of trusteeships, Cheshire East Borough Council's Cabinet resolved on 9 February 2016 to put in place for elected Members the maximum indemnity which is allowed by law (Minute 105 refers).
- 13 Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 empowers local authorities to do anything which is calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the discharge of any of their functions, and Section 2 of the Local Government Act 1972 empowers them to do anything they consider likely to achieve the object of promotion of the economic, social, or environmental well-being of their area. In addition, there is now the general power of competence under the Localism Act 2011. These are the main provisions which the Council would rely on to appoint members to outside organisations or to select those bodies to which they are appointed.

### *Section 151 Officer/Finance*

- 14 The Members Allowance Scheme states that attendance at meetings of outside organisations on which Cheshire East Council is invited to be represented is an approved duty for the claiming of travel expenses and allowances.

### *Policy*

- 15 There are no direct policy implications.

<p><b>An open and enabling organisation</b></p> <p>Ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision making</p>	<p><b>A council which empowers and cares about people</b></p> <p>Work together with residents and partners to support people and communities to be strong and resilient.</p>
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*Equality, Diversity and Inclusion*

16 There are no direct implications.

*Human Resources*

17 There are no direct human resources implications.

*Risk Management*

18 The failure to appoint members to outside organisations could have a direct or indirect impact on the organisations, which can be mitigated by the operations of a procedure for making timely appointments to ensure Council representation.

*Rural Communities*

19 There are no direct implications for rural communities.

*Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)*

20 There are no direct implications in respect of children and young people and cared for children.

*Public Health*

21 There are no direct implications for public health.

*Climate Change*

22 There are no direct implications relating to climate change.

<b>Access to Information</b>	
Contact Officer:	Brian Reed Head of Democratic Services and Governance <a href="mailto:brian.reed@cheshireeast.gov.uk">brian.reed@cheshireeast.gov.uk</a>
Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	<a href="#">Corporate Policy Committee 15 June 2023 - Review of Outside Organisations</a>  <a href="#">Corporate Policy Committee 11 July 2023 - Appointments to Outside Organisations</a>



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## **Corporate Policy Committee**

**21<sup>st</sup> March 2024**

### **Council Nominations to the Board of Peaks and Plains Housing Trust**

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#### **Report of: Peter Skates – Acting Executive Director – Place and Director of Growth and Enterprise**

**Report Reference No: CP/74/23-24**

**Ward(s) Affected: All**

#### **Purpose of Report**

- 1 On 17<sup>th</sup> July 2006, the former Macclesfield Borough Council transferred their housing stock to Peaks and Plains Housing Trust (formally Cheshire Peaks and Plains Housing Trust Ltd). This was executed by both parties entering into a Stock Transfer Agreement.
- 2 The Stock Transfer Agreement outlines the basis on which both organisations will work together and included the opportunity for the former Macclesfield Borough Council to nominate members to sit on the Housing Trust's Board along with a corollary right to remove them. The Stock Transfer Agreement was transferred to Cheshire East Borough Council following Local Government reorganisation in 2009.
- 3 In 2015 Cheshire East Council's former Cabinet approved the reduction of nominees for all Stock Transfer organisations to one nomination.
- 4 This report presents a request from Peaks and Plains Housing Trust to remove the Council's opportunity to nominate a member to sit on the Peaks and Plains Housing Trust Board. It outlines the rationale for the request and seeks approval to enter into a Deed of Variation to allow this to happen.
- 5 This is in line with the Corporate Plan objective to be an open and enabling organisation.

## Executive Summary

- 6 Peaks and Plains Housing Trust have formally requested that Cheshire East Borough Council remove the requirement in the Stock Transfer Agreement to provide the Council with the opportunity to nominate representatives to the Board of the Trust.
- 7 In 2015, Cheshire East Council's former Cabinet agreed to reduce the requirement to one nomination for all Stock Transfer Organisations. Peaks and Plains Housing Trust have now formally requested that this opportunity be removed completely via a Deed of Variation to the Stock Transfer Agreement.
- 8 The rationale for the request is that Registered Housing Providers are regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing and there is strict guidance in relation to the governance of organisations, including representation on Boards. Board members are required to have the right skills and knowledge to be accepted onto the Board and they are not able to act on behalf of the Council or any other third party.
- 9 Whilst Cheshire East Council can currently nominate one member to become a Board member, there is not a reserved space for a nominee and the Trust are not under an obligation to appoint the nominee. If, however, a nominee were accepted onto the Board, they would have to act in the best interests of Peaks and Plains Housing Trust and exercise independent judgement.
- 10 The removal of nomination rights does not preclude members from applying independently to become a Board member, should they feel they have the right requirements and skills to become a Board member. They can apply independently when a seat on the Board becomes available.
- 11 The removal of the opportunity to nominate to the Board of Peaks and Plains does not impact the other requirements set out within the Stock Transfer Agreement.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corporate Policy Committee is recommended to:

1. Approve the removal from the Stock Transfer Agreement dated 17<sup>th</sup> July 2006 of the clause giving Cheshire East Borough Council the opportunity to nominate a member to sit on the Board of Peaks and Plains Housing Trust, to be done via a Deed of Variation.

2. Delegate authority to the Executive Director Place, in consultation with the Chair of the Corporate Policy Committee, to deal with other such requests from other Stock Transfer Organisations.

## Background

12 Clause 13 to Schedule 14 of the Stock Transfer Agreement provides:

13. **NOMINATE BOARD MEMBERS**
- 13.1 To provide the Council the opportunity to nominate its representatives to the Board of the Trust (currently five representatives) in accordance with the Trust's Memorandum and Articles of Association and Board Membership Policy.
- 13.2 To allow the Council to remove its representatives in accordance with the Trust's Memorandum and Articles of Association.
- 13.3 The Trust shall as soon as reasonably practicable and in any event within one month notify the Council in writing of any vacancies which arise among the Council's nominated representatives.

13 In July 2015, Cheshire East's former Cabinet approved the reduction of nominations to Stock Transfer Organisations (Peaks and Plains Housing Trust, The Guinness Partnership (formally Wulvern and Plus Dane)), retaining the right to make one nomination per organisation. This resulted in a reduction from five nominations to one nomination for Peaks and Plains Housing Trust.

14 Peaks and Plains have formally requested that the ability to make a nomination to their Board be removed completely via a Deed of Variation to the Stock Transfer Agreement. The variation will remove paragraph 13 of the Fourth Schedule of the Stock Transfer Agreement and replace it with the words "not used". This does not have any impact on any other requirements within the agreement.

15 All Registered Housing Providers are regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing and they are bound by regulatory requirements, including the Governance and Financial Viability Standard. This stipulates that *"Registered Housing Providers shall adopt and comply with an appropriate code of governance. Governance arrangements should establish and maintain clear roles and responsibilities and accountabilities for the board, chair and chief executive and ensure appropriate probity arrangements are in place. Areas of non-compliance with their chose code of governance should be explained. Registered Providers should assess the effectiveness of their governance arrangements at least once a year. Registered Providers shall ensure*

*that they manage their affairs with an appropriate degree of skill, independence, diligence, effectiveness, prudence and foresight.”*

- 16 Peaks and Plains Housing Trust has elected to adopt the National Housing Federation’s Code of Governance, which includes the following requirement: *“3.4 Board election, selection and appointment: the board has a diverse membership with the collective skills and attributes needed to govern effectively...[]... Prospective board and committee members undergo an open and merit-based assessment process to establish their suitability. Where the organisation’s constitution provides for one or more board members to be nominated by an external body, or directly elected, the organisation ensures that those coming forward have the necessary attributes and qualities, and that they are aware of the responsibilities of the role, including those of exercising independent judgement.”*
- 17 Whilst Cheshire East Council can nominate one member to Peaks and Plains, there is no obligation for Peaks and Plains to accept the nomination. The individual would have to demonstrate that they have the skills and knowledge required to become a Board member. If the nominee is accepted and appointed to the Board, they will have duties under company law and under the National Housing Federation Code of Governance. They will have to act in the best interests of Peaks and Plains and not those of the Council. They would not be representing the Council or making decisions on behalf of the Council.
- 18 Stock Transfer organisations have matured since their inception and have developed into independent organisations, some taking the decision to merge with other Registered Housing Providers. They are regulated, and therefore it could now be argued that they no longer need the Council’s involvement in their governance arrangements. The Housing and Planning Act 2016 (in section 93) led to regulations being issued [The Regulation of Social Housing (Influence of Local Authorities) (England) Regulations 2017] to limit the control Local Authorities have over Stock Transfer Housing Associations such as Peaks and Plains and it has the ability by regulations to make provision for the purpose of limiting or removing the ability of local Authorities to exert influence over private registered providers.
- 19 Cheshire East has three Stock Transfer agreements in place with the Stock Transfer organisations, each of which is different, and any amendments would have to be considered independently of one another to ensure that there were no implications. Therefore, the request by Peaks and Plains has been considered in relation to their Stock Transfer Agreement and further requests by other Stock Transfer Organisations of a similar nature would have to be considered on an individual basis. Delegated authority has therefore been requested to enable the requirement to remove the right to nominate on an individual basis.

## Consultation and Engagement

- 20 Wider consultation is not required in relation to this request as it relates solely to the Stock Transfer Agreement in place between Peaks and Plains Housing Trust and Cheshire East Borough Council.

## Reasons for Recommendations

- 21 Peaks and Plains Housing Trust was established in 2006 and is now a mature, independent organisation, which is regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing and under this regulation they must demonstrate strong governance arrangements, including appointments to their Board.
- 22 On 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2017 PPHT converted from a company limited by guarantee to a community benefit society in accordance with Section 115 of the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014. They have adopted a revised constitution and Board Structure, which follows both the National Housing Federation's Model Rules. The Trust has also adopted the National Housing Federation's Code of Governance, which sets out certain expectations in terms of good governance. There are no reserved places on the Board for any constituent group.
- 23 Under the Stock Transfer agreement, the Council (formally Macclesfield Borough Council) had the opportunity to nominate on to their Board. However, as there is no longer a requirement for Peaks and Plains to accept a nomination, and individuals have to act in the interest of the company and not the Council, it is felt that this requirement should be removed from the Stock Transfer Agreement.

## Other Options Considered

- 24 The alternative options which are available to Committee are outlined below:

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing – Retain the requirement within the Stock Transfer Agreement and do not take up the opportunity to nominate.	There is no impact on the Council, but Peaks and Plains will have to advise the Regulator that this action has not been undertaken.	Criticism from the Regulator, which could potentially impact on the Trust's Governance score.
Retain the right to nominate and take up the opportunity.	There is no requirement for Peaks and Plains to accept any nomination.	This could potentially damage the relationship with Peaks

	The individual will have to demonstrate they have the required skills and knowledge and will act in the interest of the Trust.	and Plains Housing Trust, if the nomination was not accepted.
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## Implications and Comments

### *Monitoring Officer/Legal*

- 25 Cheshire East's constitution states that the Corporate Policy Committee (Chapter 2, Part 4) is responsible for appointing representatives to serve on outside bodies and organisations and for reviewing the process for considering appointments to outside organisations. It is therefore appropriate for the Committee to consider the proposed recommendations.

To amend the current Stock Transfer Agreement, there would be a requirement to enter into a Deed of Variation. The Deed of Variation has been drafted by solicitors appointed by Peaks and Plains and therefore if the Committee is in agreement, Clause 13 of Schedule 14 of the Stock Transfer Agreement dated the 17<sup>th</sup> of July 2006 will no longer have effect once the Deed is executed.

- 26 There are no further implications in relation to the Stock Transfer Agreement; the contract remains enforceable between the parties.

### *Section 151 Officer/Finance*

- 27 There are no financial implications and there is no impact on the MTFs as the cost of entering into the Deed of Variation by Legal Services would have to be covered by Peaks and Plains Housing Trust.

### *Policy*

- 28 There are no policy implications of this report.
- 29 The recommendations link to the following Corporate Plan objectives

<b>An open and enabling organisation.</b>	<b>A council which empowers and cares about people</b>	<b>A thriving and sustainable place</b>
Ensure that there is transparency in all	Work together with residents and partners to support people and	N/A

aspects of council decision making.	communities to be strong and resilient.	
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*Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion*

30 There are no equality, diversity and inclusion implications to this report.

*Human Resources*

31 There are no human resources implications of this report and its recommendations/decisions.

*Risk Management*

32 The only risk to the recommendation is that it sets a precedent for other Stock Transfer Organisations. However, each Stock Transfer Agreement is different and would have to be considered individually.

*Rural Communities*

33 There are no implications for rural communities of this report and its recommendations/decisions.

*Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)*

34 There are no implications for children and young people, and cared for children, of this report and its recommendations/decisions.

*Public Health*

35 There are no public health implications of this report and its recommendations/decisions.

*Climate Change*

36 The recommendation will not contribute towards assisting the Council to reduce its carbon footprint and achieve environmental sustainability by reducing energy consumption and promoting healthy lifestyles. However, the Council works closely with its Registered Housing Provider to improve the energy efficiency of their housing stock.

<b>Access to Information</b>	
Contact Officer:	Karen Carsberg – Head of Housing Karen.carsberg@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	N/A
Background Papers:	The request from Peaks and Plains and Deed of Variation (exempt).

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## **Corporate Policy Committee**

**21 March 2024**

### **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – Annual Review**

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#### **Report of: Deborah Woodcock - Executive Director Children's Services**

**Report Reference No: CP/31/23-24**

**Ward(s) Affected: All**

#### **Purpose of Report**

- 1 The purpose of this report is to update members on progress against delivery of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021-2025.
- 2 The work to deliver the strategy this period has continued to build upon progress already made in relation to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) within the Council, and furthered the plans to continue to promote and advance EDI, throughout Cheshire East.
- 3 The EDI strategy is a key strategy for the Council as its ambitions pervade all that we do in relation to residents and staff. The strategy supports our corporate plan vision of an Open, Fair and Green Cheshire East. It particularly promotes our “fair” vision of reducing inequalities, promoting fairness and opportunity for all and support for our most vulnerable residents.

#### **Executive Summary**

- 4 Progress has been made to implement the EDI strategy during 2022/23 and the accompanying action plan contains 29 actions, 13 of these have been achieved (45%), 13 (45%) of these have been partially achieved and only 3 (10%) have not yet been progressed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Corporate Policy Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the progress in delivering the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and highlight any areas of risk, challenge and good practice.
2. Receive an updated Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy following the update to the Cheshire East Plan.

## Background

- 5 The EDI strategy was approved in April 2021 by the former Cabinet. It sets out refreshed ambitions and objectives as part of the duty to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and to improve public services for everyone. The strategy sets the vision to ensure that Cheshire East is an area of equal opportunity where everyone has a fair chance, and people from all backgrounds take part in community life.
- 6 The EDI strategy sets out five key objectives, which are:
- 7 **Include** – listen and involve all voices
- 8 **Inspire** – celebrate and promote diversity and the positive opportunities it brings
- 9 **Integrate** – deliver and promote accessible services for all
- 10 **Inform** – empower people to respectfully challenge discriminatory and poor behaviour
- 11 **Impact** – support and deliver meaningful change
- 12 To support the delivery of the plan, a workplan was developed to document the key actions proposed to deliver the ambitions of the plan. The plan has been delivered and led collectively from officers across the Council. Progress against the plan has been presented to and considered by the EDI Board, chaired by Deborah Woodcock (Executive Director Children's Services). Membership of the board includes the Member Champion for EDI Cllr Stuart Gardiner.
- 13 The Board has oversight of all EDI activity at the Council. Every Directorate within the Council has an EDI Board, which reports into the Council EDI Board. The Directorate Boards consider EDI activities,

challenges and awareness days in relation to the specific service areas within each Directorate.

- 14 The Council has 5 active staff network groups, these are: VibranCE, the Early Careers Staff Network Group, the Differently Abled Network, the Women's Network and the Armed Forces network. The organisation is also supported by EDI Champions.
- 15 The Champions are staff who are committed to creating a culture of tolerance, kindness and inclusivity at Cheshire East Council. Champions commit to undertaking a series of EDI related training courses and meet as a group to raise any issues coming from the workforce, and to feedback on any suggested improvements, which can then be discussed at the EDI Board.
- 16 A "stock take" review of the EDI strategy was undertaken in December 2023 which has provided an opportunity to assess progress made to date in delivering the identified actions to implement the ambitions of the strategy. This is captured in detail in **Appendix 1**.
- 17 The review of progress allows the Council to ensure that the actions are progressing to plan and are meeting the agreed aims and objectives of the EDI strategy. The review also offers an opportunity to identify areas of good progress, and areas which may benefit from accelerated focus.
- 18 In summary, 45% of actions have been achieved, 45% have been partially achieved and 10% have not yet been progressed.
- 19 Highlights in the progression of the strategy are as follows:
- 20 **Include**
- 21 Young employers' and veterans' networks are now established.
- 22 External equality contacts have been collated and are now included within the equality impact assessment toolkit.
- 23 Following the creation of a cross council group, a consultation and engagement toolkit has been drafted and now informs consultation and engagement development. This has been made available on the Centranet. An equality impact assessment toolkit has also been made available to support improved equalities assessment of change.
- 24 The Customer Experience strategy is being redesigned and will include EDI objectives.
- 25 Regular meetings with CHALC are being held to ensure that material is widely distributed.

26 **Inspire**

27 The Communities team now have a bespoke team that work with minority groups. The Cohesion team primarily support migrant populations and veterans but this work is being expanded.

28 Cheshire East Council will participate in the Cheshire Equality Leads Forum to work effectively with partners.

29 Ward profiles have been made available and shared to provide current data on communities across the borough.

30 The Differently Abled Group are reviewing guidance for workplace adjustments.

31 The Hidden disability staff network group meet regularly and has a good level of membership.

32 The group are now seeking accreditation to the Disability Confident Employer scheme.

33 **Integrate**

34 The EIA template and guidance has been updated and is now accompanied by an Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit.

35 A learning lounge training module has been developed and will now provide further guidance around how to complete an assessment.

36 Equality is a clause within all council contracts and standard terms and conditions available of CE website.

37 Annual social value survey – questions asked about suppliers apprising their supply chain.

38 New contract management system includes policies to be held centrally against the supplier and performance indicators added.

39 **Inform**

40 We have supported 700 Ukrainians during 2022/23 and have supported over 400 Afghans over the last two years.

41 We have a network of Connected Community place for local people to connect and gather information. We have plans in 2023/24 for these

venues to become more culturally competent in terms of reaching out to various cohorts.

**42 Impact**

43 A new EDI board chair is now in place and the board has been refreshed. This refresh takes into account the establishment of a new boards in each directorate within the Council, with the new members being nominated from each directorate board.

44 EDI boards have been established in each directorate and they meet on a regular basis.

45 Issues and communication feed into and out of the directorate boards into the Council EDI board.

46 The EDI Board receives regular updates from directorates and EDI Board members attend directorate meetings.

**Consultation and Engagement**

47 Consultation was undertaken to inform the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy in 2020/21. The outcome of the consultation can be found via the following link: [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Consultation results](#)

**Reasons for Recommendations**

48 The EDI strategy outlined our ambitions to reduce inequalities and promote fairness for all and supports achievement of our Corporate Plan. Oversight of progress of implementation of the objectives of the strategy is part of the Council's commitment to openness and transparency.

**Other Options Considered**

49 Not applicable.

**Implications and Comments**

*Monitoring Officer/Legal*

50 The strategy, and its associated workplan, have been developed in the context of our obligations under the Equality Act (2010) and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

- 51 The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) requires the council to:
- 52 Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- 53 Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 54 Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

*Section 151 Officer/Finance*

- 55 There are no direct financial implications of this report. Areas identified for acceleration will be subject to a Business Case being submitted, in order to provide any necessary funding.

*Policy*

- 56 The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy is a key policy document for the Council and supports the Corporate Plan. Alongside our Open, Fair and Green commitment, the Council recognises that promoting equality, diversity and inclusion will improve public services for everyone.
- 57 Equality for all residents, stakeholders and employees aligns with our Open, Fair and Green objectives and is an assumed theme within the Vision and aims of the Corporate Plan.

<b>An open and enabling organisation</b>	<b>A council which empowers and cares about people</b>	<b>A thriving and sustainable place</b>
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*Equality, Diversity and Inclusion*

- 58 The EDI strategy sets the vision and objectives for the council's approach to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- 59 The strategy aims to increase inclusion and promote equality of opportunity and tackle inequality for all residents. Equalities analysis for the borough was carried out in the development of this strategy.
- 60 As individual policy changes take place as a result of this strategy they will be subject to separate Equality Impact Assessments.
- 61 The Objective Delivery Plan will be subject to ongoing equality analysis.

*Human Resources*

62 There are no direct human resources implications of this report.

*Risk Management*

63 There are no key risks identified in relation to the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion strategy. There have been some low-level risks identified in relation to the pace of progress. However, risks continue to be managed by the EDI Board and mitigating actions developed to manage any emerging risks.

*Rural Communities*

64 The “integrate” objective of the EDI strategy focuses on delivering and promoting accessible services for all. Rural communities should be positively impacted by implementation of the strategy.

*Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)*

65 Children and Young People and Cared for Children should be positively impacted by the implementation of the EDI strategy. They are particularly considered in relation to the “include” objective, which refers to “listen and involve all voices”.

*Public Health*

- Progression of the EDI strategy promotes and supports public health. The strategy commits to strive to provide equal life opportunities for all residents. These include not only those with protected characteristics but also those who may be disadvantaged through socio-economic factors, such as employment opportunities, physical and mental health and access to educational opportunities.

*Climate Change*

66 The EDI strategy was developed in accordance with the “green” priority of the Corporate Plan.

<b>Access to Information</b>	
Contact Officer:	Phil Christian - Acting Head of Business Change <a href="mailto:Phil.christian@cheshireeast.gov.uk">Phil.christian@cheshireeast.gov.uk</a>

Appendices:	<b>Appendix 1 – EDI Strategy Progress Review</b>
Background Papers:	<a href="#">Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy 2021-2025</a> <a href="#">Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Annual review 2022 – 2023</a>

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy – Progress Review

Objective 1: INCLUDE – Listen and involve all voices					
1a We will promote inclusive opportunities for two-way conversations					
Key Actions	Target Date	Expected Outcome	Data Source and Evaluation methodology	Lead responsibility	Progress
Develop our network of equality champions both internal and external to the council, as advocates and promoters of equality and inclusion	Ongoing	<p>Opportunities for inclusive two-way conversations grow</p> <p>Policies and strategies are cocreated</p> <p>Staff Groups represented at the EDI Board</p>	<p>HR to provide number of equality champions</p> <p>Stakeholder list of external equality champions to be developed</p>	<p>Policy and Change</p> <p>Individual network group members</p>	<p><b>Achieved</b></p> <p>Membership of staff network groups has reached just under 200 officers, which is an increase over the period of the strategy.</p> <p>The Equality champions network has been refreshed and have agreed a terms of reference and annual training plan.</p> <p>Staff network updates are a standing agenda item on the EDI Board.</p> <p>Young employers’ and veterans’ networks are now established.</p> <p>External equality contacts have been collated and are now included within the equality impact assessment toolkit.</p>

<p>Commit to sharing and presenting information in appropriate and accessible formats.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Documentation and other published material is suitable for the audiences which are accessing it.</p>		<p>Web team &amp; EDI officer to monitor publications online and check all documentation is accessibility checked.</p>	<p><b><u>Partially achieved</u></b></p> <p>The Web team continues to check documents that they are asked to upload and applications that they are asked to link to, for accessibility and whether we think it is usable.</p> <p>More staff are aware of how they can check accessibility for themselves in Office products.</p>
<p>Work collaboratively with voluntary, community and faith organisations to share key messages and opportunities for engagement.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Collaborative activities and communications are developed and promoted where appropriate.</p>	<p>Agreed list of awareness days and events will be used.</p>	<p>Communities team. Communications team. Policy and Change</p>	<p><b><u>Achieved</u></b></p> <p>Coproduction of services with the involvement of universal groups and groups with protected characteristics is being undertaken. The Communities team engages with VCFSE providers on matters of interest with minority groups such as asylum seekers, refugees, migrant populations.</p> <p>Consultation and Engagement toolkit supports and enables increased involvement and collaboration across services and community groups.</p> <p>Awareness days are planned in advance and staff network groups support those days which are relevant to each group.</p> <p>Engaging with many VCSFE groups on the development of Family Hubs – including having a representative from Wishing Well on the comms and engagement group. We worked with a range of groups to highlight Voter ID</p>

					<p>requirements, this included Age UK, a number of organisations and groups via the communities team, including groups representing Gypsy, Roma and Travellers, trans and non-binary people, and, via our housing team, people experiencing homelessness. We have maintained links with various faith and cultural groups to promote public health campaigns, including COVID and more recently childhood vaccinations. We have also shared messages on WarmPlaCEs and cost of living support with a range of community groups – many of which also supported and shared information about Homes for Ukraine - we engaged various stakeholders including TPCs and community groups with a Homes for Ukraine Stakeholder e-newsletter.</p>
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<b>1b We will seek to listen in order to understand</b>					
Expand our opportunities and methods of engaging with residents, partners and stakeholders to ensure that we are proactive and inclusive.	Ongoing	<p>To ensure that all residents can engage with the council.</p> <p>To support digital inclusion.</p> <p>To understand barriers preventing effective engagement and working to remove them.</p>	<p>Consultation and Engagement data will be used to evidence an increase in the involvement of underrepresented groups.</p>	<p>Communities Team</p> <p>Policy and Change</p>	<p><b><u>Achieved</u></b></p> <p>Following the creation of a cross council group, a consultation and engagement toolkit has been drafted and now informs consultation and engagement development. This has been made available on the Centranet. An equality impact assessment toolkit has also been made available to support improved equalities assessment of change.</p> <p>The Customer Experience strategy is being redesigned and will include EDI objectives.</p> <p>Regular meetings with CHALC are being held to ensure that material is widely distributed.</p>
Know our audience and communities through robust and up to date stakeholder mapping and management	July 2022	<p>The veteran community will have up to date information on where local support is available:</p> <p>Support mental health</p> <p>Safe place for veterans</p> <p>Volunteering opportunities -</p> <p>Bring the community together</p> <p>Create a charity network</p> <p>Public awareness around our veteran community -</p> <p>Services working together</p> <p>Family fun days</p>	<p>The Communities team will capture both quantitative and qualitative feedback directly from people attending events.</p>	Communities team	<p><b><u>Partially achieved</u></b></p> <p>Following analysis of a recent CVS study, a need was identified for local services for veterans. The team liaised with veteran charities and are working towards establishing a veterans hub in Cheshire East. Suitable premises have been identified in Crewe. This facility will offer services to the veteran community.</p> <p>Lots of work around veterans including the Council working towards the MoD Armed Forces Gold Award which will require various policy</p>

		Veterans into employment Training opportunities			changes. 2023-Armed Forces Day now planned and being advertised.  Stakeholder mapping to be completed and maintained for all community groups promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion.
Use and consider information including data and intelligence to inform our thinking and action	Ongoing	Develop an EDI scorecard to monitor performance and diversity across services.  The scorecard will ensure: -  The organisation understands the effects of employment policy and practice on its workforce.  The organisation has sufficient information about staff to inform robust equality analysis.  The workforce profile is updated regularly.  Data is looked at organisationally and service by service.	Unit 4 ERP system	Business Intelligence team	<b><u>Partially achieved</u></b>  An initial staff EDI profile has been developed.  Further work needs to be undertaken to gather staff information in relation to age (or DOB to allow calculation), gender reassignment and pregnant (not maternity). These areas are not currently included in HR reporting.  Further work requires progressing in relation to understanding our communities and understanding how we may best tackle inequalities.

	<p>It is possible to analyse data by all of the protected characteristics. The organisation has gathered and published information and data on the profile of its communities and the extent of inequality and disadvantage.</p> <p>Plans are in place to collect, share and use equality information with partners.</p> <p>A comprehensive set of information about local communities/protected characteristics needs and outcomes is regularly updated and published and used to identify priorities for the local area.</p>			
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<b>Objective 2: INSPIRE – Celebrate and promote our diversity and the positive opportunity it brings</b>					
<b>2a. We will promote local events and activities that seek to reduce isolation, raise awareness and encourage participation</b>					
Develop a communication and engagement plan to identify key events and activities that the Council will promote and support each year.	Annual calendar to be agreed.	Residents and staff receive communications around awareness days and associated activities.  Improved understanding and awareness.  Diversity and inclusivity promoted in the workplace.	Approved version of the Awareness Days list.  Events plans cocreated for agreed events.	Policy and Change  Equality Champions	<b>Achieved</b>  A 2023 list has been produced and has been shared with Directorate boards, staff networks, champions and communications team to agree a final list and to take ownership of days which are relevant to each directorate and staff network.
Support and promote community action and cooperation across our partnerships to improve cohesion	Ongoing	There is an increase in the involvement of underrepresented groups.  There are a range of innovative approaches to involving communities and arrangements are made to meet specific or individual needs.  Vulnerable people/ communities are participating including the hardest to reach in the community.	Explore how the Census 2021 data can be used within the council to inform action and design – updated profiles and increased.	Communities team  Business Intelligence team	<b>Achieved</b>  The Communities team now have a bespoke team that work with minority groups. The Cohesion team primarily support migrant populations and veterans but this work is being expanded.  Cheshire East Council will participate in the Cheshire Equality Leads Forum to work effectively with partners.  Ward profiles have been made available and shared to provide current data on communities across the borough.  A stakeholder database is in initial design stages, with the goal of creating a repository of groups

		<p>There is evidence that mainstream engagement mechanisms are increasingly involving previously underrepresented groups.</p> <p>Communities are encouraged or supported to influence or make decisions.</p>			<p>who represent seldom heard or vulnerable to enable participation in decision making activities.</p>
<p>Support our staff through Peer Networks and events</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Continued development of the Peer Networks and their role.</p> <p>Ensure that policies and strategies are co-created with the Peer Networks.</p>	<p>Evidence that publications reflect our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.</p> <p>To be audited within the annual equality report.</p>	<p>Policy and Change</p>	<p><b><u>Partially achieved</u></b></p> <p>Staff network groups now play a critical role in the assessment and review of policies and are engaged with in advance of any consultation. This early engagement ensures that any polices are co-produced and consider equalities at the outset.</p> <p>Further revised arrangements will be implemented during 2023/24.</p>

<b>2b. We will proactively take action to ensure our workforce is diverse and representative of the communities we serve</b>					
Apply fair recruitment and selection procedures	Ongoing	Ensure that applicants can see their lived experiences amongst others in the workforce	Equality profiles of applicants and new starters	Workforce development  Organisational development	<p><b><u>Partially achieved</u></b></p> <p>The organisation has revised its previous guaranteed interview scheme to the newer disability confident scheme standard. As part of this more detailed guidance on the application of the scheme has been produced to ensure it is applied correctly and consistently.</p> <p>Equality and Diversity data can now be collected via Unit4. Recent communication has been undertaken to encourage completion of this data to provide the Council with an opportunity to understand the profile of the workforce.</p> <p>The Workforce Strategy is being implemented, which includes a key priority around “Inclusive Workforce” and actions to ensure that everyone has a voice. A Gender Pay Gap Action Plan is in place. EDI e-learning training is mandatory for all staff. New staff feedback groups are active on a regular basis.</p> <p>The Council is progressing Disability Confident accreditation and therefore an audit of recruitment and selection of candidates with disabilities is underway.</p>

<p>Make reasonable adjustments to ensure the work environment and culture meets the needs of all our staff</p>	<p>To be in place for any return to office</p>	<p>Register for the Sunflower lanyard recognition scheme:</p> <p>Staff with hidden disabilities will feel more comfortable at work</p> <p>All staff to be aware of what the scheme is and how to help</p> <p>Specialist training for customer facing staff</p> <p>Ensure that all staff have the correct equipment they need to enable them to do their jobs.</p> <p>Improvements have been made to the working environment.</p> <p>Reasonable Adjustments are provided in a timely fashion consistently across the organisation.</p> <p>Differently abled network to review reasonable</p>		<p>HR</p> <p>Differently Abled Network</p> <p>Equality Officer</p> <p>Workforce development</p> <p>Organisational development</p>	<p><b>Achieved</b></p> <p>The Sunflower lanyard scheme has been introduced and training is now available to support the scheme via learning lounge.</p> <p>The Council has registered as a member of the Sunflower Lanyard recognition Scheme to support people with hidden disabilities. The package purchased comes with posters and training materials and is designed to support both staff and visitors in council premises. It will be in place initially in libraries and customer service centres, and a communications launch is planned for late 2022.</p> <p>The Differently Abled staff network group can advise and support staff who may need additional resources to work effectively. All staff are encouraged to speak with their managers.</p> <p>The Differently Abled Group are reviewing guidance for workplace adjustments.</p> <p>The Hidden disability staff network group meet regularly and has a good level of membership.</p> <p>The group are now seeking accreditation to the Disability Confident Employer scheme.</p> <p>HR have agreed to audit how many applicants have completed a “disabled applicant pro forma”</p>
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		adjustments guidance to inform policy development.			<p>and to review if there is any available data on the success or otherwise of disabled applicants. When applicants are invited to interview, they are asked in the invite email to let the hiring manager know if they require any adjustments to help them attend the interview. This is dealt with locally by the hiring manager.</p> <p>HR have agreed to review any evidence from jobs advertised around the success rate of disabled candidates seeking and gaining promotion.</p> <p>HR are looking to provide human resource managers with specific Disability Confident training</p> <p>Feedback from the Differently abled network group has been incorporated into the reasonable adjustments policy.</p> <p>The organisation has a policy for Reasonable Adjustments for staff and Members and managers are trained to implement it.</p>
Monitor and review employment practice and our policies and procedures that support them	Disability confident application to be submitted by 30/06/21	Achieve Disability Confident Employer (level 1) status by 2023 and Level 2 by 2025	Application via link.	HR  Differently Abled Network	<p><b><u>Partially achieved</u></b></p> <p>Application for Disability Confident Employer status is being progressed, with level 1 achieved.</p> <p>Level 2 evidence is being gathered and an application for level 2 will be made once this has been completed and checked.</p>

	<p>Every PDR cycle</p>	<p>Ensure EDI is built into the PDR process to encourage staff to take responsibility for their EDI knowledge and training.</p>		<p>Organisational development</p>	<p>OD wellbeing initiatives are promoted every week in the internal e-newsletter “team voice” with variety of activities, information and links along with a dedicated web pages for all staff to access.</p> <p>OD run the Managers Share and Support sessions and Time to Listen and Chat (TLC) calls twice a week.</p> <p>OD have supported International Men’s and International Women’s days, incorporating activities into our Wellbeing months.</p> <p>Learning Lounge offers 2 mandatory eLearning modules to support EDI strategy; Equality in the Workplace and Dignity at Work.</p> <p>Learning Lounge provides managers with a dashboard, where they can see who in their teams have completed training. Managers can then take ownership to encourage staff to complete the mandatory training and set this as an action on their PDR as required.</p> <p>Managers and staff are to discuss and comment on their wellbeing during the PDR conversation, to ensure support and action planning is embedded.</p> <p>The mandatory courses are being reviewed and it is being considered to set these to annually</p>
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					completion, where staff will be sent reminders when they need to re certify.
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**Objective 3: INTEGRATE – Deliver and promote accessible services for all**

**3a. We will ensure that we consider, communicate and consult with all people regardless of their protected characteristics when developing or changing our services**

Undertake Equality Impact Assessments across all development and change activities including services we buy and commission	Ongoing	Policies, strategies and decisions being shaped and informed by equality impact assessments.	Increased number of EIAs.	All staff – with support from Policy and Change department	<p><b><u>Achieved</u></b></p> <p>The EIA template and guidance has been updated and is now accompanied by an Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit.</p> <p>A learning lounge training module has been developed and will now provide further guidance around how to complete an assessment.</p> <p>Further training is also being looked at to provide Equality Champions with a specific session on content and approach to completing Equality Impact Assessments.</p>
Provide training and guidance to ensure equality impact assessments are fully understood	2022/23	Create support package for Members to provide advice and guidance on EDI matters to ensure that members have a greater understanding and can challenge inequality appropriately.	Training outcomes.	<p>Member EDI Champion, supported by Democratic Services.</p> <p>Workforce Development.</p> <p>Policy and Change.</p>	<p><b><u>Partially achieved</u></b></p> <p>Members induction programme has been developed, which includes the 2 EDI mandatory modules. Equality Impact assessment training is being developed.</p>

					<p>Equality champions will be provided with equality impact assessment training to support their knowledge and to enable shared learning within the Council.</p> <p>Equality Impact Assessment training is being refined and will be available on Learning Lounge.</p>
<p>Publish all equality impact assessments to provide transparency, assurance and information on our decision making</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>There is senior level commitment to using and understanding equality analysis/ impact assessment to inform planning and decision making.</p> <p>The organisation's assessments are accessible, robust and meaningful. There is evidence that Members routinely take account of equality analysis/ impact assessment when making decisions.</p> <p>Decisions around budget cuts and savings have taken account of cumulative impact.</p> <p>The findings, recommendations and conclusions are shared</p>	<p>Details to be included in Annual Equality Report.</p>	<p>Policy and Change</p>	<p><b>Achieved</b> – ongoing action.</p> <p>Equality Impact Assessments are published on the council's website.</p>

		effectively to inform decisions and planning.  Mitigating actions are identified where appropriate			
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<b>3b. We will ensure that all services we commission meet their obligations under the Equality Act</b>					
Engage and work with our local communities to co-produce and co design our local service offer and the design and delivery of major projects such as town centre regeneration schemes and improvements to local neighbourhoods	June 2023	The community and voluntary sector say that they are treated as equal partners by the Council.  The organisation achieves considerable social value from Its contracts		Commissioning Team  TOGETHER	<b><u>Achieved</u></b>  The following has been achieved in People’s services:  Commissioning handbook Standard specification Performance Management framework Social Value policy  This work is still embedded, next steps will be demonstrating the impact this has, and monitoring participation.
Require our suppliers to provide adequate and timely equality monitoring information	Ongoing	Local procurement is positively influencing the local economy  There is evidence of providers meeting the organisations equality objectives.	Contract Management data	Procurement	<b><u>Partially achieved</u></b>  Equality is a clause within all council contracts and standard terms and conditions available of CE website.  Tenders – discretionary exclusion from any tender if found to be in breach of any labour laws.

		Providers understand and can articulate a commitment to equality.			<p>Equality questions asked at supplier selection stage.</p> <p>Annual social value survey – questions asked about suppliers apprising their supply chain.</p> <p>New contract management system includes policies to be held centrally against the supplier and performance indicators added.</p>
Ensure that any venue we use or event we promote does not discriminate on the basis of an individual's protected characteristic				All	<p><b><u>Not yet achieved</u></b></p> <p>This action requires progressing</p>

<b>Objective 4: INFORM – Empower people to respectfully challenge discriminatory and poor behaviour</b>					
<b>4a We will take a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, taking positive and immediate action where possible</b>					
Continue to reinforce and promote the Council’s values and behaviours to promote a positive and inclusive workplace culture.		Improved quality and availability of EDI training for Learning Lounge. Ensure all protected characteristics are adequately covered by training available.  All staff to take responsibility for their own learning to develop awareness and understanding of different peoples’ lived experiences.	Reports on uptake to be produced and inform annual report.  Increase number of EDI related training opportunities.	Staff Networks  Workforce development	<p><b><u>Partially achieved</u></b></p> <p>Several courses on learning lounge provide training on the protected characteristics: Equality in the workplace and Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>Basic Autism Awareness course, Accessible Information is available for staff to complete.</p> <p>Learning Lounge offers a good selection of eLearning and delivered courses around equality, diversity, inclusion and raising their own awareness: Course Completions Updated completions 1st Jan - 12th Dec 2023 Dignity at work 23 - 2449 completions, Equality in the workplace - 2916 completions, Equality Act - 121 completions, Acceptable Behaviour and Language Including Unconscious Bias - 4 seminars 47 attended, Helping Disabled Customers - 21 completions, Supporting Carers in the Workplace Introduction - 25 completions, Supporting Carers in the Workplace Line managers - 20 completions, Transgender Training - 38 completions, Unconscious bias - 123 completions, Mental Health Awareness - 2 seminars, 23 attended, Mental Health Awareness for managers - 2 seminars 25 attended, Mental Health Awareness - 205</p>

					<p>completions, HIV Awareness - 10 completions, Introduction to Bipolar - 0 completions, Pre-retirement training - 1 seminar 17 attended. Additional Courses added: Neurodiversity in the workplace - 111 completions, Acceptable Behaviour and Language (Including Unconscious Bias) for managers - 3 seminars 23 attended, Equality Impact Assessments - 14 completions, Practical Equalities - 1 seminar 9 attended, Zero Suicide Prevention - 6 completions, Sunflower Training Videos - 26 completions.</p> <p>A neuro-diversity e-learning module is also now available on Learning Lounge.</p> <p><u>What's planned:</u> All staff are now required to complete the Equality in the Workplace module on an annual basis and Dignity at Work will also be set as annual completion.</p> <p>Equality impact assessment training has been developed December 2023 and will be rolled out in the New Year.</p>
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Provide access to clear and robust HR policies and procedures to support officers and managers when	Ongoing	Policies to be reviewed regularly to ensure that they are up to date. Reviews to be conducted in	Training provided via Learning Lounge	HR	<p><b><u>Achieved</u></b></p> <p>The following policies and procedures are currently under review, and will be launched in late 2024:</p>
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<p>challenging poor or unacceptable behaviour</p>		<p>collaboration with staff networks where relevant.</p> <p>Senior leaders in the organisation have stated their commitment to a diverse workforce and have made clear what is expected from staff when delivering services to the community.</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dignity at Work Policy and Procedure</li> <li>• Disciplinary Policy and Procedure</li> <li>• Grievance Policy and Procedure</li> </ul> <p>In addition, the Code of Conduct (Officers) is also currently under review and the Equality in Employment Policy and Transitioning at Work Policy, both are due to be launched in 2024. Staff networks have been consulted on changes to the policies as part of the review process. The following mandatory e-Learning modules are available on the Learning Lounge to support the HR policies and procedures, and are updated in line with the policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dignity at Work (all staff)</li> <li>• Disciplinary Procedure (managers)</li> <li>• Equality in the Workplace (all staff)</li> <li>• Grievance Policy and Procedure (managers)</li> </ul> <p>There are HR workshops for manager in respect of the Discipline, Grievance and Dignity at Work procedures.</p> <p>In addition, there are modules on Learning Lounge for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acceptable Behaviour and Language (including unconscious bias)</li> <li>• Challenging Conversations/Conflict.</li> </ul>
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<b>4b. We will work in partnership to keep people safe and connected</b>					
Contribute and collaborate with partners and stakeholders to tackle hate crime and promote hate crime reporting	Ongoing	To support the aim for no criminal offences to be committed against a person or property that is motivated by an offender's hatred of someone because of their: race, colour, ethnicity, nationality, ethnic origins, religion, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation or disability.	Hate Crimes reported through the "True Vision" website.	Communities team	<p><b>Achieved</b> – ongoing action</p> <p>Connections have been established with housing been looking and developing a community tension monitoring report" which allows us to identify community tensions early and intervene. This includes Hate Crime statistics, this work is under development.</p>
Take targeted action to educate, inform and challenge the stereotypes faced by our marginalised communities (e.g., migrants, Gypsy, Roma and Travellers)	By 2024  GRT Group to be launched in March 2022.	<p>The wider community will benefit from the knowledge from this group and the positive relationship with the council.</p> <p>To provide sustainable jobs and enhance skills within individuals whilst supporting our hard-to-reach communities.</p>	Evaluation of actions to be considered.	Communities team	<p><b>Partially achieved</b></p> <p>We have supported 700 Ukrainians during 2022/23 and have supported over 400 Afghans over the last two years.</p> <p>Our focus this year is how we can ensure we have a VCFSE sector that can respond to "integration needs" including additional support for Asylum Seekers for things like immigration support and advice. This also includes bespoke interventions around health protection (vaccine hesitancy/TB screening etc).</p>

Promote and signpost to networks that provide advice and support to anyone impacted or experiencing discriminatory behaviour or action	Ongoing	Services are co-produced with service users wherever possible and service users can influence changes	Promotion through digital and nondigital channels.	Communities team  EDI Board	<b>Achieved</b>  We have a network of Connected Community place for local people to connect and gather information. We have plans in 2023/24 for these venues to become more culturally competent in terms of reaching out to various cohorts.
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<b>Objective 5: IMPACT – Support and deliver meaningful change</b>					
<b>5a. We will be open and transparent in publishing the progress of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion objectives</b>					
Publish an annual report on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at Cheshire East in the public domain	Annually	To have an oversight of Council performance in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion.	All EDI data	Policy and Change	<b>Not yet achieved</b>  To be completed this year.
Publish the Gender Pay Gap report in the public domain	Annually	There is evidence that the organisation is actively working on reducing its Gender Pay Gap.			<b>Achieved</b>  The Gender Pay Gap report was published in line with the regulations: <a href="#">Gender Pay Gap Report (2022/2023)</a>  The Gender Pay Gap action plan is a regular agenda item at the Council EDI Board.

					The Gender Pay Gap Report (2023-2024) will be published on, or around, 31 March 2024. This will be shared with the EDI Board in [January] 2024.
Ensure that evaluations for each event are available for publication.	Annually				<p><b><u>Partially Achieved</u></b></p> <p>An evaluation report has been completed for Crewe Pride 2022. Due to current economic conditions and remaining face-to-face meeting challenges, no other events have been undertaken by Cheshire East Council.</p>

<b>Objective 6 – Continuously improving equality, diversity and inclusion (additional actions identified to embed the objectives of the EDI strategy)</b>					
Review and refresh EDI board	2022/23	<p>EDI board has a clear role in delivering the EDI Strategy.</p> <p>EDI Board representation to reflect its delivery role.</p> <p>EDI strategy implemented with proper buy in and commitment at all levels</p>	<p>Demonstrated progress on delivering work plan priorities</p> <p>Increased attendance and participation at EDI board meetings</p>	EDI Officer and EDI Board chair	<p><b><u>Partially achieved</u></b></p> <p>A new chair is now in place and the board has been refreshed. This refresh takes into account the establishment of a new boards in each directorate within the Council, with the new members being nominated from each directorate board.</p> <p>As there is no EDI officer yet in place, the objective is only partially achieved.</p>

Review and refresh Directorate level EDI Boards	2022/23	Clear links achieved between directorates and EDI board.	Meetings happen quarterly and feeding back to EDI board	EDI Officer and EDI Board chair	<p><b><u>Partially achieved</u></b></p> <p>EDI boards have been established in each directorate and they meet on a regular basis.</p> <p>Issues and communication feed into and out of the directorate boards into the Council EDI board.</p> <p>The EDI Board receives regular updates from directorates and EDI Board members attend directorate meetings.</p>
Ensure appropriate access to CLT for staff network group as required.	Ongoing	Members of the network groups can request to meet with CLT to discuss their experiences and ideas for improvement.	Attendance at meetings is representative of staff network membership	Staff network members	<p><b><u>Not yet achieved</u></b></p> <p>As several CLT members are new to the organisation, they will be invited to attend the staff network groups as part of their induction. It may be appropriate to have a CLT lead member for each of the staff network groups.</p>

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OPEN

## **Corporate Policy Committee**

**21<sup>st</sup> March 2024**

### **Performance Report – Q3 2023/24**

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**Report of: David Brown – Director of Governance and Compliance**

**Report Reference No: CP/40/23-24**

**Ward(s) Affected: All**

#### **Purpose of Report**

- 1 To provide the Committee with an oversight of organisational performance against the priorities and vision set out within the Council's Corporate Plan 2021-25.
- 2 This report covers Q3 of 2023/24, 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023 – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023.
- 3 This report supports the responsibility of the Corporate Policy Committee to have a co ordinating role across all other committees and to exercise corporate oversight of outcomes, performance, budget monitoring and risk management.
- 4 Appendix 1 provides the detail of performance and progress against priorities.

#### **Executive Summary**

- 5 This report gives an update on performance against the priorities in the Council's Corporate Plan. It describes performance in Q3 (October - December 2023) against the objectives within the Corporate Plan.
- 6 During Q3, there were continued national challenges such as continuing high inflation, continuing cost of living pressures, and recruitment and retention challenges.

- 7 Despite these national and local challenges continuing, there were some positive areas of performance in Q3, including evidenced improvements in childrens services and progress in planning.
- 8 However, as activities continue to be taken to tackle the Councils' financial challenges, such as tight management of recruitment, there remains a risk that some areas of performance, particularly those in respect of timeliness of responses, could continue to be impacted.
- 9 Analysis of any performance changes will be undertaken to ensure that impact and mitigation can be highlighted, as soon as possible, should this be required during the next reporting period.
- 10 There are still anticipated future inspections in both Adults Health and Integration and Childrens Services, which will likely place additional pressure upon the Council, with a risk that recommendations from these inspections will lead to further demands being placed upon already pressured services.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corporate Policy Committee is recommended to:

1. Confirm understanding of organisational performance in Q3 of 2023/24.
2. Consider any amendments in performance reporting, and/or additional data and intelligence that should be included within performance management reporting.

#### **Background**

- 11 The Council's Corporate Plan 2021-25 outlines 20 priorities for the Council, 6 aligned with the "Open" aim, to be an open and enabling organisation, 8 priorities are aligned to the "Fair" aim, a Council which enables and cares about people and 6 priorities are aligned to the "Green" aim, a thriving and sustainable place. The 20 priorities are as follows:

### 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
- A transport network that is safe and promotes active travel
- Thriving urban and rural economies with opportunities for all
- Be a carbon neutral council by 2025

- 12 This report reviews performance against priorities in the Corporate Plan and focuses upon a “One Council” approach to performance management. This includes a balance of quantitative and qualitative data.
- 13 The full Q3 performance report is at **Appendix 1**. This gives further details on progress made against delivery of the Corporate Plan during Q1 of the 2023/24 municipal year.
- 14 The impact of the continued financial challenges facing the Council appear, in some areas, to have been somewhat mitigated. This can be seen in several of the performance measures being reported this Q. However, there has been a continued increase during Q3 in the level of Customer Effort score.
- 15 Cheshire East Council delivers around 500 services to around 400,000 residents. There are 2,866 full time equivalent staff in Q3, a slight increase of 18 FTE, since Q2. The vacancy rate has decreased during Q3 to 10.8%, from 12.2% in Q2 and a reduction in the number of agency staff can also be reported in Q3, from in Q2 304 to 297 in Q3.
- 16 There has been a continued increase in the rate of vacancies in the Adult’s directorate, rising from 12.14% in Q1, to 15.17% in Q3, a small rise in the Place directorate, from Q2 10.6% to Q3 11.1% and a similar rise in Corporate Q2 11.5% to Q3 11.8%.
- 17 The Children’s directorate has reported a reduction in vacancies from Q2 12.1% to Q3 11.3%.

- 18 There has also been a small reduction in the level of staff turnover, from 3.9% in Q2 to 3.5% in Q3. Though there is a small increase in the levels of staff turnover in the Place directorate from 3% in Q2 to 4.5% in Q3.
- 19 An increase in FTE, a reduction in agency staff and a decline in the levels of staff turnover are positive impacts and reflect the approach to move away from employment of temporary staff. This approach can realise savings and can provide greater stability within the workforce.
- 20 There has been a slight increase in the Customer Effort score. The measure has increased by 0.23 since Q2 which is mainly due to longer phone wait times caused by a significant increase in calls about the garden waste scheme.
- 21 There has been a reduction in the variance between the forecast outturn and total net budget this Q. Reducing from 5.3% in Q2 to 3.7% in Q3.
- 22 Service committees receive performance information on a regular basis through their subject matter expert officers, specific to the subject of the committee. This performance report offers an oversight of progress against the Corporate Plan and should complement the more detailed performance, service specific dashboards that are considered at service committees.
- 23 **Open – An open and enabling organisation.**

### Priorities

- 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

- 24 The vacancy rate has decreased, and the number of agency staff has reduced during Q3, reflecting the results of the focused piece of work to reduce the number of agency staff. There has been a reduction of around 100 FTE agency staff between Q1 and Q3 and we expect that this figure will continue to decrease as the focussed works continues.
- 25 98.5% of local taxation (council tax and business rates) were collected in Q3, a continued, albeit slight, increase on the previous quarter.

- 26 The previously identified performance in relation to the timeliness of responses during Q2, with 31% of Stage complaints being resolved within timescales, has been mitigated. In Q3 we have seen an increase to 56% of stage 2 complaints being resolved within timescales.
- 27 Timeliness was also previously identified as an issue in relation to freedom of information act responses, with a slight decline in Q2 to 88%. This figure has now increased to 91% in Q3, and now falls into the "Adequate" category of compliance as set out by the Information Commissioner (ICO). The ICO has a minimum expectation of 90% compliance.
- 28 There has been a slight decrease in the performance given by corporate contact centres customers for "perceived effort" of resolving their queries. This score has increased to 4.8 in Q3 against a target score of 4 (lower is better). This is largely due to continued call volumes and queries around the introduction of charges for the collection of green waste.
- 29 There has been an increase in the number of apprenticeships being provided by the Council, with 44 now being reported in Q3. This is an anticipated increase and aligns with patterns experienced in previous years, during Q3.
- 30 **Fair – A Council which empowers and cares about people.**

#### Priorities

- Work together with our 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 the opportunities for children, young adults and adults with additional needs
  - Ensure all children to 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
- 31 Challenges of cost and demand remain in both Adults and Childrens social care. However, the qualitative performance measures have indicated some positive progress in relation to childrens social care this quarter.

- 32 The rate of Education, Health and Care Plans completed within 20 weeks continues to exceed the national average (59%). There has been a slight decline in Q3 to 69%. However, this is still an increase from Q1 (62%).
- 33 The percentage of childrens social care assessments completed within 45 days has increased again during Q3, to 88% (compared to 63% in Q1). And is now above the National percentage of 82%. This is seen as an early indicator that, when needed, individuals are receiving a support in a timely fashion.
- 34 The rate (and numbers) of cared for children has reduced during Q3 to 533 children per 10,000 or 67%, the national rate is 71%.
- 35 In terms of education, the percentage of good and outstanding primary and secondary schools remain above the national average and has increased during the period from Q2 94% to Q3 96% (Primary Schools) and from Q2 91% to Q3 91% (Secondary Schools).
- 36 The number of children missing from education has increased from Q2 116 to Q3 156, though is still lower than our Q1 position of 197 children.
- 37 One of our poverty indicators is to monitor the numbers of pupil eligible for free school meals, and it is reported that noted that a decrease has been evidenced in Q3, from Q2 8807 to Q3 8621.
- 38 There has also been a reduction in the number of Children in Need reported during Q3 from Q2 2020 to Q3 1924, giving a rate of 264 per 10,000 children, against a national rate of 343 children per 10,000.
- 39 Reported levels of Children with a Child Protection Plan in Q3 are 31.8 per 10,000 and remain below a national rate of 43 per 10,000. These figures also represent a reduction in Q2 levels from 33.3 per 10,000.
- 40 **Green – A thriving and sustainable place.**

## Priorities

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

- 41 There are 6 priorities under the “Green” aim for a thriving and sustainable place.
- 42 During the year, there has been a continued reduction in the number of planning applications in hand. Levels in Q3 are reported to be 200, which represents a significant reduction from Q1 levels of 400, and a further reduction from Q2 350. A new process implemented as part of the detailed work into planning now means that each application is allocated a named contact officer on arrival into the service, which is having a positive impact upon performance.
- 43 The number of affordable homes delivered has increased during Q3 to 232, from Q2 93. Year to date, 451 homes have now been delivered, exceeding the annual target of 355.
- 44 The percentage of waste collected sent for recycling and reuse remains reasonably steady, though there has been a reduction during Q3 to 50%, against Q2 56%. The recycling rate is usually lower in the second half of the year due to the reduced garden tonnages, and we are still on track to meet our annual target.
- 45 Progress made towards the net zero target has increased during Q3 to 54% (from 48% in Q2). This is due to an increase in the amount of carbon inset increasing by 6% since Q2.
- 46 The installation of new electric charging points remains on track, with a further 4 new charging points installed in Q3, totalling 24 so far this year against a target of 28.
- 47 The percentage of major applications determined within 13 weeks or agreed time remains above the national target of 87%, with 91% being determined in Q3.
- 48 The percentage of non-major applications determined within weeks or agreed time continues to remain above the national target of 86%, with 88% being determined in Q3.
- 49 There have been no trees planted during the Q, as the tree planting work is seasonal, so this was planned and expected. It is estimated that 15ha of trees are to be planted during Q4, which will give a final figure of 6 ha below the target of 21ha for the year.
- 50 Work continues to be progressed to develop the action plan to support the wider borough target of net zero by 2045.

## Consultation and Engagement

51 Not applicable.

## Reasons for Recommendations

52 The Corporate Policy Committee is responsible for reviewing and scrutinising performance against the strategic aims and objectives in the Council’s Corporate Plan 2021-25.

53 The performance management framework continues to be developed and seeks to provide a robust, customer focussed view of performance. Member input into this development is valued to ensure that performance management reports are of use.

54 Performance management is a tool to allow oversight of the Council’s key activities and to enable transparency and understanding around where the Council is performing well, and what are the areas of challenge and improvement.

## Other Options Considered

55 Not applicable.

## Implications and Comments

### *Monitoring Officer/Legal*

56 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

### *Section 151 Officer/Finance*

57 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Financial implications arising from performance requirements are detailed within the separate financial review reports aligned with the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

### *Policy*

58 This report demonstrates progress against all priorities within the Cheshire East Council Corporate Plan 2021-25.

<p><b>An open and enabling organisation.</b></p>	<p><b>A council which empowers and cares about people.</b></p>	<p><b>A thriving and sustainable place.</b></p>
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*Equality, Diversity and Inclusion*

- 59 The range of council activities covered in the Corporate Plan aim to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty and the obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

*Human Resources*

- 60 There are no direct human resources implications arising from this report.

*Risk Management*

- 61 Performance and risk are intrinsically linked. Where risks are identified, performance data can evidence the likelihood of the risk and can also show if risks materialise. The performance report identifies areas where performance is strong and areas for development and improvement. This supports the risk management process by providing the opportunity to review progress and identify areas for improvement and any necessary mitigating actions.

*Rural Communities*

- 62 The Corporate Plan aims to support greater inclusion for rural communities. In 2022/23 a Rural Action Plan was approved by the Economy and Growth committee, which includes priorities around digital connectivity, access, housing, visitor economy and support for rural based businesses.

*Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)*

- 63 Performance management of the priorities relating to children and young people and cared for children ensure that there is a focus on children receiving the best start in life and that we deliver on our commitments to children and young people in Cheshire East.

*Public Health*

- 64 This report supports our Public Health priorities using the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Tartan Rug to ensure that we work with partners to address issues of poor housing, poverty, employment and education across urban and rural communities.

*Climate Change*

- 65 Performance against the Corporate Plan contributes to overall achievement of the net zero targets for the council and for the borough.

<b>Access to Information</b>	
Contact Officer:	Phil Christian – Acting Head of Business Change <a href="mailto:Phil.christian@cheshireeast.gov.uk">Phil.christian@cheshireeast.gov.uk</a>
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Performance Report Q3   Corporate%20Plan %20Performance%20
Background Papers:	<a href="#">Q2 Performance Report</a> <a href="#">Cheshire East Council Corporate Plan 2021-2025</a>

*Cheshire East Council*

# Corporate Plan 2021-2025

**Performance Report – Quarter 3 2022/23**



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**Open**

**Fair**

**Green**

# An open and enabling organisation

By 2025 we want:

Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 3 Update

Priority: Ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision making

The council to be seen as being a fair open and transparent organisation and able to demonstrate it.

Key actions:

- Implement a new committee system
- Demonstrate commitment to open data

- 91% of freedom of information requests were responded to within statutory timescales. This is an increase on Q2 and falls into the "Adequate" category of compliance as set out by the Information Commissioner (ICO). The ICO has a minimum expectation of 90% compliance.
- Open Data is shared via the Councils' Open Data site - [Insight Cheshire East](#)
- This data includes Air Quality, Procurement Information - Contracts Register, Procurement Information - Invitations to Tender and Expenditure exceeding 500 GBP.
- During Q3 there were 34,131 views on Insight Cheshire East, with an average of 375 per day with peaks on October 3rd of 965 views and November 3rd of 858 views.
- Several Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) reviews have been published. For each review three separate products have been developed: a short plain English summary; a longer executive summary, and a full report. It is hoped that this approach makes the comprehensive data, findings and recommendations accessible to our wide range of audiences.

To increase local democracy.

Key actions:

- Working with town and parish councils
- Virtual meetings

- The management of the network to transfer from Corporate to the Communities team, as they have an existing contract with CHALC.
- Working with the town and parish council's will involve managing the forward plan of themes, organising speakers, writing briefing note for Jackie Weaver, drafting agenda and notes.
- Town and Parish Council Network and Engagement. Three expert network sessions delivered:
  - October - Climate Change
  - November - Green Spaces Review
  - December - Leisure Services Review
- Launched a capital grants scheme for town and parish councils to apply for to reduce carbon emissions.

Priority: Listen, learn and respond to our residents, promoting opportunities for a two-way conversation

Our communities will be well informed about things they can do to prepare for emergencies.

Key actions:

- Enhanced emergency preparedness in communities

- Emergency preparedness is led by a Joint Emergency Planning Team across Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester councils.
- Information is regularly shared through our communication channels to inform people of things they can do to prepare for emergencies.
- We develop flexible plans through a process called Integrated Emergency Management, which enables all responding organisations to deal effectively with a major or serious incident at any time of day or night, 365 days a year. These plans are also exercised on a regular basis

The council is seen by residents as responsive.

Key actions:

- Consultation on key plans and strategies

- Activities for developing the Cheshire East Plan have continued, with an initial structure template being drafted. The Cheshire East Plan policy and strategy steering group has continued to meet during the period.
- This activity is planned to continue throughout quarter 4, with the Plan aiming to be approved and launched later in the next financial year.
- Several consultations and surveys have been undertaken during Q3.
- Including, Maintenance of Green Spaces Consultation, Shaping Our Future Survey, Review of Learning Disability Respite (x 4 surveys), Maintenance of Green Spaces Consultation, School Travel Policy Consultation, Cheshire East Common Allocations Policy, Proposal to close St Gregory's Catholic Primary School, Budget Consultation with Schools - Allocating Funding for 2024 / 25 and a Social Value Survey 2022/2023.
- Key stats for the last 6 months:
  - Oct-23, 4 consultations and 1,065 responses (Proposal to close St Gregory's Catholic Primary School)
  - Nov-23, 8 consultation and 4,546 responses (Maintenance of Green Spaces and Flexi-link)
  - Dec-23, 2 consultations and 1,916 responses (Shaping Our Future)
- Several resident and partner engagement sessions to identify local priorities for the new corporate plan

Customer services to offer support and guidance and be accessible to people who need them.

Key actions:

- Review where and how technology can assist and enable

- The CX One telephony platform has been fully implemented and now includes enhanced functionality which supports the option for customers to connect to popular services without the need to queue on the information line to speak to customer service advisor first.
- Speech recognition technology transfers callers to the correct queue by using words such as ‘Planning’, ‘bins’, ‘pay my council tax’.
- Plans in progress to introduce artificial intelligence (AI) onto phone lines and emails within the corporate contact centre which will improve customer journeys and free up resources to support customers with more complex enquiries.
- The Customer effort score measure has increased by 0.23 since Q2 which is mainly due to longer phone wait times caused by a significant increase in calls about the garden waste scheme.
- Overall levels of satisfaction have increased by 2% since Q2 to 74% in Q3. However, this remains slightly under target due (75%) to continued dissatisfaction with the garden waste charges.

Receive the Ministry of Defence’s (MoD) Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award.

Key actions:

- Award of silver standard prior to award of gold standard

- An application for the Gold award has been drafted and is now awaiting submission to [Defence Employer Recognition Scheme](#).
- It is anticipated that the submission will be made in July 2024 once the materials have been approved for final submission.

Priority: Promote and develop the services of the council through regular communication and engagement with all residents

A financially sustainable council which has increased levels of reserves.

Key actions:

- Develop a 4-year MTFS
- Develop a sustainable reserves strategy
- Successful delivery of savings programme

- Our budget consultation ended on Monday 29 January. Each proposal within the consultation aligns to one of our committees. So, for example, proposals relating to parking will be considered by the highways and transport committee, and proposals about election costs will be considered by the corporate policy committee.
- In addition to the public budget consultation survey, the following stakeholder engagement activities are taking place throughout this month and next:
- Manager Share and Support sessions, In the Know sessions, Town and Parish Council briefing, Cheshire East Councillors’ briefing, Chambers of Commerce, Schools Forum, Trade Unions.

- The council’s service committees have specific public meetings in the calendar to consider, debate and approve budget proposals for each committee’s area of budget responsibility:
- Corporate policy committee will then meet on 13 February to agree the budget and make a recommendation to the meeting of Full Council on 27 February for formal approval of the 2024/25 budget.

Priority: Look at opportunities to bring more income into the borough

Our Alternative Service Delivery Vehicles (ASDV) delivering for our residents and generating a profit (with shareholder dividend) from commercial activities, reducing financial pressures on the council.

Key actions:

- Complete programme of reviews of ASDVs

- A Working Group had reported to the Finance sub-committee a proposal on the proposed governance arrangements for consideration.
- The Working Group’s conclusions regarding the most effective approach to designing the Council’s longer term company governance, included the removal of Cheshire East Residents First (CERF) as a holding company, with companies reporting direct to the Finance Sub-Committee in future as the shareholder committee.
- The review is ongoing and would continue into next year.

Priority: Support and develop our workforce to be confident, motivated, innovative, resilient and empowered

A committed and motivated workforce.

Cheshire East Council seen as an employer of choice.

Key actions:

- Undertake staff surveys and act on the results

- A Pulse staff survey has been undertaken in quarter 3 of 2023/24.
- The survey was live between Monday 20 November and closed at 12am on 8th December 2023.
- [Unit 4 was implemented in 2021](#), with several functional improvements being made since then.
- There has been a reduction in the number of staff network groups active and a resulting reduction in the number of active participants as a result. Efforts to re-establish these groups will be aligned to the WorkplaCE programme.

- Implement Best4Business Unit 4 ERP system

A workforce that can work remotely and flexibly using the latest technology.

Key actions:

- Clear guidance and support to staff and managers.
- Accelerate roll-out of mobile working

- Corporate Policy Committee have approved the closure of Westfields, following a consultation with Cheshire East Council recognised trade unions, employees and members.
- Report can be found here [CPC 30th November 2024](#)

Priority: Promote and develop the services of the council through regular communication and engagement with all residents

Residents and staff to be aware of the council and the services we provide.

Key actions:

- Review communications plans and style

- Cheshire East Council has a Communications Strategy which includes a clear vision for the council's communications with residents. It sets out aims and outlines priorities for communications activity that will support the delivery of the corporate plan. It also sets out the principles we will follow when communicating.
- The [Media Hub](#) provides residents with an opportunity to subscribe to email updates from lots of different council services, including:
  - Libraries, Children's centres, Highways, Countryside rangers, Fostering, And Family hubs. Or residents and stakeholders can simply sign up to receive a weekly update of council news and information
  - Promotion of Social Value via the online Connected Communities Noticeboard.
  - Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise Sector (VCFSE) weekly newsletters specific to each Care Community, ensuring information is relevant and consistent.
  - Funding email sent bi-weekly to all community contacts covering local and national funding opportunities.

Resident satisfaction with the council to be in line with similar councils.

Key actions:

- Undertake regular communications with residents
- Develop new Customer Experience strategy

- The council to be regarded as a good partner.

- Regular communications with residents, members and staff are undertaken through the communications and media team.
- A [Customer Experience Strategy](#) was developed and sets out our vision to deliver against this commitment and to provide the best possible experience for our customers, whoever they are and however they contact us.
- We know that we provide a wide range of services to our customers and we know that the experience will differ depending on the service accessed and the way in which it is accessed.
- We also know that as a public service provider it is important that customers can trust us to design services which respond to their needs and the needs of the local area and that these are delivered in a way which provides value for their money.

- An internal review of partnerships is expected to be considered following recruitment of a new Chief Executive.
- Care Communities Partnerships ensure shared health priorities are being supported at a local level.
- Established a Cheshire East Infrastructure Alliance which brings together VCFSE and Local Councils infrastructure providers, to operate and communicate in a coordinated way.
- Cheshire East Food Network has been essential to understanding the demands on community food providers and to developing a joined-up approach to the cost-of-living crisis.
- Integration across health and social care operationally and strategically, is seeking out opportunities to be more efficient and coordinated in service delivery.
- Working with health and care partners from across the Cheshire East system, a series of workshops have pulled together a draft 'Blueprint for 2030', setting out a vision for healthy households, healthy neighbourhoods and health and care services.

# A council which empowers and cares about people

By 2025 we want:

Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 3 Update

Priority: Work together with our residents and our partners to support people and communities to be strong and resilient

All services to be developed together with our residents and communities, so they are based on what works for people in Cheshire East.

Key actions:

- Embed our vision for children and young people, and working together
- Work with residents to understand the continuing impact of Covid

- Extra Help paperwork has been launched at the 'Threshold of Need' events for those pieces of work at 'Level 2', single agency and an ask that partners delivering early help intervention submit their documentation to the Family Help front door so it can be logged, in whatever format they are using, so we gain a clearer and more accurate picture of the breadth of early help intervention being delivered across the partnership.
- JSNA reviews have been published on: Crewe; smoking; falls; and drugs and alcohol. These have involved engagement and feedback from residents to varying degrees.
- There is ongoing work to develop the children and young people's emotional and mental wellbeing JSNA review. This review has involved extensive engagement with residents and its findings (as they have emerged) have been informing family hub development and the recommission of our emotionally healthy children and young people provision.
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability JSNA review has also involved significant engagement across stakeholders (including via our SEND Partnership Board) and input from our parent carer forum.
- In 2023 we undertook a Behavioural Insights research project to better understand the effects of Covid on our Vulnerable residents. Interviewed 7 staff members from voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) services across Cheshire East, and co-produced a Volunteer Handbook for VCFSE organisations to support with volunteer engagement, management and sustainability. The handbook will support the organisations who are successful with Flourish grants.

Families and communities are strong and resilient.

Key actions:

- Develop a strong, local, social impact structure
- Develop a locality model of working

- Care Communities continue to work across community partnerships, identifying local priorities and delivering projects to address areas of need:
  - 20 projects are supporting marginalised/hard to reach communities.
  - 25 projects are addressing Health Inequalities.
  - 21 projects are supporting isolated residents.
  - 7 community organisations have increased the volunteer programmes.

## By 2025 we want:

## Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 3 Update

Cheshire East is a welcoming and supportive place, where equality, freedom, fairness and opportunities are available to all.

### Key actions:

- Identify a suitable location within the borough and develop a traveller transit site
- Increase collaboration with marginalised groups
- Secure social value benefits

- 7 projects are directly supporting our most vulnerable residents.
- Cheshire East has partnered with a range of churches, community centres and other settings to enable them to become Connected Communities Centres/Venues. These buildings host a range of activities and support services closer to where people live. There are 34 Connected Communities Centres and Venues across Cheshire East.

- The transit site for Gypsy and Irish Traveller people is developing and should be open in July 2024. Work is underway with local schools and GP surgeries to raise cultural awareness.
- Training with Primary and Secondary Health Services has been facilitated to ensure those people, without an address, can access Health services and improve outcomes.
- A training programme is being developed for Adult Social Workers who work with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families, to improve knowledge, skills and responses to assessed need.
- We have published equality impact assessments alongside each of our JSNA reviews this year to ensure we are considering variation of health and wellbeing need by protected characteristic. We plan to feed recurrent gaps in our understanding into topic proposals for the JSNA work programme.
- Marginalised Groups:
  - Continued integration & development support within the ARAP (Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy) scheme for Afghan families.
  - 12 families resettled into Cheshire East.
  - 282 Ukrainian guests with sponsors matched with 165 households (all in education, training or work.)
  - A further 284 Ukrainian guests living independently in either social housing, or private rented sector accommodations.
  - Creation and chairing of the Internal Armed Forces Network EDI group.
- Social Value
  - The Connected Communities Noticeboard will allow community organisations to identify areas that need support and request support for these directly from our Commissioned services and local businesses.

## By 2025 we want:

## Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 3 Update

Work with partners for the benefit of our communities inspiring confidence in public services developing community cohesion and community resilience.

### Key actions:

- Deliver evidence based early intervention and prevention services
- Reduce loneliness and isolation

- Social Value Charter Annual Review – the review will capture data across services to evidence the positive impacts we are making to the lives of Children and Young people, as well as environmental, economic and social benefits for all Cheshire East Residents.
- Reviewing Corporate Social Responsibility evaluating equality and inclusion of employees, local economic benefits and the Carbon Neutral Action Plan
- Over the last 9 months there has been 74 projects that have benefitted from social value this includes:
  - Sharing resources, volunteering, project delivery, upskilling and training and digital inclusion.
  - We continue to develop the Gypsy Roma Travelling Communities Operational Group, engaging with these communities to support their health and wellbeing.
- Work has been undertaken to monitor and evaluate the Serious Mental Illness and Physical Health commissioned program and development group, linked to the Mental Health Transformation Board.
- Two multiagency workshops have been held to discuss the development of plans to increase physical activity levels and the number of people with a healthy weight in Cheshire East.
- The Lifestyle on Prescription resource has been launched and is now being shared and socialised with health and care professionals across Cheshire East.
- Work on the Loneliness and Social Isolation Joint Strategic Needs Assessment has got underway through a multiagency working group.
- Work on our place based JSNA reviews (Crewe and Macclesfield), is providing a wide variety of opportunities to bring communities closer together and explore potential for and challenges to prevention and early intervention.
- JSNA review findings are being shared with our CELIA network (Cheshire East Local Infrastructure Alliance).
- Supported VCFSE (Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise) Sector groups with external grant applications bringing £49,500 into the Cheshire East VCFSE sector.
- Enabled 705 volunteers supporting community projects across the borough.
- 20 community groups provide direct support for marginalised communities (groups with protected characteristics).
- In the last year, 41 organisations have delivered projects that tackle health inequalities and social isolation.

By 2025 we want:

Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 3 Update

- Working in partnership with the VCFSE sector (Refugees Welcome, Elim Church, Hope Church etc.) to develop strategies that increase efficiency, transparency and promotion of the migration schemes in the community and enhance the avenues of support for both sponsors and guests. (Welcome cafés, Informal ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes, Wellbeing and inclusion sessions).
- Delivered the Digital inclusion project through Royal British Legion Alsager, targeting social isolation and loneliness amongst veterans - ~101 users over a 1-year period (project has been extended due to popular demand).
- Continued support of the 8 Veteran Breakfast clubs all throughout the borough.
- Used 74 staff volunteer hours to help vulnerable people in the community.
- Active involvement in the PREVENT (national safeguarding programme) group, GRT (Gipsy, Romany and Traveller) steering group.
- The Council's Veterans Officer continues to work with groups such as the RBL to organise Armed forces events across the borough.

Priority: Reduce health inequalities across the borough

Work with partners to address the issues of poor housing, poverty, employment and education opportunities across urban and rural areas.

Key actions:

- Implement the Cheshire East Partnership Five Year Plan
- Promote regular screening and take up of preventative health opportunities
- Improve the mental health of all people working and living in Cheshire East

- Working with health and care partners from across the Cheshire East system, a series of workshops have pulled together a draft 'Blueprint for 2030', setting out a vision for healthy households, healthy neighbourhoods and health and care services. This recognises the need to address the root causes of poor health and wellbeing.
- The Crewe JSNA was published and includes a wide variety of recommendations aimed at addressing wider determinants of health. This has since been used by the Crewe Town Board.
- Ongoing progress with our two-year community development project to reduce inequalities within our East Timorese community; we have now completed a formal health needs assessment, the recommendations from which are informing actions around improving access to healthcare and reducing stigma around TB and sexual health.
- Our avoidable deaths analysis is highlighting opportunities for prevention initially in wards in Crewe, and more recently in other Care Communities.
- Our children and young people's emotional and mental wellbeing JSNA includes a wide variety of recommendations relevant to both our children and young people and also the many adults that support

## By 2025 we want:

- To continue to support a zero-suicide approach

## Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 3 Update

- them. The JSNA review details the many ways in which emotional and mental wellbeing varies across Cheshire East and is also accompanied by an equality impact assessment.
- Phase 2 of the Joint Outcomes Framework development has been initiated, which will monitor progress against the Place Plan and also the Place-level delivery plan.
  - A refreshed Tartan Rug has been published demonstrating variation in health and wellbeing need across the Cheshire East area. An interactive dashboard has been approved for publication and a video user guide is in the process of being finalised to be published alongside this new tool.
  - A lifestyle survey has been undertaken and has provided us with over 2500 responses (this represents a response rate of over 20%). This should improve our understanding of how residents would most like support in adopting and maintaining healthy lifestyles. Results will be available at Cheshire East, and Care Community level.
  - The Mental Health Partnership Board 5-year plan has been endorsed by the Health and Wellbeing Board
  - The Cheshire East staff flu vaccination campaign has seen increased numbers taking up the offer of a vaccine.
  - The Cheshire East Suicide and Self Harm Prevention Plan was endorsed by the Health and Wellbeing Board.
  - Cost of Living Community Response Grants: 14 VCFSE (Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise Sector) organisations were awarded £96,000 of UKSPF funds to support communities during the Cost-of-Living Crisis.
  - Projects meet the following objectives:
    - Supporting the VCFSE sector in Cheshire East by helping it recover from the Cost-of-Living impact by exploring how they may make efficiencies, whilst also responding to the needs of their beneficiaries.
    - Supporting the VCFSE sector to develop sustainable food solutions and long-term support to reduce the dependence on food banks.
    - Enabling those adversely impacted by the Cost of Living to access the right help and support, at the right time.
  - 20 organisations are signed up to the Cheshire East Warm Places charter, allowing residents to access services to remain warm throughout the colder months. All organisations provide the following:
    - A warm and welcoming space for the community.

By 2025 we want:

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- Treating everyone equally, with dignity and respect.
- Ensuring the Warm Place is always a safe place.
- Not disclosing any personal information regarding anyone who uses services, or attends the Warm Place.
- Not judging anyone on the circumstances on why they require services.
- ESF (European Social Fund) Journey First and Parent First Programme has supported over 4000 residents to access employment opportunities. This has been in partnership with Cheshire West and Chester Council, Warrington Borough Council and Weaver Vale Housing Trust.

Priority: Protect and support our communities and safeguard children, adults at risk and families from abuse, neglect and exploitation

Children receive the right support, by the right people, at the right time, so they are effectively protected from harm, and are supported to stay within their families and communities.

Key actions:

- Continued investment in Early Help and Prevention services
- Work with our partnerships to ensure there is a joined-up approach to safeguarding children

- A multi-agency project is ongoing to create an infant feeding strategy, which will promote choice to parents and carers and improve the accessibility of support.
- We have linked our JSNA webpages to the Safer Cheshire East Partnership Strategic Intelligence Assessment. This is to facilitate and support conversations about more holistic and upstream approaches to preventing harm.
- Members of the Cheshire East Intelligence Network have also supported the Pan-Cheshire Serious Violence needs assessment.
- Public Health have supported the development of the Pan-Cheshire Child Death Overview Panel annual report and will support in the dissemination of its findings.
- Public Health continues to input into the implementation of Joint Target Inspection Area recommendations.

People and organisations to work together to prevent and stop the risk and experience of abuse and neglect, whilst promoting the well-being of adults with care and support needs.

- There is a small reduction in the rate of children with a child protection plan from Q2, but it is important to recognise that the successful step down of one large family can impact significantly on this cohort. Very recently published national figures for 2023 show the England rate of 43.2 and a Northwest picture of 49.1. Our Statistical Neighbours (SN) ranged from 25.2 to 52.3 with nearest neighbours CW&C and Warrington at 49.3 and 52.3 respectively.
- In November 2023, the Safeguarding Adults Board supported the Ann Craft Trust in raising awareness about Adult Abuse, during Adult Safeguarding Week. Events included information about Economic Abuse, Carers,

## By 2025 we want:

### Key actions:

- Prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse and neglect to adults with care and support needs
- Safeguard adults at risk
- To address causes of abuse, neglect or exploitation
- To ensure that officers are adhering to legislation and promoting best practice

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Dementia and Domestic Abuse, Trauma Informed Practice and working with Complexity. Other highlights included supporting White Ribbon Day and hosting a joint Safeguarding Award Event, with the Safer Cheshire East Partnership and Childrens Safeguarding Partnerships.

- Cheshire East continues to receive a high number of Safeguarding Concerns compared to pre COVID activity. Although numbers are high, and the cases are more complex, this could also indicate that more people are aware of Adult Abuse and know how to report concerns. In line with national data, the most prevalent type of abuse is Neglect/Self Neglect.
- The Home Office updated its CONTEST Strategy for responding to Radicalisation in July 2023, and in November and December respectively, also updated Statutory Guidance for PREVENT and CHANNEL panels. The model for providing support to people who may be susceptible to radicalisation, is now the same as all other Local Authorities, with Counter Terrorism Policing taking the lead on managing all concerns relating to PREVENT. The performance of these panels are assessed annually by the Home Office and the next submission will be prepared in Q4.
- Cheshire East has contributed to the development of the Serious Violence Duty Strategy. This will be published in Q4.
- In July 2023, the Safer Cheshire East Partnership facilitated a Day of Action. Officers from Partner Agencies visited 685 properties in Cheshire East to seek the views of residents about how safe they felt in relation to Violence against Women and Girls. During the Q3 the results were analysed and presented to the Safer Cheshire East Partnership.
- A care of older people JSNA review has been initiated with good engagement from varied stakeholders.

## Priority: Be the best corporate parents to the children in our care

Always deliver on our pledges to care for children and young people, and those who are cared for will have an experience, that we will:

- Be a good corporate parent
- Improve education, training and employment outcomes

- Although the Q3 figure for repeat referrals is slightly higher than Q2. Overall, our position remains strong compared to national and statistical Neighbours averages. Repeat referrals are audited to identify any lessons where repeat issues are evident and what more could have been done to achieve sustainable outcomes.
- A further improved position on Q2 for the percentage of assessments completed within 45 days has been reported and is reflective of the continued focus on timeliness.

## By 2025 we want:

- Work to achieve permanence and keep children safe
- Improve health and wellbeing outcomes
- Prepare young people for adulthood

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- Overall, our year-to-date performance is a much-improved position of 77%. Released statistics for 22/23 a national picture of 82% with a NW position of 79%. Our SN ranged from 63% (ourselves) to 98% (North Yorkshire) with an average of 86%.
- Quarterly referrals and rates have remained static for the last 3 quarters. Regular auditing confirms decision making is appropriate and where referrals are reported with an outcome with NFA and reasons are fully understood and documented.
- Views from our children in care were specifically sought in relation to our children and young people's emotional and mental wellbeing JSNA review.
- We have also included data relating to our children in care in our SEND JSNA review.
- ESF (European Social Fund) Journey First programme has focussed employment support to long term unemployed, NEET (Not in education, employment or training) students (16-18 years of age) and jobless households. The extension of this programme for a further six months ensured a further 243 residents completed the programme.

## Priority: Support all children to have the best start in life

All children enjoy access to high quality childcare and support programmes that maximises their development in terms of speech and language, resilience and ability to learn and play.

### Key actions:

- Maintain high numbers of children placed in high quality childcare settings
- Promote and improve access to the parenting journey, with additional support offered to the most vulnerable families

- The number of children receiving free school meals was collected from the Autumn Census completed in October 2023 and reflects a decrease of 2% from those reported in the spring census. Regular information is sent to our schools and available at our Childrens Centres and Family Hubs to advise parents how to apply for the scheme.
- This is a very small drop from the May census which was 16.9%. The schools' teams and other services work closely with parents to encourage them to apply for and access their eligible provision wherever possible.
- The number of children taking up the 3- and 4-year-old offer remains consistently high, ensuring where possible children are accessing support from an early age to achieve their full potential.
- The financial incentives scheme to encourage pregnant women and their families to quit smoking is approaching the end of its pilot period and we will soon begin the formal evaluation.
- Our emotional and mental wellbeing JSNA findings have been fed into family hub development and children and young people commissioning conversations and early years provision is considered as part of our SEND JSNA review.

Priority: Increase opportunities for children, young adults and adults with additional needs

Great services and provision across the partnership for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) which means children's needs are met effectively and efficiently.

Key actions:

- Ensure that all recommendations from Ofsted inspections have been addressed and improvements are embedded in practice.
- Focus on further improving communication across the SEND partnership
- Review the pathways for transition to adulthood
- Expand the local provision of SEND places to enable more children to attend a school

- As of December 2023, there has been a further small increase in the number of individuals being supported with an EHCP. The teamwork with families over the summer period and at the start of new school years to ensure where needed the right support is in place to enable successful transitions to new schools.
- Although a slight reduction in the number of EHC plans completed within 20 weeks, from the position at Q2. Q3 still reflects a much-improved position overall from previous years. This, together with timely reviews, remain part of the focused SEND improvement work.
- The percentage of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) has reported a slight increase from Q2, there is often a small spike at the end of the Autumn term where individuals decide their initial path post 16 is not right for them. The Youth support service work closely with all individuals to support them with a range of options to find the best fit.
- A comprehensive SEND JSNA was initiated which aligns with other SEND workstream and will help to inform longer term strategic direction in relation to SEND.

## By 2025 we want:

Provision for young adults to live independently within in the community.

Key actions:

- Leisure, life and meaningful employment opportunities are developed to improve life chances for young adults
- Promote citizen engagement and participation

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- Independence is considered as part of the SEND JSNA review currently underway.
- Disability is considered as part of the lifestyle survey, undertaken as part of the JSNA work programme.
- Recruited an externally funded Business Engagement Officer (working directly with Cheshire East Businesses, to understand their recruitment challenges, connecting them with services supporting disadvantage cohorts into work and how to access support grants).
- Launched 3 Shared Prosperity Fund projects:
  - Inspiring Futures (FedCap supporting economically inactive people into work).
  - Digital inclusion (courses provided by Cheshire Learning Partnership).
  - Basic and Career skills (provided by Focussing First on People).
- Externally funded team member Jane Carroll gained National Numeracy Champion status. (Jane is the Project Manager for the externally funded numeracy programme called Multiply).
- Generated new cost savings by supporting more customers with disabilities into work as a positive alternative to their care plan support package (e.g., reducing the need for PA support).

Priority: Ensure all children have a high quality, enjoyable education that enables them to achieve to their full potential

All children enjoy the best education which prepares them to thrive in adulthood.

Key actions:

- Ensure we have sufficient school places locally to meet the differing needs of children and respond to our growing population.

- There is often a reported increase during Q3 in the number of children missing from education, this is experienced when individuals don't enrol as expected at the start of the new school year. In the main this is because parent/guardians haven't notified that they have either moved or taken up an alternative place. The team utilises a national schools system to resolve UK moves together with national agencies where individuals are believed to have moved abroad.
- Our SEND JSNA (once finalised) and our recently approved children and young people's JSNA will support strategic developments to achieve these actions.

By 2025 we want:

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- Support and challenge all education settings to deliver our key priorities with a focus on addressing inequalities.
- Provide support and challenge where children are not attending school or receiving an appropriate education.
- Support children to catch up on the learning they lost during Covid
- Support children and young people's mental health and wellbeing to resolve problems as early as possible

Priority: Reduce the reliance on long-term care by improving services closer to home and providing more extra care facilities, including dementia services

Vulnerable and older people live safely and maintain independence within community settings.

Key actions:

- Work with partners to develop appropriate accommodation and extra care housing models

- Our care of older people JSNA and Loneliness and Social Isolation JSNA are both underway and will provide recommendations in relation to supporting older people to live independently.
- Our Extra Care strategy was agreed at Adults and Health Committee in November 2023. We have seen a growth in domiciliary care capacity, in line with our strategy for people to receive care at home, with an 18% increase in the number of hours delivered by commissioned care providers.

## By 2025 we want:

People are cared for and valued by a professional and caring workforce.

Care4ce to become an exemplar high quality trading company.

Key actions:

- Develop a quality trading company
- Recruit and train a skilled and motivated workforce.
- Provide a professional pathway for progression

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- Following the impact of COVID and due to changes in the market around the cost and availability of high-quality health and social care provision, the decision around the development of a trading company is to be reviewed as the costs and risks around development may outweigh any anticipated benefits.
- The service continues to recruit and train a skilled and motivated workforce and the introduction of a Grade 5 Reablement worker role has offered opportunities for development and greater opportunities for support and integration with health colleagues.

To prioritise Home First for patients discharged from hospital. Where possible patients are discharged to a home of their choice.

Key actions:

- Expand and develop the Home First service to support people to stay at home longer
- Work to develop integrated health and social care teams
- Carers Strategy to be implemented
- Develop the Shared Lives service

- The Home First programme continues to develop and embed the model and principles of supporting people to remain supported at home and at the point of discharge.
- The key achievements for Q3 are as follows:
  - Two additional Community Occupational Therapy staff are working with people to remain living in their own home, avoiding hospital admission and working closely with the reablement service to provide aids and equipment, so that an individuals can remain at home with a reduced need for longer term care.
  - Cheshire East Council and partners in the NHS have launched an innovative animation, which shows how people can be better supported in their own home and how this will help to reduce hospital readmissions. This initiative, which aligns with the NHS's long-term plan, aims to empower people to receive the right level of care and treatment for their health conditions within the comfort and familiarity of their own homes.
- Digitalisation Project - "Support me when things go wrong".
  - A review of the Live Well page is underway to ensure this site has links which show Care Communities and, if selected, the links lead to a page that will only show services within that care

- Increased use of technology
  - community. GP practices have been added into each Care Community, to show how the services will appear.
  - Independent Supported Living have been commissioned to provide 1:1 support into each AED from 8am till 8pm Monday to Sunday. This service commencing on the 1st of October, until the 31st of March 24, is funded via BCF. The service will provide 1:1 support and supervision for patients in a place of safety within the AED department (or other assigned areas of the hospitals) where there is an assessed mental health need.
  - The community Connectors continue to be instrumental in supporting people at the point of discharge and have delivered good outcomes, including improved discharge and reduced reliance on domiciliary and residential care.
- Carers Payments to Facilitate Rapid Discharge: Exploring options and solutions to alleviate some of the pressures and free up hospital bed capacity quickly and safely.
- The scheme is also to raise awareness and identify carers within all hospital settings to ensure they have a better understanding of the hospital discharge process, so they feel confident and supported to return home with their loved one knowing they have the right support and connections. Impact – the scheme continues to support hospital discharges. During 2023/24, 152 carers have been supported through the scheme.
- The Community & Discharge Support Team, Community Support Connectors, is based at Leighton and Macclesfield Hospitals, integrated into the multidisciplinary team to help relieve system pressures around hospital discharge and care at home for pathway 0, 1 and 2 patients. Outcomes of the Community Support Connectors:
  - Reduce the care packages by providing constructive challenge and alternative provision.
  - Increase hospital discharge by providing constructive challenge and alternative provision.
  - Increase VCFSE involvement in discharge packages of care.
- Identify number of gaps in VCFSE provision where if available any other of the 3 outcomes would be achieved, this has resulted in:
  - 396 individual patient referrals received to the Community Support Connectors for patient discharge or hospital admission avoidance. 396 hospital bed days avoided following Community Support Connector input at £500 cost per day equal to £198,000.

By 2025 we want:

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- Number of social care visits avoided through Community Support Connector action through community sector input 198 (Assumed 50% of patients require 1x30 min social care call per day for 7 days post discharge at £10.98 per call) equal to £15,218.
- Since April 2023, 1022 individual patient referrals have been received to the Community Support Connectors avoiding cost of £500 per hospital bed per day equalling £512,000 with 511 social care visits avoided totalling £39,275 in avoided care costs.

Adults receive quality assessments of need and support planning and good quality services to keep them safe and maintain their physical and mental wellbeing.

Key actions:

- Fully implement social work practice within adult social care
- Maintain and improve the quality of care and support services

- Standards of Social Work practice and continuing professional development are monitored at a national and local level.
- The Cheshire East Practice Assurance Framework includes professional supervision, meeting the national Standards of the Social Work regulator (Social Work England); the Approved and Supported Year in Employment for newly qualified Social Work staff and Progression Panels for Social Workers, advancing from Grade 8 to Grade 9 Social Worker, through Approved Mental Health Professional reapproval Panels, Case File audits, feedback from people who use and access services and through three weekly Quality Performance and Assurance Boards, chaired by the Director of ASC Operations, attended by Heads of Service, the Strategic Practice Assurance and Development Manager and representative Locality/Practice Managers.

# A thriving and sustainable place

Priority: A great place for people to live, work and visit

Enable access to well designed, affordable and safe homes for all our residents.

Key actions:

- Deliver housing to meet the needs of all residents including vulnerable and older people in the borough
- Review and evaluate the need for a private rented sector licensing scheme
- Ensure affordable homes are “tenure blind” and focussed on quality

- We continue to work in partnership with our Registered Housing Providers to increase the supply of affordable homes across Cheshire East. To date 451 new homes have been completed, which exceeds the affordable housing requirement of 355 per annum.
- To ensure that social housing is allocated fairly, in line with legislation and with local and national priorities, we have reviewed and consulted on revisions to the Cheshire East Common Allocations policy. The revised policy will be presented to the Economy and Growth Committee in March 24 for approval.
- To meet the housing needs of some of our most vulnerable residents we have recommissioned our Housing Related Support Contracts.
- Work continues on the development of the Gypsy and Traveller transit site, which will provide a safe place for the travelling community to stay whilst in the area, reducing the level of unauthorised encampments. Completion is scheduled for summer 24.
- We have secured Move on and Prevention funding from the Government Rough Sleeping initiative which we are going to commission supplement support for the refugee community to lift pressures on our already busy homelessness services and support them into sustainable accommodation.
- We are progressing with an open procurement process to secure specialist accommodation for those with a Learning Disability on Council owned land.
- Our recently published Tartan Rug can inform these processes alongside the poverty JSNA.

## By 2025 we want:

A high-quality accessible library service, that remains relevant to the changing needs of Cheshire East residents and delivers value for money.

### Key actions:

- Improve and adapt our libraries to meet any changing needs which offer value for money
- Update and refresh the Library Strategy

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- Following the decision in July by the Council's Environment and Communities Committee, which approved a set of revised opening hours for the libraries service, the required consultation took place with staff and unions and the revised library hours were implemented on the 1st of December 2023. Two town councils decided to 'Top up' their local provision on the revised hours for their respective libraries are below:
  - Crewe Town Council – top up to maintain opening hours of 9.30am – 6pm each weekday (7.5 hours per week)
  - Nantwich Town Council – top up to maintain opening hours of 9.30am – 6pm each weekday (4 hours per week)
- The scheme remains open to other Town or Parish Councils who may wish to sign up, and initial conversations around are ongoing.
- Works to secure immediately available income opportunities have also progressed with the following now in place:
  - Alexander clinic- Health and wellbeing
  - Barclays Bank – Macclesfield, Wilmslow and Holmes Chapel
  - NatWest bank Popup service- Knutsford
  - Weight watchers- Holmes Chapel
  - Wilmslow Town Council- Space within Wilmslow Library
- Conversations are also taking place with other banks that have expressed an interest in using the libraries.
- As per the Committee resolution now that current review is fully implemented work will commence on a Library Strategy which will focus on how the Library Service becomes more financially self-sustaining via a medium to long term view.

By 2025 we want:	Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 3 update
<p>High quality leisure and sports provision across the borough that delivers good value for money.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve our leisure centres</li> <li>• Provide walking and cycling recreational routes and outdoor recreational space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Leisure Review – officers working with the Council’s appointed delivery partner Everybody Health and Leisure have continued to bring forward the review. A consultation exercise has been undertaken and the output of this along with recommendations around the ongoing investment in leisure service is the subject of a report to the Environment and Communities Committee in March.</li> <li>• The redevelopment of Congleton Leisure Centre now been completed with an official opening ceremony held in late June. Initial monitoring of use suggests that the investment will as planned achieve a wide range of benefits.</li> <li>• The Learn to Swim scheme has grown to 9,700 swimmers participating in weekly lessons and leisure memberships have exceeded 20,000 for the first time, with over 2.5 million individual visits to our leisure centre sites.</li> </ul>
<p>To reduce the number of long-term empty dwellings.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish baseline and review current strategy and policies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We continue to work with owners of empty properties to try and bring properties back into use. The level of long-term empty homes continues to be maintained at below 1% (0.92%) of the total number of residential properties.</li> </ul>
<p>New development to be appropriately controlled to protect and support our borough.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To keep the Local Plan Strategy under review</li> <li>• Provide an effective Planning Service with capacity to efficiently determine planning applications</li> <li>• Robust and effective planning enforcement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning application performance against statutory performance measures is above target for major applications (91%) but below (88%) for non-majors. This includes extensions of time. A backlog of planning applications remains with staff retention and recruitment difficulties across all aspects of the Planning service.</li> <li>• The number of applications in the backlog continues to reduce (approximately 200 over normal ‘on hand’ levels). Fast track days continue to provide focused sessions for the backlog with a particular focus on the older applications. The number of applications now being determined within 8 weeks is also improving.</li> <li>• The number of enforcement notices has continued to increase over the quarter (and throughout the year) reflecting good work to address some of the backlog of cases seeking to protect the Borough from unlawful developments</li> <li>• Work on detailed Supplementary Planning Documents to accompany the Local Plan continues with Sustainable Drainage Systems, Biodiversity Net Gain and Developer Contributions all out to consultation during this period.</li> <li>• The Modernisation Plan focus continues to be directed to reducing the backlog; the pending staffing restructure; the implementation of the new IT system; and improvements to the customer experience – all</li> </ul>

By 2025 we want:	Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 3 update
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation and maintenance of additional supplementary policy documents</li> <li>• Effective and competitive Building Control Service</li> <li>• Continued application of CEC Design Guide principles and focus on Place</li> </ul>	<p>being monitored by Transformation Board. Both the restructure and the IT system implementation have revised timeframes due to various delays including issues with the IT supplier, which have added to existing challenges.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work on s106 audit recommendations have been prioritised, with significant progress being made in working with other services, updating IT systems and documenting process and procedures. The Infrastructure Funding Statement was issued at the end of December.</li> <li>• Building Control continues to adapt to new legislation and the changes required from the Building Safety Act , including formal registration of qualified inspectors.</li> </ul>
<p>To make best use of our surplus buildings and assets to support the borough and our partners.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the community asset transfer policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council continues to use its revised community and asset transfer policy advising partners and services on the process to be followed. A programme of meetings is underway working collaboratively with local Town Councils to consider the opportunities for local support and management of key assets.</li> <li>• The Council continues to release assets as appropriate to support the Capital Programme. In Q3 service is on target to deliver anticipated credit for the financial year.</li> </ul>
<p>Continue to grow the Cheshire East visitor economy.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver Cultural Strategy and Place Marketing Action Plan</li> <li>• Deliver Tatton Park business plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The value of the Visitor Economy for Cheshire East has recovered well since the Covid pandemic decimated the sector in 2020. The most up to date STEAM tourism economic impact modelling data shows an increase of 60% on 2020 figures and over 44% on 2021 figures. This provided a total of £879m of value to the Cheshire East economy in 2022, with almost 13 million visitors enjoying Cheshire East last year.</li> <li>• This year, Cheshire’s Destination Management Organisation, Marketing Cheshire, have been awarded important LVEP status (Local Visitor Economy Partnership). This will enable greater partnership working with Visit Britain/Visit England national tourism agency, as well as new opportunities for funding.</li> <li>• Since the pandemic, hospitality businesses have had significant issues around recruitment and a partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions and Cheshire College to develop a renewed focus and approach to hospitality recruitment, retention, and skills has been progressed. This work is now starting to see results, giving local people new career opportunities and helping local businesses access potential employees to</li> </ul>

cover their vacancies. An innovative school's partnership with hotels has also been initiated, enabling training and experience opportunities for young people in the hospitality sector.

- In 2023 Cheshire East hotels have performed well and are almost back to pre-pandemic levels for occupancy, with an occupancy rate of 73% in 2023, against 70% in 2022. The average rate achieved per room sold has also increased, and record numbers has been experienced in every month for 2023. Hotels in Cheshire East are now receiving £4 extra per room sold in 2023 than they did in 2022 and £16 more per room sold than in 2019. Cheshire East hotel revenue per available room has also had a record-breaking year, with the amount achieved increasing £5 per available room to £57. The pre-pandemic rate achieved was £46.
- The shared service 'Archives - A Story Shared' programme, including the building of the new History Centre in Crewe, was successful in achieving a £4.5 million grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Detailed technical design RIBA 4 has now been completed and construction contractors appointed. Hoardings have been erected around the site with detailed images of the project for the public.
- Following the commissioning of a series of mural artworks in Macclesfield, an interactive art trail map has been produced which has generated positive publicity and additional footfall and visitors to the town. In Crewe, the Heritage Wall public art piece has been installed on the façade of the new multi-story car park as part of the Royal Arcade scheme and a Cultural Education Partnership (LCEP) has been established. This has brought together 20 schools and educational organisations across the surrounding areas, together with cultural organisations to provide improved cultural experiences and opportunities for children and young people.
- A programme of events and activities on Lyceum Square in Crewe was delivered over the Summer 2023 period with new groups, audiences and individuals using this outdoor space. The Lyceum Theatre, along with theatres across the UK, still face challenges with audiences yet to return to pre-covid levels. The Rocky Horror Show was well received by audiences however, and Panto ticket sales were ahead of last year.
  - Performances – 202 against a target of 191
  - Audience Figures – 72,157 against a target of 77,690
  - Occupancy 50% against a target of 60%
- It is worth noting that achieved figures for each of these performance indicators for the prior year were 189 performances, 59,964 audiences and 47% occupancy at the same point, so there is growth in all areas, indicating a gradual return to pre-pandemic levels.

By 2025 we want:

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- The Creative Champions scheme which aims to develop additional voluntary capacity for cultural events and projects, developed a new constituted group in Crewe and is now working with partners in Congleton on a similar scheme.
- A cultural grants programme will be launched in February offering organisations grants for cultural activity across the Borough in line with the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and CEC cultural framework priorities.
- Over 300 community events across the Borough have received support during 2023/24, with event organisers receiving advice, technical support and permissions.
- Tatton Park continues to be an important driver of the borough’s visitor economy, and an important environmental and community resource. Day to day operation continues to provide challenges as a result of the combination of shifts in visitor dynamics post-pandemic, cost inflation and changes in demand due to the cost of living. Tatton has held a number of established and new events this year which have had a positive impact on visitor numbers and income. This year's Christmas offer and visitor experiences at the Mansion, Gardens and Farm have proved popular, attracting new audiences, admissions income and secondary spend. Pricing and promotional initiatives are ongoing and include flexible ticket pricing for peak and off-peak periods, online admission discounts and targeted promotional incentives. Catering and Retail continue to report brisk trading during good weather and seasonal event periods and Parkland admission entries are holding up against budget targets.

Priority: Welcoming, safe and clean neighbourhoods

Crime and anti-social activity and anti-social behaviour to be reduced.

Key actions:

- Use our full range of education, engagement and enforcement tools to protect our communities.
- Take formal enforcement action as appropriate
- Clear and integrated enforcement approach with

- As part of a national operation to scope the compliance of age verification processes of online vaping product retailers, Trading Standards conducted 100 online test purchases with 15 sales being made and 13 products being delivered, 2 of the 13 products also being non-compliant with vaping regulations. Warning and compliance letters have been issued with further compliance testing in 2024.
- As part of an ongoing investigation named Operation Dublin, Trading Standards officers executed a warrant at the home address of a suspect illegally trading in counterfeit music awards. An amount of evidence was seized during the warrant with enquiries now ongoing.
- After almost six and a half years since the original criminal case began into two online counterfeit traders, our Financial Investigator and Trading Standards officers finally reached the end to the confiscation investigation evidencing the criminal benefit of their activities. The final order requires that the criminals pay back a combined sum in excess of £100k.

By 2025 we want:

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relevant fit for purpose policies

- Investment in technology to enhance CCTV delivery

- The Environmental Protection Team, supported by legal services have been successful in countering a Judicial Review application. The JR was in response to our plans to prosecute a local business. The prosecution case is continuing.
- The CCTV wireless project continues to progress although the December 2023 deadline has been extended due to technical issues experienced at the end of the year. Those areas which have gone live have already demonstrated higher resolution, higher quality images and increased zoom levels enabling the Council and partners to have access to a more reliable source of information.
- Two notable CCTV evidenced cases in Quarter 3 include the identification of prolific shoplifting activity at TK Maxx in Macclesfield and the identification of a suspect male involved in violence found to be carrying a knife. In both cases arrests were made; the shoplifting case recovered £3K worth of stolen goods.
- Following conversation at the Cheshire East Intelligence Network, we have linked our JSNA webpages to the Safer Cheshire East Partnership Strategic Intelligence Assessment. This is to facilitate and support conversations about more holistic and upstream approaches to preventing harm. Members of the Cheshire East Intelligence Network have also supported the Pan-Cheshire Serious Violence needs assessment. Combatting Drug Partnership established. Continued development of Public health relationships with licensing re: PH Input to alcohol license applications.
- 

Victims of crime and exploitation to be supported effectively by the council and partners through collaboration.

Key actions:

- Work with the police and partners to share intelligence and problem solve local issues
- Refresh the Safer Cheshire East Partnership Plan for 2020-23

- 
- The Older Persons Scams Awareness and Aftercare Project, a partnership between Age UK Cheshire East and Cheshire East Trading Standards, won the Safeguarding & Dignity Award for the category of Community Safety/Partnership Working.
- Part of the award made mention to “The success of this project has undoubtedly resulted in old and vulnerable residents of Cheshire East being made more aware of scams and crime and prevented repeat victimisation”.
- This year the project has kept over 1250 people safe from scams and fraud through group and individual awareness sessions and supported 34 victims of fraud to get back on their feet.
- We have linked our JSNA webpages to the Safer Cheshire East Partnership Strategic Intelligence Assessment. This is to facilitate and support conversations about more holistic and upstream approaches to

By 2025 we want:	Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 3 update
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise awareness around safeguarding</li> </ul> <p>Raise awareness around safeguarding and community safety issues</p>	<p>preventing harm. Members of the Cheshire East Intelligence Network have also supported the Pan-Cheshire Serious Violence needs assessment.</p>
<p>To protect residents and improve our environment.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review local air quality through our Annual Status Reports, taking action to respond to areas of poorer air quality</li> <li>• Air Quality Management Areas have an action plan outlining planned measures to improve quality</li> <li>• A regulatory service that balances advice and education</li> <li>• Provide a robust licensing regime for alcohol, gambling and hackney carriage private hire vehicles</li> <li>• Proactive inspection and surveillance programmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Air Quality Team is currently undertaking a review of the <a href="#">Cheshire East Air Quality Strategy</a>. The aim of the Strategy is to support the Council in its air quality responsibilities and outlines how it will work with both internal and external partners to ensure that air quality is considered as part of all relevant decisions and policies across the Council. A revised strategy will be subject to public consultation and will ultimately be considered by Environment and Communities Committee later this year.</li> <li>• As part of softer measures around the air quality improvements, the AQ team have undertaken three education lessons at local primary schools, are continuing to organise the installation of ‘no vehicle idling signage’ and arranging for the installation of cycle stands at points across Congleton (these latter two activities are funded by specific Defra grant funding).</li> <li>• Quarter 3 saw an increase in consultation responses from Regulatory Services to Planning Applications aimed at minimising the impact of development to individuals and the wider environment. A total of 649 consultation responses were issued dealing with matters such as noise, air quality, contaminated land and light nuisance (up 50% on previous periods in 2023).</li> <li>• In advance of Spring and the lambing season, the Health and Safety Team have issued a mailshot to all petting zoo businesses advising that the inspection programme is due to start and signposting them to health, safety and infection control advice.</li> <li>• We have completed our sewer baiting contract target for the year (April – March) with 477/450 lifts being completed. This work is part funded by United Utilities and allows us to target baiting in areas with known or reported rat problems where a specific source cannot be identified.</li> <li>• New legislation banning the use of a further range of single use plastics (cutlery, balloon sticks, polystyrene food and drink containers) came into force on 1 October 2023. In response the Trading Standards Team have produced a specific guidance document to help businesses navigate the rules and the exemptions,</li> </ul>

Improved green spaces for all. Enabling people to exercise and socialise in our parks and open spaces.

- Key actions:
- Review and improve our play areas and parks
  - Work with partners to provide a more welcoming environment
  - Secure funding for additional recreation provision along with improvements to the current provision

- organised social media releases and provided a general FAQ’s document all of which are being used as part of general inspection work and in response to complaints and intelligence.
- During the Christmas break we were alerted to a suspected case of Blue Tongue in a flock of sheep within the Borough. Fortunately, further testing provided a negative result and further action was not required. Bluetongue is a notifiable disease and must be reported. It is a viral disease which affects ruminants (sheep, cattle, goats etc) as well as camelids (llamas and alpacas). It does not affect horses or pigs. Symptoms include fever, lesions, redness of the eyes, nose and mouth, reddening of the skin above the hoof, excessive salivation and nasal discharge.
  - We held two meetings with the taxi and private hire trade during Quarter 3. The aim of these sessions was to provide a structured means by which the trade could raise questions and concerns. Following these meetings some initial changes have been made to our service delivery methods, others have been taken away for further, more detailed consideration and there remain those that are legislative matters over which we have no control as a licensing authority. We have committed to hosting regular events with the trade in 2024 and beyond.

- The Council continues to inspect, repair and where investment is available improve our play areas and parks. A major project funded by the Crewe Towns Fund will refurbish 8 pocket parks as key green spaces amongst densely populated areas of Crewe.
- The four pocket parks which are due to be completed by Quarter 4 of this financial year are progressing well. McLaren Street Playing Field has seen major works being completed bringing refurbished footpaths, park furniture, and an enclosed area for dogs to play off the lead.
- Tree planting on site and the play area works are near completion. School Crescent’s play area works have been completed and it is due to open imminently.
- There will be smaller works to follow on the site including planting and access improvements. Similarly, the Derby Docks work is progressing well with the play area due to open imminently. Now some grounds work will take place to tidy the rest of the site up. Queens Street is progressing well with the planned Skate Park due to begin construction in Quarter 4. The improved parks will offer health, wellbeing, and amenity enhancement to these vibrant green spaces amidst densely populated areas of Crewe.
- We have completed as part of the Councils Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) an operational review of the grounds maintenance programme for our parks, public open spaces, and other green spaces and developed a draft policy and proposals for future maintenance on our green space.

By 2025 we want:

- Increase the number of rewilded areas within our parks and open spaces

Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 3 update

- These draft policies and proposals have been through a public consultation which ended on the 24th of November.
- The maintenance policies and proposals have been revised taking consultation feedback into account and the revised versions are due to go back to Environment and Communities committee for a final decision in February of 2024.
- The policy will allow for more rewilded areas within our parks and open spaces with increased biodiversity across Cheshire East.
- Public Health funding has continued to support the Green Spaces Social Prescribing project.

Priority: To reduce our impact on our environment

To have minimised overall waste generated in the borough and maximised our levels of recycling.

Key actions:

- Introduction of the Municipal Waste Strategy
- To review and consult on the household waste recycling provision

- The Council’s official recycling rate for 2022-23 is 51.7%. This is a reduction from the 2021-22 at 56.3%. We expect to see this drop further with the introduction of the Councils Garden waste subscription charge in Q4 of this year. The Council will therefore need to look to additional measures to increase reuse and recycling in future years to achieve the current 50% target and the national recycling target of 60 % by 2035.
- To contribute to this for the first time the council has worked with its contractor to be able to offer mattress recycling at the Household Waste Sites.
- From January 2024 the government has announced that Councils will no longer be able to charge for domestic rubble deposited at the household waste sites.
- In October residents were able to sign up for the chargeable garden waste service, the subscription rates were as follows: October 2023 – 18,385, November 2023 - 11,745, December 2023 - 14,111
- We will continue to monitor the key measure of ‘kg residual waste per household’. It will be important to reduce residual waste per household to achieving recycling targets though continuing waste and recycling education and campaigns as well as potential service changes. As part of this work the council though Ansa undertake a large-scale waste prevention program with over 100 volunteer hours last quarter.

**By 2025 we want:**

To improve biodiversity and natural habitats in the borough.

Key actions:

- Increased rewilding
- Embed biodiversity, including off-setting, across Cheshire East Council estate
- Deliver the tree planting programme

**Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 3 update**

- As part of the Council Carbon program a 15ha land asset belonging to Cheshire East Council has been identified as a suitable site for tree planting and funding to support this has been secured from the Trees for Climate fund.
- Subject to a successful procurement we hope to plant native woodland on this site during Q4.

**Priority: A transport network that is safe and promotes active travel**

Improvements in the strategic infrastructure that support sustainable and inclusive growth across the borough.

Key actions:

- Delivery of major infrastructure programmes

- The Northwest Crewe highways package that improves safe access to the hospital and enables economic growth remains on programme for completion in Summer 2024 despite the challenging ground conditions as a result of the extremely wet winter.
- The Middlewich Eastern Bypass Compulsory Purchase and Side Road Orders were confirmed following a public inquiry and the Full Business Case was submitted to the Department for Transport last year. A final decision from the Department for Transport to release the funding is expected imminently to hopefully allow works to commence in 2024.
- The A500 Dualling scheme progress has been paused following the cancellation of the northern sections of HS2 whilst the Council considers its options, as HS2 were due to fund part of the scheme.
- The Cheshire East Intelligence Network has been linked with those developing the Local Plan to ensure the Council optimises use of intelligence as part of this.

Safer and well-maintained roads.

- Delivery of planned investment programmes for highway assets is progressing. In year challenges relating to changes in asset condition being managed within programme/budget. Highway service is mindful of

By 2025 we want:

Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 3 update

Key actions:

- Deliver planned investment to maintain the highway network
- Review of appropriate strategies, such as speed management

emerging Council financial challenges and assessing potential changes as part of the Place Directorate response.

- The weather events seen during the last quarter have had an adverse impact on the highway network. During which the service has successfully responded to the adverse weather events to keep the highway safe and the team are now responding to the backlog of defects and drainage issues.
- The reactive response has affected the delivery of the annual capital programme with a number of schemes deferred into the new financial year.
- Development of new pedestrian crossing strategy ongoing and consultation currently live.
- Adoption of Speed Management Strategy, further process to manage requests being developed.
- As a result of the implementation of the corporate Tree Risk Management Strategy the service area is experiencing a financial pressure. This is attributed to the management and enforcement of the large number of defects found on land adjacent to the highway and also the large number of defects identified on highway network.

Investment in electric vehicle infrastructure in our key service centres

- The Council has successfully applied to extend the Government funding to provide a number of On Street Residential Charge points throughout the borough. Procurement of a delivery contractor has commenced through the Oxford EV Procurement Framework and a supplier is expected to be appointed in Spring 2024.
- Following an application to the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Capital Fund, the Department for Transport has awarded Cheshire East Council £2.172million funding to support charge point delivery across the borough.

To increase parking provision close to local transport hubs.

Key actions:

- Complete Local Transport Plan parking reviews

- Parking reviews have been completed and used to inform a number of changes to the Council's approach to public car parking at the principal towns, key and local services centres in Cheshire East. These recommendations were approved at Highways Committee on 25th January 2024 and are expected to be implemented in late 2024.

By 2025 we want:

Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 3 update

To promote uptake of cycling in our local service centres.

Key actions:

- Installation of cycle storage facilities in Cheshire East car parks
- Invest in new cycle routes and improve existing ones
- Prohibit parking in existing cycle lanes

- Work to complete the Hurdsfield Black Lane cycle is nearing completion with support from Sustrans.
- The Council has successfully secured funds from Active Travel England to deliver phase 1 of the Wilmslow to Handforth active travel corridor. Work continues to secure funding for Phase 2, which will enable completion of the full route.
- Active travel initiatives are being linked into the development of the Cheshire east All Together Active Implementation Plan

To improve the speed and efficiency of public transport and encourage more residents to make fewer car journeys.

- Feasibility studies into the creation of rapid transit routes connecting existing infrastructure with key employment sites

- The Council has completed a study to identify critical bus priority measures that will support the punctual and reliable operation of buses. Development of these priority schemes will take place by deploying successive rounds of BSIP / BSIP+ funding.

To reduce areas of the borough not served by public transport.

Key actions:

- Submit proposals to Rural Transport Fund
- Develop quality bus partnerships with operators and town councils

- The Council's Go-Too service in the southwest of the borough – the Nantwich/ Audlem/ Wybunbury area – is funded through the Rural Mobility Fund. This funding will come to an end in August 2024. Plans to review the future options for Go-Too and Flexilink DRT are included in a bus review programme to take place in early 2024.
- The Enhanced Partnership has been prioritising routes for investment as part of the Bus Service Improvement Plan. In 2024 work is focussing on Route 84 – Crewe-Sandbach-Congleton-Macclesfield which is one of the strategic bus routes serving the borough. The approach will link investment in passenger facilities to complement the operator's investment in new vehicles.

By 2025 we want:

To encourage an increase in the use of public transport (especially buses).

Key actions:

- Operators work together to share real time information
- Bus routes planned to provide multi-modal connectivity
- Cheshire East bus app developed

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- The Council's Enhanced Partnership with local bus operators is meeting quarterly to steer the delivery of our Bus Service Improvement Plan projects. These measures are included in our 2023/24 delivery programme.

More residents to use walking routes.

Key actions:

- Promote existing routes and nature trails
- Create new walking routes between service centres

- Working with partners on the Bollin Way and developing shared routes continues where possible. The promotion of trails at the Council's countryside sites and Tatton Park is ongoing.
- Maintaining the Public Rights of Way network through resolving issues and obstructions on paths. The 2023 random survey of paths across the network undertaken by (and with thanks to) East Cheshire Ramblers and Peak and Northern Footpaths Society volunteers, inspected 49% of paths across the Borough. 93% of paths surveyed were classed as good/no fault or acceptable/fault but not serious.
- Supporting local communities to develop opportunities for permissive paths to avoid road walking.
- Progressing s106 funded improvement schemes to increase accessibility on routes between development sites and service centres and the wider path network.
- Working with landowners and developers to accommodate, divert and improve Public Rights of Way.

Priority: Thriving urban and rural economies with opportunities for all

Delivery of a strategic regeneration plan for Crewe.

Key actions:

- Successful delivery of the regeneration programmes

- Challenging times exist in the regeneration and property sectors, and the team responsible for delivering and overseeing the regeneration of Crewe town centre are continuing to progress all projects despite the significant and persistent cost inflation in the construction sector which represents a major risk to all capital projects.
- With support from the Government's Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) for Crewe, the Council has made progress with:
  - Flag Lane Link: a highways and cycle scheme improving connectivity into the town centre from the west of Crewe. The main part of this scheme completed in summer 2023 and is now operational. The remaining part of the scheme, on Delamere Street, is due to complete in Summer 2024.
  - Adaptive Signals: innovative new traffic signalling technology installed to the south of the town centre. This is expected to become operational by Spring 2024.
  - Southern Gateway: the creation of a new pedestrian and cycle link between Oak Street/High Street and Forge Street, as part of a wider scheme to improve connectivity between the railway station and the town centre. Progress has been made in acquiring the necessary land and site works are expected to start in early 2024 and complete Winter 2024/25.
  - Civic Centre/History Centre preparation: as part of a linked project to deliver a new History Centre, technical and legal work has progressed in relation to the demolition of the former library, deck and under-croft car park. Preparatory work commenced in December 2023 and main demolition works will commence in February 2024.
  - Technology and Digital Innovation Campus (TADIC): plans have advanced for the creation of new co-working space at the former Municipal Building offices (NB not the historic civic amenities). Contractors have been appointed to undertake works commencing Spring 2024 completing Autumn. In Q3 a preferred lead tenant was selected who will be responsible for the operation of the co-working space after completion in Winter 2024/25.. Separately, although no longer expected to be co-working space, plans to safeguard Christ Church have been developed.
  - Sustainable Energy Network: Investment in energy improvements being implemented including to Lifestyle Centre, Lyceum Theatre and Delamere House to deliver carbon reduction and enable future heat network.

- As previously indicated the In-Town Living project cannot be delivered within the timescales of the Future High Streets Fund. The department is, however, planning to take an alternative approach to delivering this project in 2024/25, which will relate to the Chester Street and/or Delamere Street car park sites, subject to planning and car park closure;
- The Council has continued to fulfil its role as accountable body for Crewe Town Board and the governance of the Towns Fund (TF) and Accelerated Towns Fund (ATF) grants which support regeneration in Crewe. The Economic Development team has led in delivering a number of these projects including:
- The Ly2 project at Lyceum Square launched in Summer 2023 is providing a new public entertainment and performance space at the heart of the town centre, adjacent to the Lyceum Theatre and Market Hall. The project includes stages, a giant video screen, new artwork, seating and planting areas to provide an attractive setting for visitors.
- Mill Street Corridor improvements, as part of the wider scheme to better connect the railway station to the town centre (also refer to the Southern Gateway FHSF project above). Designs have been developed and costed, alongside consultation with local residents and stakeholders ahead of a planning application which was submitted in Autumn 2023. As part of this project, detailed designs have been developed for new wayfinding in Crewe town centre; although expected to be delivered in a phased programme, subject to availability of funding, this will ensure a consistent style and format to help orientate visitors to Crewe's established and new amenities.
- History Centre public realm improvements secured planning consent and will be delivered alongside the FHSF and National Lottery Heritage Fund elements of the project to provide new public realm and parking.
- The Repurposing Our High Streets grant scheme, which was launched in Q1 has supported a range of new businesses in Crewe town centre, bringing vacant town centre premises back into use, this project is being delivered by the service's Business & Growth team.
- The Crewe Youth Zone project secured planning consent, and officers are working across the council with Onside and Crewe Youth Zone charity to progress the development of this site at Oak Street carpark, with works expected to commence Spring 2024.
- Royal Arcade Phase 1: Works continue to progress in delivering a new bus station and multi-storey car park at the heart of Crewe town centre. This is not expected to be completed in Spring 2024. The new car park will provide capacity for other existing surface car parks to be used for other, more active uses, including the Ly2, History Centre and Youth Zone projects referred to elsewhere.

By 2025 we want:	Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 3 update
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The recently refurbished Market Hall continues to operate successfully. Opened in May 2021 and the data continues to show that it is becoming an anchor retail, leisure, and entertainment venue in the town.</li> </ul>
<p>Delivery of a strategic regeneration plan for Macclesfield.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successful delivery of the regeneration programme for Macclesfield</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Macclesfield regeneration activity has been limited in scale over the last 18 months due to lack of availability of capital funding and lack of support from competitive central funding sources. However, in the 3rd quarter of 23/24, the new public accessible toilets and Changing Places toilet has been opened in the Indoor Market, utilizing Town Council funding and a Changing Places Grant.</li> <li>Additionally, part of the Cheshire East UKSPF allocation has been secured for two new capital projects for Macclesfield, due to be recommended for inclusion in the CEC capital programme as part of the MTFS being considered in February 2024. These projects, one proposed to enhance the Indoor Market, the other to provide relatively low-cost enhancements to the public realm in the town centre, are both aligned to the Macclesfield Strategic Regeneration Strategy. Both are scalable and planned to be delivered in 24/25.</li> <li>Footfall in Macclesfield Town Centre is being monitored, particularly in view of the opening of the Barracks Mill out of town retail park in late 2022 and the concurrent closure of the town centre Marks and Spencer store. Data continues to show that Macclesfield has not yet recovered to pre-pandemic footfall levels with total footfall in the 4 months spanning September- December 2023 being 9% down on the same period in 2019. This contrasts with Crewe where the data indicates footfall has increased by 12% during the same period.</li> </ul>
<p>Successful town centres in our other key towns.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with our partners and key stakeholders to understand what is important to our towns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comparing annual footfall data for the six-month period April-Sep 2023 with the same six-month period in 2019 (pre-covid) continues to indicate significant variations in footfall recovery across centres, with Handforth showing very significant higher footfall levels than pre-covid, Congleton, Crewe, Middlewich, Nantwich, Poynton and Sandbach also with increased footfall levels. Across this period Wilmslow footfall levels also now slightly exceed the levels in the same quarter in 2019. Macclesfield, Knutsford and Alsager are still recording reduced footfall when compared to the pre-covid position.</li> </ul>

Town	Recorded footfall data Sep – Dec 2019	Recorded footfall data Sep – Dec 2023	% change
Alsager	1,456,792	1,105,809	-24%
Congleton	3,246,807	4,125,559	^ 27%
Crewe	4,696,351	5,292,565	^12%
Handforth	1,089,936	2,212,158	^103%
Knutsford	3,354,472	3,266,459	-3%
Macclesfield	6,104,195	5,559,834	-9%
Middlewich	987,748	1,504,539	^ 52%
Nantwich	1,971,777	2,427,220	^23%
Poynton	1,564,511	1,748,553	^12%
Sandbach	2,462,442	3,138,579	^27%
Wilmslow	4,235,579	4,305,802	^2%

- In 2022 Town Centre Vitality Reports were finalised for the nine key service centres across the borough, identifying key opportunities to support town centre vitality, as and when funding can be secured either by CEC or other interested parties such as Town Councils or BIDs. Some external organisations referenced these plans to make cases for Shared Prosperity Funding, and some have been successful in attracting such funding to enable the delivery of several projects designed to support town centres including:
  - Knutsford Market Hall Renovation- Knutsford Town Council
  - Visit Knutsford Campaign and Tourism Strategy – Knutsford Town Council
  - Totally Congleton – Congleton Town Council
  - Congleton Market Area Feasibility – Congleton Town Council
  - Knutsford Town Centre Improvement Feasibility Studies – Knutsford Town Council
  - Crewe Town Centre Arts Development Trail- Crewe Town Council
  - Macclesfield Museum on the Street – Macclesfield Town Council
  - Wilmslow For All – Wilmslow BID

Maximise the commercial and regeneration opportunities

By 2025 we want:	Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 3 update
<p>associated with HS2 for the whole borough</p>	
<p>Thriving and active rural communities.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver the Rural action plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A grant scheme has been rolled out using Rural England Prosperity funding to support Cheshire East based rural businesses including support for small scale investment in micro and small rural enterprises and the development and promotion of the rural visitor economy. A review of the various cross cutting elements of the Rural Action Plan 2022-2026 will take place this year, including progress to date.</li> <li>• Applications are open to the Improved, Greener, Community Buildings Fund which is utilising Rural England Prosperity Funding to improve rural community facilities and buildings, enhance energy efficiency and save carbon. VCFSE organisations and Local Councils can apply for a maximum of £15,000 or 75% of their total project costs.</li> </ul>
Priority: To be carbon neutral by 2025	
<p>To have delivered the milestones in becoming a carbon neutral council.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver actions in the Cheshire East Council Carbon Action Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carbon Action Plan priorities continue with work to decarbonise Council buildings. Seventeen solar installations have been completed, providing approximately 1GWh per year. The Council has also put in place a programme of replacing gas boilers with air source heat pumps with 15 installations underway. We continue to replace petrol and diesel vehicles with electric across our services and we have installed 26 new or upgraded electric vehicle charge points at office and leisure centre locations. We are working to deliver a wider programme of fleet vehicle charging points at our environmental hub in Middlewich to facilitate the electrification of 16 vans.</li> <li>• A 15ha land asset belonging to Cheshire East Council has been identified as a good site for tree planting and funding to support this has been secured from the Trees for Climate fund. Subject to a successful procurement we hope to plant native woodland on this site during Q4.</li> <li>• Wider Borough 2045 target: Base line modelling of Carbon emissions from the Borough is completed and approval has been granted by the Environment and Communities committee to develop a key priorities action plan. A draft action plan has been developed and will be placed before the Environment and Communities Committee in the next quarter. Subject to committee approval a public consultation will then take place to finalise the detail of the action plan.</li> <li>• We continue to contribute towards the delivery of the Council’s Carbon Action Plan with 257 households helped to achieve affordable warmth.</li> </ul>

By 2025 we want:

Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 3 update

- We have procured and appointed domestic retrofit services and installers for delivery of Home Upgrade Grant phase 2.

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## CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Finance Sub-Committee**  
held on Wednesday, 31st January, 2024 in Committee Suite 1, 2 & 3,  
Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

### PRESENT

Councillor M Gorman (Vice-Chair) in the chair

Councillors J Clowes, B Drake, R Kain, F Wilson, A Heler (for Cllr O'Leary),  
B Puddicombe (for Cllr Mannion) and P Redstone (for Cllr Brown)

### OFFICERS

Alex Thompson, Director of Finance and Customer Services  
David Brown, Director of Governance and Compliance  
Julie Gregory, Legal Team Manager - Place/Corporate  
Paul Mountford, Democratic Services

### APOLOGIES

Councillors D Brown, N Mannion and C O'Leary

### 47 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors P Redstone and F Wilson declared interests as members of  
the Handforth Garden Village Member Advisory Group.

### 48 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

There were no public speakers.

### 49 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY CONSULTATION 2024/25 - 2027/28 PROVISIONAL SETTLEMENT UPDATE (FINANCE SUB- COMMITTEE)

The Sub-Committee considered a report on proposals within the budget  
consultation relating to its responsibilities.

Feedback from all service committees would be collated and provided as  
evidence to the Corporate Policy Committee on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024. Final  
approval of the 2024/25 budget would take place at full Council on 27<sup>th</sup>  
February 2024 following recommendation from the Corporate Policy  
Committee.

The full list of budget consultation proposals for 2024/25 for the Finance  
Sub-Committee was set out at Appendix A to the report.

During the budget consultation held between 9<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> January 2024,  
the Council received confirmation of additional funding from the

Government which would be included in the final MTFS figures for full Council.

The Provisional Local Government finance settlement was received on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2024. There was no material impact on the target funding envelope for the service Committees. Appendix B to the report: 'Provisional Local Government Settlement 2024/25 and Net Budget Envelope 2024/25' set out the Core Spending Power funding announcements and comparison to the forecast net budget for 2024/25. There was an overall reduction in unringfenced grant funding of £1.4m when compared to the funding estimates included in the 2024/25 target setting exercise. The shortfall was proposed to be made up from using additional business rates compensation grants which would otherwise have been credited to the Collection Fund Earmarked Reserve. This maintained the net revenue budget for 2024/25 at the level of £372.7m.

The Director of Finance and Customer Services responded as follows in relation to members' comments and questions on the report:

- In order to protect businesses against the recent high levels of inflation, the Government had given local authorities business rates compensation grant funding instead of increasing business rates in line with inflation.
- The two figures for core spending per dwelling and net revenue per dwelling in Appendix B were based on the different calculations used by the Government and the Council.
- The use of grant funding for highways maintenance and improvement was restricted to the specific purpose for which the grant was made. £4m of the funding within the budget was discretionary and could be used for such things as repairs to potholes. This was a matter for the Highways and Transport Committee when considering its capital programme.
- The additional monies provisionally allocated to the Council in the Government's announcement last week, which were estimated to be around £3m, would be used to reduce the budget shortfall.
- With regard to bad debt provision, a written response would be provided regarding the percentage of income collected, and whether this had changed in the last twelve months.
- Risk assessments were undertaken on the likely achievement of the budget.

Councillor J Clowes put forward a set of additional proposals by the Conservative Group for inclusion in the budget. The proposals had been submitted to officers for comments in December. The proposals, including the officer comments in response, had been circulated to members of the

Sub-Committee before the meeting. Each proposal was considered in turn by the Sub-Committee and amendments were agreed to certain proposals. The proposals as amended were as set out below:

### **Early Committee Oversight and Scrutiny of MTFS implementation**

Ai) That clear decision / delivery schedules for MTFS proposals are identified as part of the CLT masterplan, clearly articulated to the relevant Service committee(s) and incorporated into the appropriate service committee work programmes.

### **Inclusive Pay Terms and Conditions**

Bi) That Human Resources investigate consistency in payments for evening and weekend working, together with appropriate 'inclusive salary' contracts.

Bii) That Human Resources incorporate this work under the Workforce Strategy related to recruitment and retention, any changes to be subject to discussion with recognised trade unions.

Biii) That any related budget implications are reported to Corporate Policy Committee / Finance Sub-Committee.

### **Parish Compact System Extension**

Ci) That the Finance Team support Environment and Communities Colleagues in conducting a cost-benefit analysis of the Parish Compact model for those smaller parish councils that express an interest.

### **Reducing the Costs of Democracy**

It was noted that there were no proposals at this time in relation to this item.

### **Council Tax and Business Tax Payment Targets**

Ei) That the Sub-Committee identify a working group to review current debt management and retrieval practices and to make appropriate recommendations for change.

### **Reserves Strategy**

There were no proposals at this time in relation to this item.

### **Adult Social Care Debt**

Gi) This item should remain 'on the radar' throughout this fiscal year with a view to bringing forward, if indicated, any potential additional savings in 2024/25.

### **Review of Capital Projects**

The office response had been noted and there were no proposals at this time in relation to this item.

### **Council Tax Support – Reduction to Pre-Covid Levels**

li) That this item is recommended as part of the 2024/25 Budget submission in order that (a) appropriate consultation can be triggered, and (b) a full fiscal study of the up-take of Council Tax support (since its most recent increase to 100%) is undertaken, whilst ensuring protection of the most vulnerable.

### **RESOLVED**

That the Sub-Committee

1. recommends to the Corporate Policy Committee, for its meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024, all proposals within the budget consultation, as related to the Committee's responsibilities, for inclusion in the Council's budget for 2024/25;
2. unanimously recommends to the Corporate Policy Committee, for its meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024, the additional proposals from the Conservative Group, as amended at the meeting, for inclusion in the Council's budget for 2024/25; and
3. notes the contents of Appendix B: 'Provisional Local Government Settlement 2024/25 and Net Budget Envelope 2024/25', and unanimously approves the use of a further £1.3m of business rates compensation grants to maintain the net revenue budget for 2024/25 at £372.7m.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 3.15 pm

Councillor M Gorman (Vice-Chair in the Chair)

## **CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the **General Appeals Sub Committee**  
held on Tuesday, 5th March, 2024 in the Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,  
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

### **PRESENT**

Councillors T Dean, S Edgar and L Smetham

### **OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Rebecca Airey, Legal Clerk  
Helen Rawlinson, Transport Manager  
Karen Shuker, Democratic Services Officer  
Kylie Timms, Transport Lead

### **25 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR**

#### **RESOLVED:**

That Councillor Steve Edgar be appointed as Chair of the meeting

### **26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor E Gilman. Councillor L Smetham attended as a substitute.

### **27 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **28 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION**

There were no members of the public present.

### **29 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the press and public be excluded from the 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.

**30 SCHOOL TRANSPORT APPEAL**

The Sub-Committee considered an appeal against a decision of the Council's School Transport Team 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 dismissed.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 10.48 am

Councillor S Edgar

OPEN

## Corporate Policy Committee

21 March 2024

### Strategic Risk Register – Assurance Report Q3 2023/24

**Report of: David Brown, Director of Governance and Compliance,  
Monitoring Officer**

**Report Reference No: CP/41/23-24**

**Ward(s) Affected: All**

### Purpose of Report

- 1 One of the responsibilities of the Corporate Policy Committee is to have a co-ordinating role across all other committees and exercising a corporate view of outcomes, performance, budget monitoring and risk management. Reporting on the Strategic Risk Register supports effective risk management, is central to good governance and supports the efficient delivery of the council's corporate plan objectives.
- 2 This report provides an update on the activity of the council's Strategic Risk Register for Quarter 3 2023/24. This report also now includes the equivalent level risk registers for the Council's wholly owned companies; Orbitas, Tatton Park Enterprises and ANSA.

### Executive Summary

- 3 This report provides the Corporate Policy Committee with an update on the activity of the Strategic Risk Register for Quarter 3 2023/24 with the Strategic Risk Register set out in detail in Appendix A, and the wholly owned company registers set out in Appendix B, C and D.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corporate Policy Committee is recommended to:

- Confirm the position of the Council's Strategic Risk Register and those of the wholly owned companies for Quarter 3 2023/24, in respect of the content, description, scoring and risk management activity outlined.

## **Background**

- 4 Risks included on the Strategic Risk Register are those which materially threaten the organisation's ability to achieve its strategic goals, in this case our corporate objectives in the Corporate Plan. This could be in the form of an individual threat to a specific objective, or the compound effect of a threat across several areas.
- 5 Items on the Strategic Risk Register are "owned" by members of the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and are reviewed on a quarterly basis. Co-ordination and administration of the Strategic Risk Register and the Risk Management Framework is undertaken by the Head of Audit and Risk Management.
- 6 The content of the Strategic Risk Register has been updated in preparing this assurance report for the Corporate Policy Committee. The Corporate Leadership Team have assessed their risks as at the end of Quarter 3 2023/24.
- 7 Revisions to the register are made on an on-going basis to ensure that the scope and detail of the individual risks, and the overall coverage of the register is reflective of the current threats to the organisation achieving its strategic objectives and maintaining business as usual service delivery. Where items are removed from the Strategic Risk Register, they continue to be considered at operational levels, and can be escalated back for inclusion based on CLT's judgement at that time.
- 8 Full details of the individual risks are provided in Appendix A. The content of this covering report relations to the key changes in risks from Quarter 2 to Quarter 3 and the inclusion of risk registers from wholly owned subsidiaries.

## **Summary of Quarter 3 review**

- 9 An elevated level of risk remains across many parts of the organisation as the challenges of the current financial situation continue to unfold. This is reflected in the sensitivity and complexity of decisions being taken across the organisation and at all levels. Drivers of uncertainty remain much the same as Quarter 2 with no change in the two highest rated risk. Both of those risks directly relate to the funding, demand imbalance currently faced by the Council, and indeed all councils. Central government support is looked for in relation to this issue.

- 10 The on-going tight control of recruitment, with a material number of vacancies left unfulfilled, and spending restricted to essential expenditure only continues to impact our ability to deliver in all areas.
- 11 The impact of restricted recruitment and spending can be seen in both the Leadership Capacity and Ability to Achieve Organisational Change risks.
- 12 In positive news the JTAI improvement plan has been delivered and the protection of vulnerable children will be viewed through a “business as usual” lens moving forwards.
- 13 There is one increase in the net risk scores on the register arising from the Q3 review, which is the increase in the Climate Change risk.
- 14 Table 1 shows the position of the Strategic Risk Register after the Quarter 3 assessments: with the gross, net and target score for each risk. The table is organised by highest to lowest net risk for Q3.
- 15 Table 2 shows the position of the Strategic Risk Register based on the Q3 assessments against the previous quarter. Q1 scores have not been included where the risk has materially changed in description following the Q2 review.
- 16 The heat map below the tables (Chart 1) shows the concentration of critical and material rated risks.
- 17 As agreed by Corporate Policy Committee on 18 January 2024, the strategic risk registers of the Council’s Wholly Owned Companies are being included in this report to the Committee. These are included in detail in Appendix B, C and D and commentary about these risks, begins at paragraph 63.
- 18 It is important to note that the scoring methodology of these companies is slightly different to the Councils, reflecting proportionality and materiality relevant to that organisation. The risks also described from the perspective of the wholly owned companies, rather than the Council.

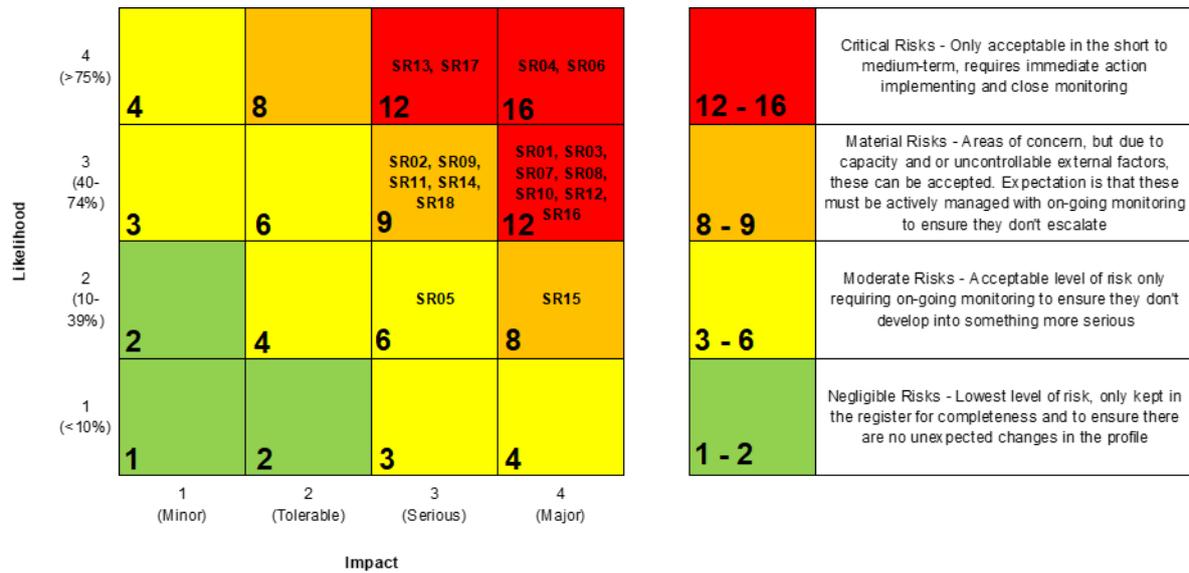
**Table 1 – Strategic Risk Register, highest net score to lowest**

Ref	Risk	Q3 Gross	Q3 Net	Q3 Target
SR04	Dedicated School Grant Deficit	16	16	12
SR06	Failure to Achieve the MTF5	16	16	9
SR01	Increased Demand for Adult's Services	16	12	9
SR03	Complexity and Demand for Children's Services	16	12	12
SR07	Leadership Capacity	16	12	8
SR08	Ability to Achieve Organisation Change	16	12	8
SR10	Failure to Manage the Consequences of Policy Uncertainty and National Policy Frameworks	12	12	8
SR12	Stakeholder Expectation & Communication	16	12	9
SR13	Information Security and Cyber Threat	16	12	12
SR16	Failure of the Local Economy	16	12	12
SR17	Climate Change (CEC Carbon Neutral Status 2025)	16	12	9
SR02	Fragility and failure in the Social Care Market	16	9	9
SR09	Recruitment & Retention	16	9	9
SR11	Failure to Adhere to Agreed Governance Processes	16	9	6
SR14	Business Continuity	12	9	6
SR18	Local Planning Authority Modernisation Plan	12	9	6
SR15	Capital Projects – Place	16	8	8
SR05	Delivery of the JTAI improvement plan	16	6	6

**Table 2 – Strategic Risks Direction of Travel**

Ref	Risk	Q1 Net	Q2 Net	Q3 Net	Direction of Travel (Q2-Q3)
SR01	Increased Demand for Adult's Services	12	12	12	↔
SR02	Fragility and failure in the Social Care Market	9	9	9	↔
SR03	Complexity and Demand for Children's Services	N/A	12	12	↔
SR04	Dedicated School Grant Deficit	N/A	16	16	↔
SR05	Delivery of the JTAI improvement plan	12	9	6	↓
SR06	Failure to Achieve the MTFs	N/A	16	16	↔
SR07	Leadership Capacity	N/A	12	12	↔
SR08	Ability to Achieve Organisation Change	N/A	12	12	↔
SR09	Recruitment & Retention	N/A	9	9	↔
SR10	Failure to Manage the Consequences of Policy Uncertainty and National Policy Frameworks	12	12	12	↔
SR11	Failure to Adhere to Agreed Governance Processes	9	9	9	↔
SR12	Stakeholder Expectation & Communication	12	12	12	↔
SR13	Information Security and Cyber Threat	12	12	12	↔
SR14	Business Continuity	9	9	9	↔
SR15	Capital Projects - Place	8	8	8	↔
SR16	Failure of the Local Economy	12	12	12	↔
SR17	Climate Change (CEC Carbon Neutral Status 2025)	9	9	12	↑
SR18	Local Planning Authority Modernisation Plan	9	9	9	↔

**Chart 1 – Strategic Risks Heat Map**



**Risks Updates by Service Committee**

**Adults and Health Committee**

- 19 **Increased Demand for Adults Services:** There is no change to the risk rating or description. The implementation of the Quality, Performance and Authorisation Board ensures that every request for care is reviewed by Director and Senior Managers together with commissioners and brokerage staff. This has ensured that all care requests are effective and as efficient as possible and has also highlighted where providers appear to be charging for services not delivered.
- 20 During Q2 we have continued to see a high level of complexity, particularly for transition cases and mental health; we believe that this is due in part to the change in process from Health and the closure of Independent Hospitals. We are now providing care to a higher number of individuals who are in their late 90s and early 100's year old.
- 21 **Fragility and failure in the Social Care Market;** There is no change to the risk rating or description. Whilst overall capacity in the care market continues to be healthy, a major challenge to this arises from the planned 9.8% uplift in the National Living Wage from April 24. This is already leading to an increase in requests for fee uplifts from our care providers, on average around 10%.
- 22 During Q3, we have seen some quality challenges and an increase in whistleblowing resulting from care workers being added to the Shortage Occupation list for international recruitment. We also saw some market disruption including a non-commissioned care provider that folded prior

to Christmas and care businesses being sold to other providers. We are in the final stages of commissioning the “Care Cubed” tool which will enable us to undertake a comprehensive review of care fees.

## **Children and Families Committee**

- 23 **Complexity and Demand for Children’s Services;** no change to the net rating, it remains 12, a material risk, equal to the target score. Additional growth to address budget pressures within services has been proposed in the MTFs consultation for 2024/25, including £10.8m to address placement costs for children.
- 24 Our first children’s home is due to open in early February 2024 - the home is awaiting its registration visit from Ofsted. We have recruited a full staff team and have built all the new systems, processes and training to enable us to grow our homes at pace moving forward. This will provide our cared for children with more opportunities to remain close to their communities and will provide better value for money against rising placement costs. A new sufficiency strategy on how we will develop placement options for children and young people will be received by the Children and Families Committee in February 2024.
- 25 Our new family group conferencing service will launch in February 2024. This service supports families and their wider support networks to create and deliver plans to support children and keep them safe, and will support families to sustain changes long-term, preventing children from needing a service in future. Where children can’t live with their parents, family group conferencing can support children to be cared for by a person they already know, which is better for children and young people, and avoids high-cost placements.
- 26 **Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Deficit:** There is no change to the risk rating or description; it remains at the highest net score of 16.
- 27 During Q3 a Safety Valve plan was developed, a significant piece of work, and on the 12<sup>th</sup> January 2024, it was submitted to Government, as part of the department for education’s (DfE) Safety Valve programme. The plans set out how the council proposed to reform services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and achieve a balanced and sustainable dedicated schools grant budget. The Safety Valve programme is in place to provide additional support, including financial support, to councils as they work to reform support and services for children with SEND, to improve sustainability and affordability. Subject to DfE approval, the plan will be published on the DfE website in March.

28 Additional growth was proposed in the MTFS budget consultation for 2024/25, including £0.5m to support transformation for SEND, and £0.9m for school transport, reflecting increased demand and increasing costs of fuel and contracts.

29 **Delivery of the JTAI Improvement Plan;** There was an 11- month JTAI Improvement plan review on 18th December 2023 and the outcome letter detailed as follows:

“Overall, the Council has made positive progress in improving the quality of multi-agency safeguarding practices since June 2023. The transformation required is now well understood and leadership teams have implemented many necessary changes to strengthen culture and performance. Focus groups, at all levels, reported that a culture of high-support-high-challenge is now embedded into practice, which has created a range of benefits including improved timeliness in responding to the needs of vulnerable children, improved information sharing and greater accountability across agencies.

We were impressed with the strides that the Council and partners have made in implementing a child-centred approach to safeguarding vulnerable children. Staff spoke confidently about creating a safe environment for vulnerable children by prioritising activities to build a trusted relationship and by working creatively with other practitioners to provide a wrap-around service. For example, social workers are now acknowledging a child’s friendship group and connecting with other relevant social workers to build a broader network of support for children.

The themes raised across all feedback groups were consistent and a sign of genuine change within Cheshire East’s children’s services. While it is recognised that there are still improvements to be made, the leadership team seem much clearer on the Council’s and partnership’s direction of travel than they were in the review in June 2023. Overall, we were presented with an improving picture of Cheshire East’s multi agency response to the criminal exploitation of children. It is clear that the local authority has, along with partners, undertaken a great deal of work to target those areas identified at the JTAI inspection and at the Department’s six-month review. The Department is satisfied that systems and processes are in place to protect children who are at risk of, or are victims of, criminal and sexual exploitation and leaders are clear on their priorities to ensure the service continues to build on these foundations. As such, we are content to step down the specific JTAI related monitoring, provided that the Council maintain a tight grip on services and maintain the progress made so far.”

- 30 Moving forward, we will be transferring to a more general risk of protecting vulnerable children. The scrutiny and monitoring will continue through the new partnership arrangements.

### **Corporate Policy Committee**

- 31 **Failure to achieve the MTFS;** No change to the risk ratings at this time. The MTFS on budget setting for 2024/25 has been published for the Corporate Policy Committee meeting on 13 February. With regard to the projected outturn for 2023/24, it reiterates the forecast deficit of £13m reported in the Third Financial Review, as noted below.
- 32 It also reports the potential for the need to write-off to revenue the capital expenditure of £8.7m relating to HS2; this will be necessary if the support from Government requested (either compensation by way of grant, or capitalisation direction) is not forthcoming. In addition to the significant use of reserves needed to balance off the 2023/24 revenue account, the report also highlights growth pressures of £34.3m for 2024/25, as against the availability of additional funding of £22.6m, creating a budget deficit of £11.7m – and this position assumes approval and then delivery of a number of challenging change/ savings items.
- 33 This would mean further use of reserves and – even subject to successful achievement of those plans – that the General Fund balance at 31 March 2025 would be just £2.1m, and a ring-fenced earmarked reserve of only £1.7m would exist at that point. This is clearly unsustainable; and consequently the MTFS also includes the S25 report from the Director of Finance and Customer Services (Chief Finance Officer) which sets out the planned response to the 2024/25 budget and reserves position and the transformational activity that needs to take place during 2024/25 to address the financial crisis the Council is facing.
- 34 **Leadership Capacity;** no change to the risk rating at this time. Recruitment processes for the appointment of a new Chief Executive were undertaken in the quarter – with the new Chief Executive being appointed at Full Council on 13<sup>th</sup> December.
- 35 The Executive Director of Place resigned from the organisation in October 2023; interim arrangements whereby the Director of Growth and Enterprise is also acting up to the Executive Director Place role continue. Corporate Leadership capacity is recognised as a significant governance issue in the 2022/23 draft Annual Governance Statement.
- 36 **Ability to Achieve Organisation Change;** no change to the risk rating at this time. Corporate Plan engagement and development activity

continued in the quarter, concluding in December 2023. The new Chief Executive has been recruited and appointed at Council in December 2023.

- 37 The Director of Policy and Change resigned during the quarter, so ownership of the risk has transferred to the incoming Chief Executive and will be subject to further development and review in Quarter 4.
- 38 **Recruitment and Retention;** No change to the risk ratings at this time. National labour market pressures still exist, particularly in the care, social work, planning and ICT sectors. Local authorities are competing for the same staff, with some offering higher salaries and other benefits not in place at Cheshire East Council.
- 39 As outlined above, a comprehensive programme of work is in place to address these pressures. Much of this work is now 'business as usual' activity, but additional initiatives have also been introduced.
- a) Work has begun to implement a range of additional staff benefits will support the recruitment and retention of staff, and most of this work should be completed during Quarters 3 and 4.
  - b) Work has continued on the promotion of the Employee Assistance Programme and usage continues to grow.
  - c) A process of office rationalisation has been agreed and these changes are likely to embed and develop the Council's agile working approach, although it may also affect the retention of existing staff, if their work base changes.
  - d) Ongoing work to improve the efficiency of the recruitment process is in place.
  - e) The MARS scheme has been offered again and any staff leaving the organisation, will leave by the end of May 2024. This will enable the Council to re-design services and management structures to improve efficiency, create career development opportunities and reduce costs.
- 40 **Failure to Manage the Consequences of Policy Uncertainty and National Policy Frameworks;** No change to the net risk score at this time, as 2024 is an election year for the Policy and Crime Commissioner and likely a general election, although no specific date has been set for the latter. Awareness and concern about the levels of local government funding has growing nationally, with authorities indicating that they will have to make significant reductions to services

to deliver a balanced budget for 2024/25. Together, these factors create political uncertainty at both the local and national levels.

- 41 The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has created the Office for Local Government (Oflog) to provide authoritative and accessible data and analysis about the performance of local government, and support its improvement. CEC expect to be providing performance data for key metrics to Oflog once those metrics are confirmed.
- 42 Communities secretary Michael Gove has announced that local authorities will need to set out how they will “improve service performance and reduce wasteful expenditure” in productivity plans as part of an additional £500m in funding for 2024-25 that social care authorities will share. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities will establish an “expert panel” involving the Office for Local Government and the Local Government Association to review the productivity plans which could inform funding settlements in the future.
- 43 **Failure to Adhere to Agreed Governance Processes;** The recruitment of a new Chief Executive took place during Q3 with the appointment being announced in the first days of the 2024. During the period here have been positive examples of cross committee working to ensuring audit recommendations are implemented, with oversight and assurance being provided to the Audit & Governance committee. The risk rating remains the same, supported by the fact that issues are being identified and resolved.
- 44 **Stakeholder Expectation & Communication:** No change to the risk ratings at this time. Coverage and public/media interest in the council through Q3 was dominated by the council’s financial position and the potential impacts of the governments’ announcement of cancellation of HS2 North of Birmingham. Q3 saw a significant escalation in public interest in pressures on council finances and the impacts on residents, local economy and environment. This is ongoing at a local and national scale and is reflected in national polling regarding resident satisfaction and perception of local councils.
- 45 Interest in the council’s financial position included in-year forecasting of budget gap, implementation of budget proposals from 2023/24 budget and looking ahead to future years. Key proposals attracting most interest included parking review, garden waste subscription scheme, strategic leisure review and green spaces maintenance. These were (and continue to be) supported with comprehensive communications plans, aligned to consultation activity, project plans and key decision-making. Despite this, when proposing or making significant cuts or

changes to valued services, residents and other stakeholders will be concerned and will voice opposition.

- 46 We also saw developments and interest in flood mitigation plans for Poynton Pool, the ongoing planning issues relating to a housing development in Crewe, and concerns about review of household waste recycling centres.
- 47 During this period the council also submitted plans to DfE as part of the safety valve programme, relating to high needs funding and SEND service reform. This is of key interest locally and nationally.
- 48 Ensuring that the council's messages, information for residents and opportunities to influence decision-making (and understand the impact of that input), amid heightened interest from a range of voices and stakeholders, remains a significant challenge.
- 49 The Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) training has now been approved and is available on learning lounge. Work is underway to explore if this package can be made mandatory for Heads of Service as they have final approval and sign-off EIA prior to publication. This will ensure assessment is undertaken at the right level and that any impacts are understood and mitigated where possible.
- 50 A residents' survey has been undertaken during the period. Results are being analysed and summary reports will be drafted ready for wider distribution. Discussions will be undertaken to assess the responses and work with services will be undertaken to address any areas identified where performance needs to be improved. A shift to digital has reduced costs. Issues around accessibility were addressed through targeted use of paper copies and responses rates have provided for a good level of confidence in the results at town and borough level.
- 51 Many significant consultations have been undertaken during this period, with some timescales for reporting being short in some instances. Efforts are being made to ensure that the outcomes of these consultations are taken into account prior to any decisions being made.
- 52 **Information Security and Cyber Threat;** no material change to the risk this quarter. Activity to manage this risk during the quarter has included:
- a) Identity Management – projects are continuing to ensure that identities are protected through increased monitoring and controls. These will ensure that correct level is applied to identities across the estate.

- b) Application Management – review of current estate and alignment to the asset register.
- c) Data Security – continued enhancement of the existing security controls to ensure that the latest threats are mitigated and protected. Development of a remediation plan to ensure that vulnerabilities are proactively monitored and addressed. Work is continuing to strengthen the resilience capabilities of data storage and protection. Work is progressing on a refreshed Cyber Incident Response Plan to ensure that the Council is best equipped should an incident occur.
- d) Data Quality – Continuation of the MDM projects across several data fields to ensure that the councils’ solutions have the correct data embedded with them, updated seamlessly across multiple systems. This is a key area to support any future drive to AI.
- e) Information Management – continuation of projects to deliver and improve the maturity of information both through its storage and use of information. This will enable both greater protection for that information but also enable efficiencies through accurate management information and improved compliance through controlled retention and ease and speed of access to critical information. This is a key area to support any future drive to AI.

53 **Business Continuity;** No material change to the risk, time with a system analyst has been booked in for January to develop the scope for the BCP SharePoint App. Emergency Planning exercise planned for February based around a cyber security breach, the learnings from which will feed into the app development and inform further development of the organisation’s business continuity approach.

## **Economy and Growth**

54 **Capital Projects – Place;** No change to the risk ratings this quarter, controls and action review, no material changes identified. The Middlewich eastern bypass full business case was submitted to the DfT for funding, with a decision anticipated in the spring.

55 The effects of inflation continue to be felt across the wider programme of capital projects in Place, larger capital investments are continually assessed to understand whether they remain viable and will deliver the required benefits.

56 **Failure of the Local Economy;** The national economic situation continues to be monitored by the Economic Development Service. There is no change in the economic position, with the economy flatlining. Locally, the cancellation of HS2 has impacted confidence.

## Environment and Communities Committee

57 **CEC's Carbon Neutral Status;** The council has projects in progress to achieve the target it has set itself to be carbon neutral by 2025, however this is now unlikely to be achievable based on time constraints for the following reasons;

- Due to the complexity of the projects required and how their practical delivery has been influenced by external market forces. These external factors are issues such as securing off takers for solar energy and an ability to acquire the necessary volume of small fleet vehicles over a restricted time period;
- The budget proposal to be considered in Quarter 4 at Full Council on 27th February 2024 to defer capital expenditure on the second larger solar farm and transition to EV fleet. This is proposed on the basis of the Council's very challenging financial position and the need to defer spend, in this case the cost of prudential borrowing, to future years wherever practicable.

If agreed at Full Council in Q4, this would revise the 2025 target for the Council to be Carbon Neutral to 1st April 2027.

58 Recognising the challenges described, the net score is increased from 9 to 12, target score also increased from 6 to 9.

59 **Local Planning Authority Modernisation;** There is no change to the risk ratings at this time and the desired reduction in net risk score is not yet possible. This is due to several on-going issues; one of which is the delayed the delivery of the ICT system project for which we have no solid timescale for implementation from our external supplier. Engagement with the external supplier is on-going and current expectations are tentatively for a Q1 2024/25 delivery.

60 Restructuring within the service has faced further delays due to job evaluation queries and HR resource. Further recruitment to key roles will be necessary before restructure is complete – which may now be pushed into Q1 24/25, and will also be impacted on by financial pressures.

61 Backlog of planning applications is reducing slowly but some sickness and further vacancies has impacted on progress. A backlog funding bid has been successful so additional Capita support should be secured for Q4. Engagement with consultees on applications and s106 is largely complete. Validation checklist work to go to consultation and forward to adoption in Q4. S106 audit work progressing well with several recommendations completed and further work to be largely completed

by end of Q4. Further progression and timeframes on the remaining Modernisation Plan recommendations are dependent on resolution of priorities described above.

## Highways and Transport Committee

- 62 The Highways and Transport Committee have no strategic risks at this time but this remains under on-going review. The impact of the cancellation of the HS2 project has been picked up in the MTFs risk.

## Wholly Owned Company Risk Registers

**ANSA** – the report and Appendix B relating to Ansa contain exempt information and are set out in Part 2 of the agenda.

## Orbitas

- 63 Orbitas uses a similar scoring methodology for assessing their risks as the Council. With both impact and likelihood being scored from 1 to 4, giving a total score out of 16. Full details of the register and methodology as supplied by Orbitas can be found in Appendix C.
- 64 A summary table of the risks, including gross and net scores for each risk as at Q3 2024 is shown below.

**Table 3**

<b>Risk Description</b>	<b>Q3 2023/24  Gross Score</b>	<b>Q3 2023/24  Net Score</b>
Pandemic Event	8	6
Financial Failure	8	4
General regional economic problems	4	4
Loss of core contracts	6	3
New competitors / options leading to reduced market share	9	6
Local Government spending constraints	12	9
Failure to attract investment for business development	9	6
Legislative change affecting Council-owned companies	6	3
Political change via general and local elections	4	4
Failure to meet political aspirations	12	8
Reputational damage for the Company or shareholder	6	3
Loss of confidence in the Company, Board or key Personnel	12	8
Industrial action	4	2
Failure to recognise and recruit the necessary skills	6	4

Major H&S issue	9	3
Quality issues	9	3
GDPR issues / data breach	6	3

## Tatton Park Enterprises

- 65 Tatton Park Enterprises (TPE) uses an older CE scoring methodology for assessing their risks. As the methodology remains largely comparable the updating of this is not a priority. Full details of the register and methodology as supplied by TPE can be found in Appendix D.

A summary table of the risks, including gross and net scores for each risk as at Q3 2024 is shown below.

**Table 4**

Risk Description	Q3 2023/24	Q3 2023/24
	Gross Score	Net Score
Gradual decline in turnover results in failure to hit annual budget contribution to the Tatton Park revenue account affecting the Park's financial performance.	9	6
Factors affecting Front of House staff and poor operational Service delivery causing lack of repeat business from customers resulting in financial targets being missed.	6	3
Natural calamity affecting the Park being able to open, and therefore may be closed for a period exceeding a day, e.g. Foot and mouth epidemic resulting in financial targets being missed.	9	6
Temporary service closure through interruption to catering provision by external factors e.g. Power Failure resulting in financial targets being missed.	6	3
Lack of correct Insurance cover and limits placed on operational liabilities causing potential liability to both Tatton Park and Cheshire East Council resulting in financial targets being missed or additional contributions required from CEC	4	2
Physical operational risk and security of contents within both the Stables and Gardeners Cottage facilities resulting in loss of ability to provide an operation.	4	2
Poor food or service provision leading to potential closure of one or both outlets, or poor public reviews, leads to reputational damage to both TPE Ltd, Tatton Park and CEC with possible damage payments due.	9	6

Risk Description	Q3 2023/24  Gross Score	Q3 2023/24  Net Score
Bout of food poisoning (or similar) from one of the two catering outlets causing temporary closure leading to reputational damage to both TPE Ltd, Tatton Park and CEC with possible damage payments due.	12	8

## Emerging Issues

- 66 Whilst the Corporate Policy Committee will receive the Quarter 4 update at the 13<sup>th</sup> of June 2024, meeting, there are emerging indications for that update.
- (a) An increase in the Local Planning Authority Modernisation Plan risk increase due to the loss of capacity caused by the Interim Director of Planning moving to a new role at another organisation and other issues referenced this quarter.
  - (b) The inclusion of a Protecting Vulnerable Children risk.
  - (c) Clarification around the net zero target and its funding, possible decrease if the timescales are moved back but also a possible further increase if the target is kept the same.
  - (d) Possible inclusion of risks reflecting the remit of the Highways and Transport Committee and a more general review of the Place risks.
  - (e) Consideration of further senior leadership changes on Leadership Capacity and Ability to achieve Organisational Change.

## Consultation and Engagement

- 67 Each risk included in on the Strategic Risk Register is “owned” by a member of the Council’s Corporate Leadership Team. At each quarter, the risk detail is updated through managers in their areas of responsibility, and the updated register is reviewed collectively by the Corporate Leadership Team.

## Reasons for Recommendations

- 68 Risk management is central to facilitating good governance and the achievement of corporate objectives. As a publicly accountable body, the Council must demonstrate effective identification and management

of the risks that threaten the achievement of its corporate objectives and the effectiveness of its operations.

**Other Options Considered**

69 No alternative options considered; this is an assurance update report to support the Committee in meeting its responsibilities under its Terms of Reference.

**Implications and Comments**

70 Monitoring Officer/Legal

There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report. This report provides assurance that the Council achieves its strategic aims and operates its business, under general principles of good governance, that it identifies risks which threaten its ability to be legally compliant and operates within the confines of the legislative framework.

71 Section 151 Officer/Finance

There is no direct impact upon the MTFS from the recommendations of this update report. Costs relating to implementing risk treatment plans are included within service budgets. The need to provide financial security against the impact of risks is considered on a case-by-case basis and either included within specific budgets within the MTFS or considered under the overall assessment of the required level of General Reserves as part of the Reserves Strategy. The risk to the Council of failing to achieve savings identified in the MTFS has been identified as an emerging risk.

72 Policy

Cheshire East Council has adopted the Risk Management Framework approved by Cabinet in June 2020. Risk management is integral to the overall management of the authority and, therefore, considerations regarding key policy implications and their effective implementation are considered within departmental risk registers and as part of the risk management framework.

<b>An open and enabling organisation</b>	<b>A council which empowers and cares about people</b>	<b>A thriving and sustainable place</b>
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73 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

There are no direct implications arising from the recommendations of this update report.

74 Human Resources

There are no direct implications arising from the recommendations of this update report.

75 Risk Management

This report relates to overall risk management and provides the Corporate Policy Committee with awareness of the most significant risks facing the Council, where strategic risks are emerging and assuring the Committee on how these are being managed.

76 Rural Communities

There are no direct implications arising from the recommendations of this update report.

77 Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

There are no direct implications arising from the recommendations of this update report.

78 Public Health

There are no direct implications arising from the recommendations of this update report.

79 Climate Change

There are no direct implications arising from the recommendations of this update report.

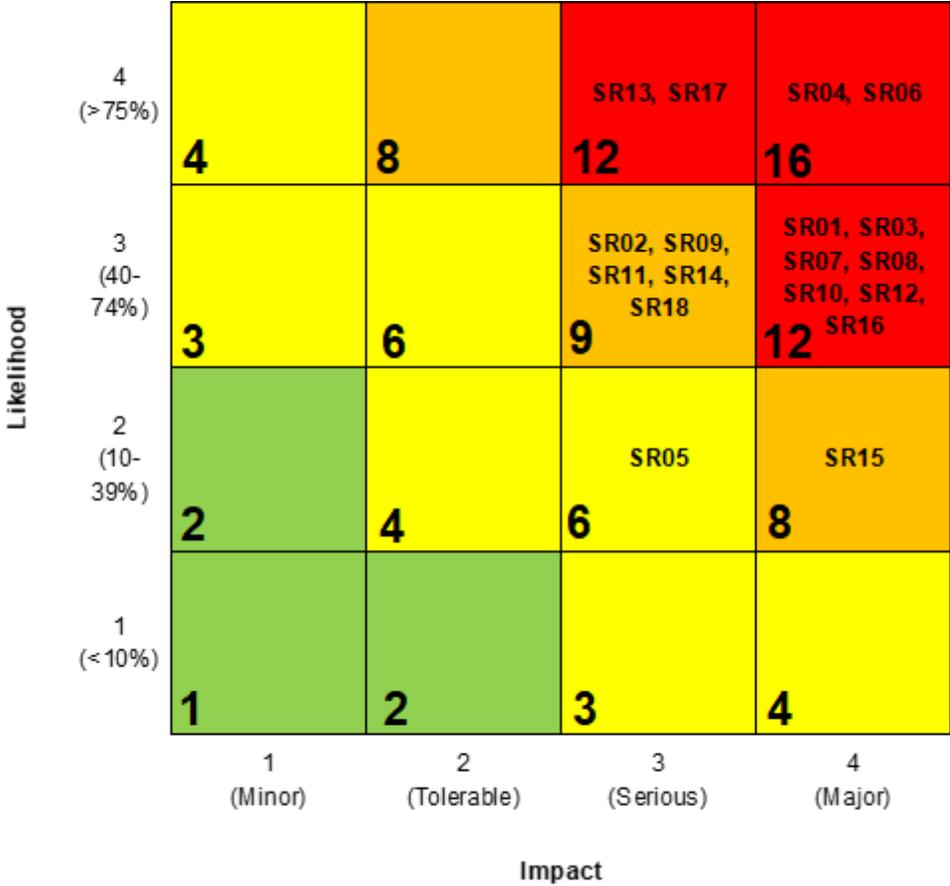
<b>Access to Information</b>	
Contact Officer:	Josie Griffiths, Head of Audit and Risk Management josie.griffiths@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	CPC Q3 Strategic Risk Assurance Appendix A CPC Q3 ANSA Risk Assurance - Appendix B (exempt) CPC Q3 Orbitas Risk Assurance - Appendix C

	CPC Q3 TPE Ltd Risk Assurance - Appendix D
Background Papers:	Finance Sub Committee 7 September 2023 <a href="#">Agenda item - Wholly-owned Companies Governance Review - Board Composition and Shareholder Agreement   Cheshire East Council</a>

**Strategic Risk Summary – Changes in Net Scores Q3 2023/24**

Ref	Risk	Q2 Net	Q3 Net	Travel	Target
SR01	Increased Demand for Adult's Services	12	12	↔	9
SR02	Fragility and failure in the Social Care Market	9	9	↔	9
SR03	Complexity and Demand for Children's Services	12	12	↔	12
SR04	Dedicated School Grant Deficit	16	16	↔	12
SR05	Delivery of the JTAI improvement plan	9	6	↓	6
SR06	Failure to Achieve the MTF5	16	16	↔	9
SR07	Leadership Capacity	12	12	↔	8
SR08	Ability to Achieve Organisation Change	12	12	↔	8
SR09	Recruitment & Retention	9	9	↔	9
SR10	Failure to Manage the Consequences of Policy Uncertainty and National Policy Frameworks	12	12	↔	8
SR11	Failure to Adhere to Agreed Governance Processes	9	9	↔	6
SR12	Stakeholder Expectation & Communication	12	12	↔	9
SR13	Information Security and Cyber Threat	12	12	↔	12
SR14	Business Continuity	9	9	↔	6
SR15	Capital Projects - Place	8	8	↔	8
SR16	Failure of the Local Economy	12	12	↔	12
SR17	Climate Change (CEC Carbon Neutral Status 2025)	9	12	↑	9
SR18	Local Planning Authority Modernisation Plan	9	9	↔	6

**Strategic Risks Heat Map Q3 2023/24**



<b>12 - 16</b>	Critical Risks - Only acceptable in the short to medium-term, requires immediate action implementing and close monitoring
<b>8 - 9</b>	Material Risks - Areas of concern, but due to capacity and or uncontrollable external factors, these can be accepted. Expectation is that these must be actively managed with on-going monitoring to ensure they don't escalate
<b>3 - 6</b>	Moderate Risks - Acceptable level of risk only requiring on-going monitoring to ensure they don't develop into something more serious
<b>1 - 2</b>	Negligible Risks - Lowest level of risk, only kept in the register for completeness and to ensure there are no unexpected changes in the profile

**Individual Risk Details – Q3 2023/24**

<b>Risk Name:</b> Increased Demand for Adult Services		<b>Risk Owner:</b> Executive Director of Adults, Health, and Integration																														
<b>Risk Ref:</b> SR01	<b>Date updated:</b> 7 <sup>th</sup> February 2024	<b>Risk Manager:</b> Director of Adult Social Care Operations																														
<p><b>Risk Description:</b> An increase in demand for adult social services that cannot be met within the existing budget.</p> <p>There is currently a historically high demand for services from young adults right through to the elderly. This has been caused by an overall decrease in national adult health and wellbeing and other socio-economic factors.</p> <p>Detailed consequences; a failure in one area of social care, either internal or external to the council, has knock-on effects and increases pressure on other services. This can cause an on-going downwards trend in adult health and wellbeing. In addition, the council may fail in its duty of care and its objective of supporting its most vulnerable individuals. Specific failures that have been seen are a reduction in preventative measure and early intervention, which ultimately increase demand. Increased pressure on practitioners causes stress related issues and reduces the appeal of working in the sector.</p> <p>Detailed causes; due to the additional wellbeing pressures placed on residents, council staff, third-party providers and the NHS, the volume and complexity of demand for adult services has increased materially. As have political factors such as changes in legislation and resettlement agreements. Due to several different socio-economic factors recruitment and retention of staff is difficult resulting in increased use of agency staff.</p>		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Orange</td> <td>Red</td> <td>Gross</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Target</td> <td>Net</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Green</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Orange</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Green</td> <td>Green</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Yellow</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td colspan="4" style="text-align: center;">Impact</td> </tr> </table>	4	Yellow	Orange	Red	Gross	3	Yellow	Yellow	Target	Net	2	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	1	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow		1	2	3	4		Impact			
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<b>Interdependencies (risks):</b> Failure of Council Funding, Fragility in the social care market, Failure of the local economy, Organisational capacity and demand		<b>Lead Service Committee:</b> Adults and Health Committee																														
<p><b>Key Mitigating Controls (Existing):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of market engagement events, keeping providers / people informed of preventative change resulting from the People Live Well, for Longer Transformation Programme.</li> <li>• Contracts and Quality Monitoring Policy Framework, monitoring the user outcomes that partners are delivering. This helps to inform the managed decommissioning of services, in an effort to reduce service disruption. Maintaining a provider risk register with the Care Quality Commission to ensure market oversight. A standard set of fit for the future contracts, designed to ensure quality outcomes for users and ensure provider's business models remain sustainable as demand changes.</li> <li>• Monthly quality monitoring partnership forum that reports to relevant DMTs and the Safeguarding Board. Attendees include the Police, Safeguarding, Care Quality Commission, ASC operations, Legal, CCG's and ASC lead commissioner.</li> <li>• People Helping People programme, working collaboratively with partners and local volunteers to channel community-based support, reducing demand on adult social care. The sourcing/brokerage team support the co-ordination of these services, helping vulnerable people to access non-council support where appropriate.</li> <li>• Direct payment scheme, allowing users identify and manage their own care support.</li> <li>• The preventative policy framework standardises the approach to prevention across adult social care "front door. When appropriate, directing users to approved community solutions, which can provide non-traditional benefits to those individuals and help maintain their independence.</li> <li>• Annual financial and resource planning by ASC services, considering expected demand, funding, the local social care market and other socio-economic trends.</li> <li>• Regular service/team meetings to disseminate information and discuss operational issues.</li> </ul>																																

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involvement in the North West regional and local programme of work pertaining to health and care staff recruitment, retention, and selection – resulting in a robust career path being developed with key partners and in being clear pertaining to local strategy.</li> <li>• Collaborative working with other services, such Public Health, where objectives align and communication is required to delivery value for money. Utilisation of Public Health JSNA and wider regional data sets inform future planning. The joint commissioning management monthly working group seeks to ensure ASC is working effectively and efficiently with other Children and Family services.</li> <li>• Engagement with the Integrated Care Partnership, including health partners.</li> <li>• Regular ASC reporting to CLT and Adult and Health Committee on performance, expenditure/budget and demand. On-going management of services, based on performance, expenditure/budget and demand management information. Trend analysis used to help predict future demand.</li> <li>• Engagement with service users, collaboration with Healthwatch and other independent organisations to help drive service improvements and cost savings.</li> <li>• Business continuity assessments and resiliency preparation, both internally and with key partners.</li> <li>• Implementing recommendations of independent review. All care plans presented to Senior Leasers board for authorisation of spend.</li> <li>• Tighter controls on hospital discharge will impact relationship with CB colleagues.</li> <li>• 3 times weekly Quality, Performance and Authorisation Board to review every request for care, since the start of this regime over 2000 cases have been reviewed to ensure that the package of care is effective and efficient.</li> <li>• Weekly Extended leadership meeting to review budget, spend and activity.</li> </ul>	
<b>Actions (Monitoring):</b>	<b>Target Date for Completion:</b>
Implementation of Impower Consulting review (Weekly CEBERT meetings)	Q4 2023/24
<p><b>Comments this quarter:</b> The implementation of the Quality, Performance and Authorisation Board ensures that every request for care is reviewed by Director and Senior Managers together with commissioners and brokerage staff. This has ensured that all care requests are effective and as efficient as possible and has also highlighted where providers appear to be charging for services not delivered. During Q2 we have continued to see a high level of complexity, particularly for transition cases and mental health; we believe that this is due in part to the change in process from Health and the closure of Independent Hospitals. We are now providing care to a higher number of individuals who are in their late 90s and early 100's year old.</p>	
<p><b>Timescale for managing risk to an acceptable level:</b> The outcomes from the work commissioned with Impower is being actioned via HLBC, we are monitoring all support and care plans and calls for services on a 3x per week basis, Director is monitoring approx 150 cases per week. Demand is constant especially for those who are 90+yrs, and for those with dementia. Cost of individual care packages remains very high with an increasing number £2000 per week.</p>	

<b>Risk Name:</b> Fragility and Failure in the Social Care Market		<b>Risk Owner:</b> Executive Director of Adults, Health and Integration																					
<b>Risk Ref:</b> SR02	<b>Date updated:</b> 5 <sup>th</sup> February 2024	<b>Risk Manager:</b> Director of Adult Social Care, Director of Commissioning																					
<p><b>Risk Description:</b> A failure of the local social care market.</p> <p>Increases in the volume and complexity in demand and financial pressures have caused weaknesses in the national social care market which have yet to be resolved.</p> <p>Detailed consequences; the council is unable to deliver a robust adult social care package without the use of third-party providers, without these outsourced services the overall social adult care package would fail and the council would not be able to achieve its objective of people living well and for longer.</p> <p>Detailed causes; the major risk going forward is the financial impacts on providers resulting from the 9.8% uplift in National Living Wage from April 2023, high rates of inflation and increased energy costs (some providers have seen a 400% increase on renewal of their energy contracts). The current financial position of the local authority precludes it from uplifting care fees for all care contracts in 2024/25. It is likely that this will impact on the sustainability of some care providers and result in some packages of care being handed back to the Council or notices served on care home residents. This could lead to a need to increase the use of care providers who have not been through a formal tendering process which in some cases could result in higher costs and/or poorer quality. While due diligence is undertaken for these providers, some providers do not fully co-operate with this process. It will also bring challenges in managing budgets in 2024/25.</p>		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Orange</td> <td>Red (Gross)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Orange (Net Target)</td> <td>Red</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Green</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Orange</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Green</td> <td>Green</td> <td>Yellow</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> </tr> </table>	4	Yellow	Orange	Red (Gross)	3	Yellow	Orange (Net Target)	Red	2	Green	Yellow	Orange	1	Green	Green	Yellow		1	2	3	4
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<b>Interdependencies (risks):</b> Failure to Achieve the MTFs, Business Continuity, Failure of the Local Economy		<b>Lead Service Committee:</b> Adults and Health Committee																					
<p><b>Key Mitigating Controls:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contracts and Quality Monitoring Policy Framework, monitoring the user outcomes that partners a delivering. This helps to inform the managed decommissioning of services, in an effort to reduce service disruption. Maintaining a provider risk register with the Care Quality Commissioning to ensure market oversight. A standard set of fit for the future contracts, designed to ensure quality outcomes for users and ensure provider’s business models remain sustainable as demand changes.</li> <li>Increasing the robustness of due diligence on care providers who have not been through a formal tendering process.</li> <li>Comprehensive cost of care exercise to be undertaken with all care providers to ensure that care packages are sustainable and available resources are distributed fairly.</li> <li>Delivery of market engagement events, keeping providers / people informed of preventative change resulting from the People Live Well, for Longer Transformation Programme.</li> <li>The preventative policy framework standardises the approach to prevention across adult social care “front door. When appropriate, directing users to approved community solutions, which can provide non-traditional benefits to those individuals and help maintain their independence.</li> <li>Annual financial and resource planning by ASC services, considering expected demand, funding, the local social care market, and other socio-economic trends. Development and publication of the Market Sustainability Plan. Completion and submission of the Cheshire East Market Availability and Capacity Plan to DHSC.</li> <li>Involvement in the North West regional and local programme of work pertaining to health and care staff recruitment, retention, and selection – resulting in a robust career path being developed with key partners and in being clear pertaining to local strategy.</li> </ul>																							

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worked with former Cheshire CCG into the development of ICS and ICP plans. Engagement with the Integrated Care Partnership, including health partners. The Quality Monitoring Partnership Forum and Care at Home Commissioning meeting, both meet once a month.</li> <li>• Update of the joint Market Position Statement with ICS to ensure that care providers receive timely information about commissioning intentions.</li> <li>• Regular ASC reporting to CLT and Adult and Health Committee on performance, expenditure/budget and demand. On-going management of services, based on performance, expenditure/budget and demand management information. Trend analysis used to help predict future demand.</li> <li>• Engagement with service users, collaboration with Healthwatch and other independent organisations to help drive service improvements and cost savings.</li> <li>• Business continuity assessments and resiliency preparation, both internally and with key partners.</li> <li>• The Council is working with skills for care to see what support it can give to the market in terms of recruitment and retention and build knowledge. Providers have access to recruiting staff from abroad if there isn't a sufficient supply available locally. Development of a Workforce Strategy for the external care workforce.</li> <li>• Investigation and investment into new health and care technologies. Use of new technologies to be driven by considering performance, capacity, and value for more against more traditional methods.</li> <li>• A Joint CEC/ICB Market Oversight Group meets daily to ensure that the Council is obtaining best value for care home placements and making best use of block booked care home beds.</li> <li>• A Transfer of Care Hub has been set up in both hospitals with key staff from CEC and Hospital Trusts co-located to improve joint working and ease pressures on hospital discharge.</li> <li>• Commissioners undertake Market Engagement activities with Care at home Providers to Coproduce new models of care. Joint working with 'Skills for Care' to encourage individuals to take up employment within the care sector. 'Hidden Carer's' initiative launched through Carer's Hub to help identify and support carers not known to the system.</li> <li>• Low level support for the British Red Cross who respond to crisis situations in the community.</li> </ul>	
<b>Actions (Monitoring):</b>	<b>Target Date for Completion:</b>
Develop engagement with community groups and 3rd sector (VCFSE Project Group, monthly and Commissioning SMT, weekly)	December 2023
Commissioning of Care Cubes (Monthly DMT)	March 2024
<p><b>Comments this quarter:</b> Capacity in the care market continues to be healthy, however, a major risk will be the planned 9.8% uplift in National Living Wage from April 24. This is leading to an increase in requests for fee uplifts from care providers on average around 10%. We are seeing some quality challenges and an increase in whistleblowing resulting from care workers being added to the Shortage Occupation list for international recruitment. We are also seeing some market disruption including a non-commissioned care provider that folded prior to Christmas and care businesses being sold to other providers. We are in the final stages of commissioning the Care Cubed tool which will enable us to undertake a comprehensive review of care fees.</p>	
<p><b>Timescale for managing risk to an acceptable level:</b> N/A (Net score is equal to target). To a certain extent the risk is outside the Council's control as there is a reduced pool of people who wish to work in Social Care. However the Government has just announced additional funding for recruitment and retention in the care sector and it is hoped that this could mitigate the likelihood and impact of the risk. It is anticipated that this would be by end of Q4.</p>	

<b>Risk Name:</b> Complexity and Demand for Children’s Services		<b>Risk Owner:</b> Executive Director of Children’s Services																											
<b>Risk Ref:</b> SR03	<b>Date updated:</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> February 2024	<b>Risk Manager:</b> Children’s Services Directorate Leadership Team																											
<p><b>Risk Description:</b> That Cheshire East’s local social, economic and demographic factors, including the impact of the pandemic, lead to an increase in the level and/or complexity of need and demand for children’s services, which the council cannot meet effectively. This risk would mean that we would not achieve the council’s desired outcomes for children and young people as set out in the council’s Corporate Plan.</p> <p>The service received growth through the MTFS to help address the pressures but the challenge to deliver to budget remains present in 2023/24. Significant action is still required to deliver savings to live within the budget as all indications are that demand, complexity and cost will continue to increase.</p>		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Orange</td> <td>Red</td> <td>Red (Gross)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Orange</td> <td>Orange (Net Target)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Green</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Orange</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Green</td> <td>Green</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Yellow</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> </tr> </table>		4	Yellow	Orange	Red	Red (Gross)	3	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Orange (Net Target)	2	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	1	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow			1	2	3	4
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<b>Interdependencies (risks):</b> Increased Demand for Adult Services, Insufficient and Non-Compliance with Financial Processes, Organisation Capacity and Demand, Failure to Achieve the MTFS, Failure of the Local Economy		<b>Lead Service Committee:</b> Children and Families Committee																											
<p><b>Key Mitigating Controls:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The service has received growth through the MTFS in 2023/24 to help address the pressures. This includes growth for children’s social care in response to the demand. Additional growth to address budget pressures within services has been proposed in the MTFS consultation for 2024/25, including £10.8m to address placement costs for children.</li> <li>• Extensive activity is taking place to manage and reduce costs. A fundamental review and realignment exercise for children’s services will be carried out to future-proof services to deliver differently for less as part of our integrated children’s services 4-year strategy.</li> <li>• We are closely monitoring the demand to services and the reasons that are driving demand so that we can be responsive and mitigate any risks to service delivery. Performance is monitored on a monthly basis by services.</li> <li>• We have a range of support available to families through early help and prevention services, including council, partner, voluntary, community, faith sector and commissioned services. These services support families and help prevent needs from escalating and requiring higher level intervention.</li> <li>• Our approach is to ensure only the right children come into care; this is right for children and young people and will also reduce demand to Children’s Social Care services, however this is a challenging landscape. Increased demand for placements since the pandemic has increased placement costs which is impacting on the budget. We will continue to review our approach, and look to identify options for children to live within their family networks as we believe this is the best outcome for them. We have been successful in gaining DfE funding for innovation and supporting family networks which will increase opportunities for children to remain living in their families. At the end of Q3 we had successfully reduced the number of children in care by 9%, from 586 children in April 2023 to 533 in December 2023.</li> <li>• We are continuing to support children and young people who are most vulnerable through the Household Support Fund and the Holiday Activity Fund. Vouchers worth £4m were distributed on behalf of the Department of Work and Pensions over 2022/23 to support the most vulnerable households across the county with food, utilities, housing costs, and other essentials.</li> <li>• A workforce strategy has been developed for children’s social care to support recruitment and retention as we know the quality and stability of our workforce is critical in offering strong support and enduring relationships to children and their families.</li> </ul>																													
<b>Actions (Monitoring):</b>		<b>Target Date for Completion:</b>																											

A fundamental review and realignment exercise for children’s services will be carried out to future-proof services to deliver differently for less as part of our integrated children’s services 4-year strategy (Progress will be monitored through the MTFS arrangements)	March 2027
Expanding our in-house residential provision to offer more local and cost-effective homes for children and young people (Children’s social care senior leadership team to monitor progress)	February 2024
Implement Family Hubs – improving access and reach of services, supporting earlier intervention, and improving partnership working (Family Hub Steering group)	March 2024
Build additional funding into the budget for 2023/24 to recognise current pressures (To be agreed by Full Council in February 2024)	February 2024
<p><b>Comments this quarter:</b> No change to the net rating, it remains 12, a material risk, equal to the target score. Additional growth to address budget pressures within services has been proposed in the MTFS consultation for 2024/25, including £10.8m to address placement costs for children.</p> <p>Our first children’s home is due to open in early February 2024 - the home is awaiting its registration visit from Ofsted. We have recruited a full staff team and have built all the new systems, processes and training to enable us to grow our homes at pace moving forward. This will provide our cared for children with more opportunities to remain close to their communities and will provide better value for money against rising placement costs. A new sufficiency strategy on how we will develop placement options for children and young people will be received by the Children and Families Committee in February 2024.</p> <p>Our new family group conferencing service will launch in February 2024. This service supports families and their wider support networks to create and deliver plans to support children and keep them safe, and will support families to sustain changes long-term, preventing children from needing a service in future. Where children can’t live with their parents, family group conferencing can support children to be cared for by a person they already know, which is better for children and young people, and avoids high cost placements.</p> <p><b>Timescale for managing risk to an acceptable level:</b> March 2026. The integrated children’s services strategy is a 4-year plan. We aim to see an incremental reduction in the risk as we implement our strategy with aim to be at a low level of risk by 2026.</p>	

<b>Risk Name:</b> Dedicated School Grant Deficit		<b>Risk Owner:</b> Executive Director of Children's Services																															
<b>Risk Ref:</b> SR04	<b>Date updated:</b> 1st February 2024	<b>Risk Manager:</b> Children's Services Directorate Leadership Team																															
<p><b>Risk Description:</b> That the deficit held in the dedicated schools grant (DSG) continues to rise and/or is not recoverable.</p> <p>The council's outturn for 2022/23 reflects a deficit of £46.9m held in the dedicated schools grant (DSG) reserve. The DSG reserve deficit is forecast to be over one and a half times the annual allocation at the end of 2023/24, £89.6m based on a grant of £56.1m. This is a result of the growth in the number of pupils with an education, health and care plan greatly exceeding the funding and insufficient local placement options. This is a national issue and local authorities are allowed to hold a negative reserve for this purpose until March 2026, however this position is unaffordable and unsustainable. The arrangements beyond March 2026 are not confirmed by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). This risk continues to be a feature of ongoing liaison with the Department for Education and the DLUHC.</p> <p>The Children and Families Committee approved the council's DSG management plan for 2023/24 to 2027/28 in September 2023. It highlighted that without significant changes to funding the DSG reserve deficit is not recoverable. Significant action is required to deliver savings to live within the budget as all indications are that demand, complexity and cost will continue to increase.</p>		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Orange</td> <td>Red</td> <td>Gross Net</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Orange</td> <td>Target</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Green</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Orange</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Green</td> <td>Green</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Yellow</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td colspan="3" style="text-align: center;">Impact</td> </tr> </table>	4	Yellow	Orange	Red	Gross Net	3	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Target	2	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	1	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow			1	2	3	4			Impact		
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<p><b>Interdependencies (risks):</b> Increased Demand for Adult Services, Insufficient and Non-Compliance with Financial Processes, Organisation Capacity and Demand, Failure to Achieve the MTFS, Failure of the Local Economy</p>		<b>Lead Service Committee:</b> Children and Families Committee																															
<p><b>Key Mitigating Controls:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On 7 September 2023, we accepted an invitation from the Department for Education to start negotiations to join their Safety Valve programme, which will provide more help from the government to balance our budget. The aim of the Safety Valve programme is to agree a package of reform to improve the performance of local authorities' high needs systems and ensure this is delivered in a sustainable way, for the benefit of children and young people, whilst bringing DSG deficits under control. We submitted detailed plans to the government in January 2024, negotiations with the Department for Education are ongoing. with any agreement published on their website in March 2024. The plan will be presented to the children and families committee in April 2024.</li> <li>The DSG management plan is in place to monitor the impact of demand to SEND services on financial pressures and monitor the delivery and impact of mitigations that have been put in place.</li> <li>The council has updated the SEN sufficiency statement for 2023/24 to 2025/26, and the SEND strategy, which were received and agreed alongside the DSG management plan for 2023/24 to 2027/28 by the Children and Families Committee in September 2023. The SEN sufficiency statement sets out the additional provision needed over the next three years. The SEND strategy has been refreshed to include priority actions relating to the mitigations with the DSG management plan.</li> <li>The service has received growth through the MTFS in 2023/24 to help address the pressures. This includes growth for school transport, Educational Psychology and SEND services in response to the demand in these areas. Additional growth was proposed in the MTFS budget consultation for 2024/25, including £0.5m to support transformation for SEND, and £0.9m for school transport, reflecting increased demand and increasing costs of fuel and contracts.</li> <li>There is significant investment in local SEND provision to meets children's needs more locally but also reduce dependency on high-cost independent school placements.</li> <li>We participated in the DfE's delivering better value (DBV) programme to support the council to achieve a more sustainable financial position in relation to SEND. This identified two priority areas of cultural change that will make the biggest difference on managing demand – inclusive practice and transition. Cheshire East has been awarded £1 million to support the delivery of this transformational change. These areas have been incorporated within our SEND Strategy.</li> </ul>																																	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A fundamental review and realignment exercise for children’s services will be carried out to future-proof services to deliver differently for less as part of our integrated children’s services 4-year strategy.</li> <li>We have a range of support available to families through early help and prevention services, including council, partner, voluntary, community, faith sector and commissioned services. These services support families and help prevent needs from escalating and requiring higher level intervention.</li> </ul>	
<b>Actions (Monitoring):</b>	<b>Target Date for Completion:</b>
A fundamental review and realignment exercise for children’s services will be carried out to future-proof services to deliver differently for less as part of our integrated children’s services 4-year strategy. (Progress will be monitored through the MTFS arrangements)	March 2027
Delivery of the delivering better value implementation plan (Children’s services senior leadership team)	March 2025
Continue to increase SEND provision in Cheshire East (Reviewed quarterly)	September 2024
Implement the Safety Valve plan (Quarterly by the DfE if accepted onto the programme. If not accepted the plan will be monitored internally through a CEX lead board with member involvement).	March 2031
<p><b>Comments this quarter:</b> On 12 January 2024, we submitted detailed plans to Government, as part of the department for education’s (DfE) Safety Valve programme. The plans set out how the council proposed to reform services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and achieve a balanced and sustainable dedicated schools grant budget. The Safety Valve programme is in place to provide additional support, including financial support, to councils as they work to reform support and services for children with SEND, to improve sustainability and affordability. Subject to DfE approval, the plan will be published on the DfE website in March.</p> <p>Additional growth was proposed in the MTFS budget consultation for 2024/25, including £0.5m to support transformation for SEND, and £0.9m for school transport, reflecting increased demand and increasing costs of fuel and contracts. Net risk remains at the highest rating possible.</p> <p><b>Timescale for managing risk to an acceptable level:</b> March 2025. We aim to see an incremental reduction in the risk as we implement our plan. By the end of March 2025, we aim for the risk to be reduced to a score of 12, then to see this continue to reduce over the following years with aim to be at an acceptable level of risk by 2026.</p>	

<b>Risk Name:</b> Delivery of the JTAI Improvement Plan		<b>Risk Owner:</b> Executive Director of Children's Services	
<b>Risk Ref:</b> SR05	<b>Date updated:</b> 12 <sup>th</sup> February 2024	<b>Risk Manager:</b> Improvement Board	
<p><b>Risk Description:</b> That as a safeguarding children's partnership, Cheshire East Council's children's services, health, and police, do not achieve the improvements needed at the necessary pace to address the recommendations from the joint targeted area inspection (JTAI) of child exploitation, including child sexual exploitation. This would mean that we would not achieve the council's desired outcomes for children and young people at risk of exploitation.</p> <p>There is also a reputational risk of not delivering the required improvements, as this could result in an inadequate rating by Ofsted. An inadequate rating by Ofsted would have a significant impact on the council's reputation, ability to recruit and retain staff, and would increase costs in order to deliver improvement activity. Significant work is required to deliver these improvements which requires sufficient capacity and resources.</p>			
<b>Interdependencies (risks):</b> Increased Demand for Adult Services, Complexity and Demand for Children's Services		<b>Lead Service Committee:</b> Children and Families Committee	
<p><b>Key Mitigating Controls:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have a comprehensive partnership improvement plan in place to address the recommendations from the JTAI inspection.</li> <li>An independent scrutineer has provided scrutiny to the partnership. The scrutineer has completed an in-depth review to inform how the partnership is structured and manages its business, including how it evaluates impact. The partnership has agreed the changes that will be made to the Safeguarding Children's Partnership in response to these findings.</li> <li>Meetings of the Executive Group of the Safeguarding Children's Partnership have been increased to bi-monthly from quarterly to support increased pace of change.</li> <li>An Executive Board is in place which consists of the Chief Executive of the council, Chief Constable and Chief Nurse, which scrutinises partnership progress against the improvement plan.</li> <li>An Improvement Board is in place with an independent chair – our DfE Improvement Advisor, for additional scrutiny and challenge of the improvement plan.</li> <li>A strategic improvement group is in place which is focused on delivery of the improvement plan. DfE Improvement Advisor meets with senior leaders and conducts visits to frontline services to evaluate the impact of changes, and supports and advises senior leaders. Reviews of progress take place with the DfE.</li> <li>External support and challenge is in place from the DfE Improvement Advisor, who meets with senior leaders and conducts visits to frontline services to evaluate the impact of changes, and supports and advises senior leaders. Reviews of progress take place with the DfE.</li> <li>On 3 May 2023, the JTAI Improvement Board agreed that the priority action around the front door had been addressed and the immediate action taken during the inspection had been embedded within practice. This was a significant milestone.</li> <li>Significant amount of awareness raising has taken place across the partnership on exploitation, including a partnership Exploitation Conference with national keynote speaker, and training sessions delivered over a partnership learning week in January 2023.</li> <li>We have launched an Exploitation Strategy, practice guidance, and training for frontline practitioners. This all ensures there is a clear partnership approach to supporting children and young people at risk of exploitation.</li> <li>There is a shared understanding of the children and young people who are at risk of exploitation across the partnership.</li> <li>There has been a multi agency audit of practice are completed for children at risk of exploitation to evaluate the impact of changes on quality of practice.</li> <li>New multi agency safeguarding arrangements have been approved at Committee level. The new arrangements and the terms of references have been discussed at length at the Bi – Monthly Executive Board.</li> </ul>			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly reports are developed through the Learning and Improvement subgroup and the CS/SOC Strategic group to provide the direct line of sight from practitioners to Executive members.</li> <li>Voice of the child continues to be heard at every Executive Board and Improvement Board.</li> </ul>	
<b>Actions (Monitoring):</b>	<b>Target Date for Completion</b>
Deliver the improvement plan and scrutinise impact on outcomes for children and young people at risk of exploitation (Bi-Monthly by the Improvement Executive Board)	November 2023
Complete an audit of children at risk of exploitation to evaluate the impact of changes on quality of practice (Safeguarding Children's Partnership Executive to ensure achieved by the completion date)	July 2023
Implement new Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements in line with the Independent Review (Bimonthly by the Improvement Executive Board)	January 2024
11 month review of the JTAI Improvement plan (Bimonthly by the Improvement Executive Board)	December 2023
<p><b>Comments this quarter:</b> There was an 11- month JTAI Improvement plan review on 18th December 2023 and the outcome letter detailed as follows:</p> <p>"Overall, the Council has made positive progress in improving the quality of multi-agency safeguarding practices since June 2023. The transformation required is now well understood and leadership teams have implemented many necessary changes to strengthen culture and performance. Focus groups, at all levels, reported that a culture of high-support-high-challenge is now embedded into practice, which has created a range of benefits including improved timeliness in responding to the needs of vulnerable children, improved information sharing and greater accountability across agencies.</p> <p>We were impressed with the strides that the Council and partners have made in implementing a child-centred approach to safeguarding vulnerable children. Staff spoke confidently about creating a safe environment for vulnerable children by prioritising activities to build a trusted relationship and by working creatively with other practitioners to provide a wrap-around service. For example, social workers are now acknowledging a child's friendship group and connecting with other relevant social workers to build a broader network of support for children.</p> <p>The themes raised across all feedback groups were consistent and a sign of genuine change within Cheshire East's children's services. While it is recognised that there are still improvements to be made, the leadership team seem much clearer on the Council's and partnership's direction of travel than they were in the review in June 2023. Overall, we were presented with an improving picture of Cheshire East's multi agency response to the criminal exploitation of children. It is clear that the local authority has, along with partners, undertaken a great deal of work to target those areas identified at the JTAI inspection and at the Department's six-month review. The Department is satisfied that systems and processes are in place to protect children who are at risk of, or are victims of, criminal and sexual exploitation and leaders are clear on their priorities to ensure the service continues to build on these foundations. As such, we are content to step down the specific JTAI related monitoring, provided that the Council maintain a tight grip on services and maintain the progress made so far."</p> <p>Moving forward, we will be transferring to a more general risk of protecting vulnerable children. The scrutiny and monitoring will continue through the new partnership arrangements.</p> <p><b>Timescale for managing risk to an acceptable level:</b> January 2024 This risk can be managed to an acceptable level if our improvement plan achieves the impact on practice that we are anticipating.</p>	

<b>Risk Name:</b> Leadership Capacity		<b>Risk Owner:</b> Chief Executive																													
<b>Risk Ref:</b> SR07		<b>Date updated:</b> 16 <sup>th</sup> February 2024																													
<b>Risk Description:</b> The risk that the council's leadership team is not operating effectively enough and does not have the capacity to manage the full breadth of its responsibilities to an acceptable level. Due to the nature of the ownership and management of this risk must sit with the Chief Executive. A level of resource stretch can be maintained for a period, however ultimately resource and workload must be balanced otherwise structural weaknesses will develop into operational failures.  Potential impacts: Without effective leadership areas or all of the council's operational could become inefficient, exceed annual budgets, fail to meet agreed performance targets or regulatory obligations.  Drivers of likelihood: Currently the leadership team is going through a period of change, carrying a number of temporary appointments and individuals covering multiple roles as part of acting up.		<table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td rowspan="4" style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Likelihood</td> <td>4</td> <td style="background-color: yellow;"></td> <td style="background-color: orange;"></td> <td style="background-color: red; color: white;">Gross</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td style="background-color: yellow;"></td> <td style="background-color: orange;"></td> <td style="background-color: red; color: white;">Net</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td style="background-color: lightgreen;"></td> <td style="background-color: yellow;"></td> <td style="background-color: orange; color: white;">Target</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td style="background-color: lightgreen;"></td> <td style="background-color: yellow;"></td> <td style="background-color: yellow;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td colspan="3" style="text-align: center;">Impact</td> </tr> </table>		Likelihood	4			Gross	3			Net	2			Target	1						1	2	3	4			Impact		
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<b>Interdependencies (risks):</b> All other strategic and operational risks.		<b>Lead Service Committee:</b> Corporate Policy Committee																													
<b>Key Mitigating Controls:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council Constitution and decision-making structure, including the Committee system and defined terms of reference.</li> <li>• Corporate Plan and Annual Service Plans.</li> <li>• Support from Governance functions.</li> <li>• Leadership team recruitment processes, including skills and experience requirements.</li> <li>• Leadership team performance management processes.</li> <li>• Organisation structure and internal reporting.</li> </ul>																															
<b>Actions (Monitoring):</b>		<b>Target Date for Completion:</b>																													
TBC		TBC																													
<b>Comments this quarter:</b> no change to the risk rating at this time. Recruitment processes for the appointment of a new Chief Executive were undertaken in the quarter – with the new Chief Executive being appointed at Full Council on 13th December. The Executive Director of Place resigned from the organisation in October 2023; interim arrangements whereby the Director of Growth and Enterprise is also acting up to the Executive Director Place role continue. Corporate Leadership capacity is recognised as a significant governance issue in the 2022/23 draft Annual Governance Statement.																															
<b>Timescale for managing risk to an acceptable level:</b> TBC																															

<b>Risk Name:</b> Ability to Achieve Organisation Change		<b>Risk Owner:</b> Director of Policy and Change																															
<b>Risk Ref:</b> SR08	<b>Date updated:</b> 16 <sup>th</sup> February 2024	<b>Risk Manager:</b> Director of Policy and Change																															
<p><b>Risk Description:</b> The risk that the council is unable to achieve organisational change due to a lack of resources and capacity to focus on transformation as people focus on the delivery of business as usual. Recently received advice from government commissioners advised that organisational change capacity is a key ingredient to support the council in delivering transformation to achieve medium to long term change that will support achievement of savings and also, in the event of a section 114 notice being issued, organisational change capacity is also essential to deliver necessary actions arising from interventions.</p> <p>Potential impacts: The council is required to deliver transformation activity at pace in order to balance the budget and avoid section 114. If a section 114 notice is issued and commissioners intervene, the council bears their costs. These costs are estimated at up to £200K per commissioner and there are usually 2-6 commissioners, for a period of up to 5 years. Therefore it is more prudent to ensure that there is capacity for organisational transformation to avoid more significant costs and reputational damage.</p> <p>Drivers of likelihood: A focus on delivery of frontline and statutory services and a de-prioritisation of corporate, enabling functions. A lack of clear governance and oversight of delivery of transformation. No clearly identified medium- and long-term transformation programme. Failure to recruit and retain individuals for senior management positions. Failure to identify and implement required change initiatives effectively and in a timely fashion. Failure to oversee efficient and effective operations, including dealing with poor performing individuals and to communicate and motivate the wider workforce.</p>		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Orange</td> <td>Red</td> <td>Gross</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Orange</td> <td>Net</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Green</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Target</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Green</td> <td>Green</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Yellow</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td colspan="4" style="text-align: center;">Impact</td> </tr> </table>		4	Yellow	Orange	Red	Gross	3	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Net	2	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Target	1	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow		1	2	3	4		Impact			
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<b>Interdependencies (risks):</b> Recruitment and Retention, Failure to Achieve the MTFS		<b>Lead Service Committee:</b> Corporate Policy Committee																															
<p><b>Key Mitigating Controls:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A “doing things differently” initial list of change proposals has been collated and is being discussed with members.</li> <li>• A weekly CEBERT meeting is in place with Senior Level Membership to review the activities required to meet budget savings targets.</li> <li>• A Bright Ideas scheme is in operation to enable the workforce to contribute their ideas for transformation.</li> <li>• A new Corporate Plan has been consulted on to clarify the vision and priorities for Cheshire East.</li> </ul>																																	
<b>Actions (Monitoring):</b>		<b>Target Date for Completion:</b>																															
Strategic CLT discussion planned on structure necessary to achieve transformation.		TBC																															
Planned to replace Director of Policy and Change, potentially with a Transformation Director.		TBC																															
Medium to Long Term Transformation Plan to be developed.		TBC																															
<p><b>Comments this quarter:</b> No change to the risk rating at this time. Corporate Plan engagement and development activity continued in the quarter, concluding in December 2023. The new Chief Executive has been recruited and appointed at Council in December 2023. The Director of Policy and Change resigned during the quarter, so ownership of the risk has transferred to the incoming Chief Executive and will be subject to further development and review in Quarter 4.</p>																																	
<b>Timescale for managing risk to an acceptable level:</b> TBC																																	

<b>Risk Name:</b> Recruitment and Retention		<b>Risk Owner:</b> Director of Finance & Customer Services	
<b>Risk Ref:</b> SR09	<b>Date updated:</b> 23 <sup>rd</sup> January 2024	<b>Risk Manager:</b> Head of HR	
<p><b>Risk Description:</b> Recruitment and retention of skilled and motivated staff is required to allow the organisation to deliver its Corporate Plan. Achievement of the plan requires operational changes which allow the council to adapt and improve.</p> <p>Impact of the risk occurring: High staff turnover and, or skills shortages, insufficient capacity within services. Failure to achieve annual budget and a detrimental impact upon the physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing of staff.</p> <p>Drivers of failure: National and local demographics alongside external factors led to increasing and changing demands on services. Increases to the cost of living also present risks to the resilience and wellbeing of our workforce and therefore the capacity to respond to demand.</p>			
<b>Interdependencies (risks):</b> Business Continuity, Increased demand for Adults Services, Complexity and Demand for Children's Services		<b>Lead Service Committee:</b> Corporate Policy Committee	
<p><b>Key Mitigating Controls:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workforce planning is in place via the Council's Workforce Strategy. This is a 4-year strategy with on-going review. Service Workforce Plans are also undertaken on a bi-annual basis to review and support workforce planning on a service-by-service level.</li> <li>• Benchmarking exercises and workforce metrics are used to identify potential issues and service workforce plans developed as above to mitigate. Work on the refinement of a workforce assessment for the Council has been completed and a monthly workforce dashboard available to identify potential issues. Focused apprenticeship levy funding, specific succession planning and talent management initiatives are used to support high priority areas. This is supported by the introduction of a manager dashboard on Learning Lounge that will help the identification of training and skills gaps.</li> <li>• HR Dashboards are provided to managers which offer up to date information on key HR Metrics so that managers can monitor performance.</li> <li>• Recruitment and retention programme has also delivered attendance at a programme of local and regional recruitment fairs, an end-to-end review of the recruitment process, improved recruitment advertising, an employee offer brochure, a review, and the planned implementation of additional employee benefits, a social work academy in Children's Services and the development of additional career pathways. The introduction of employee profile videos on social media and on Cheshire East Council's website to enhance the Council's profile have also been introduced. Further work will be undertaken to streamline the recruitment process to ensure improved efficiency and a better user experience.</li> <li>• Review of the provision of agency staff, including an audit of spending, to reduce reliance and transition to a more stable permanent workforce base with reduced costs has also been undertaken. The Council will implement the provisions of the Government proposal on capping the pay rates for agency social workers and have also engaged with the proposals for capping agency pay rates for Children's Social Workers as part of the Greater Manchester Pledge.</li> <li>• Analysis of exit interview and questionnaire data with the relevant Executive Director to support the retention of staff.</li> <li>• Wellbeing and engagement support, including delivery of EAP services, the introduction of 'In the Know' sessions for all staff, a revitalised recognition scheme, monthly organisation wide wellbeing updates for all staff, and the promotion of the government funded initiative Able Futures.</li> <li>• Senior manager support in the redesign and restructure of services to meet MTFS targets, including MARS to minimise the impact on the workforce.</li> </ul>			
<b>Actions (Monitoring):</b>		<b>Target Date for Completion:</b>	
Development of toolkits to support workforce planning (Quarterly review by HRMT)		March 2024	

Introduction of a range of additional employee benefits, enhancing the existing offer (Monthly review by HRMT/Ongoing briefing to CLT on progress and implementation).	June 2024
Continued work on the implementation of social work academies across Children’s Services and Adults, Health & Integration (Quarterly review by HRMT/Review with Children’s and Adults, Health and Integration).	March 2024
Use Pulse Survey results to gauge employee satisfaction (Reviewed by HRMT and shared with CLT).	June 2024
<p><b>Comments this quarter:</b> No change to the risk rating at this time. National labour market pressures still exist, particularly in the care, social work, planning and ICT sectors. Local authorities are competing for the same staff, with some offering higher salaries and other benefits not in place at Cheshire East Council. No change to the risk ratings at this time.</p> <p>As outlined above, a comprehensive programme of work is in place to address these pressures. Much of this work is now ‘business as usual’ activity, but additional initiatives have also been introduced.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work has begun to implement a range of additional staff benefits will support the recruitment and retention of staff, and most of this work should be completed during Quarters 3 and 4.</li> <li>• Work has continued on the promotion of the Employee Assistance Programme and usage continues to grow.</li> <li>• A process of office rationalisation has been agreed and these changes are likely to embed and develop the Council’s agile working approach, although it may also affect the retention of existing staff, if their work base changes.</li> <li>• Ongoing work to improve the efficiency of the recruitment process is in place.</li> <li>• The MARS scheme has been offered again and any staff leaving the organisation, will leave by the end of May 2024. This will enable the Council to re-design services and management structures to improve efficiency, create career development opportunities and reduce costs.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Timescale for managing risk to an acceptable level:</b> N/A</p>	

<b>Risk Name:</b> Failure to manage the Consequences of Policy Uncertainty and National Policy Frameworks		<b>Risk Owner:</b> Director of Governance & Compliance (Monitoring Officer)																														
<b>Risk Ref:</b> SR10	<b>Date updated:</b> Risk Refreshed in December 2023	<b>Risk Manager:</b> Director of Governance and Compliance (Monitoring Officer)																														
<p><b>Risk Description:</b> The risk that the council cannot adequately understand and react to national policy changes or effectively implement them. The scope of the risk covers all central and local government decisions which relate to the operations of local government.</p> <p>The Corporate Plan guides the council's decision-making, it informs what is considered a 'good' policy outcome and areas of priority. Political changes may result in stakeholders no longer being aligned with that current plan. Central government policy decisions can materially impact the council in many ways, while other risks might draw out specific changes and capture their direct impact, this risk brings together the total effect of political uncertainty for consideration.</p>		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Orange</td> <td>Red</td> <td>Red</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Orange</td> <td>Red (Gross Net)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Green</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Orange (Target)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Green</td> <td>Green</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Yellow</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td colspan="3">Impact</td> <td>TBC</td> </tr> </table>	4	Yellow	Orange	Red	Red	3	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Red (Gross Net)	2	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Orange (Target)	1	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow		1	2	3	4		Impact			TBC
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<b>Interdependencies (risks):</b> Stakeholder Expectations and Communications, Failure to Achieve the MTFS, Failure to Adhere to Agreed Governance Processes		<b>Lead Service Committee:</b> Corporate Policy Committee																														
<p><b>Key Mitigating Controls:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement with national government, consultations and requests for feedback</li> <li>Application for and funding agreement processes, governance process for ad hoc grants</li> <li>Engagement with political administration of CEBC</li> <li>Engagement with group leaders of CEBC parties</li> <li>Induction, on-going training and committee briefings for CEBC members</li> <li>Service Committee support and briefings for members and senior officers</li> <li>Corporate Plan and MTFS regular and ad hoc (post material changes) review process, including contingency planning</li> <li>Preparation for elections and promoting engagement in democracy.</li> <li>Forward planning for each committee's policy development and areas of political sensitivity</li> <li>The development and delivery of the Corporate Plan</li> <li>New member induction &amp; training programme</li> </ul>																																
<b>Actions (Monitoring):</b>		<b>Target Date for Completion</b>																														
A review of the Committee briefing process against recognised best practice to identify any potential improvements that may be required		2023/2024																														
Delivery of DLUHC Productivity Plans (DLUHC)		TBC																														
Oflog reporting (Oflog)		TBC																														
<p><b>Comments this quarter:</b> No change to the net risk score at this time as 2024 is an election year for the Policy and Crime Commissioner and likely a general election, although no specific date has been set for the latter. Awareness and concern about the levels of local government funding has growing nationally, with authorities indicating that they will have to make significant reductions to services to deliver a balanced budget for 2024/25. Together, these factors create political uncertainty at both the local and national levels.</p>																																

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has created the Office for Local Government (Oflog) to provide authoritative and accessible data and analysis about the performance of local government, and support its improvement. CEC expect to be providing performance data for key metrics to Oflog once those metrics are confirmed.

Communities secretary Michael Gove has announced that local authorities will need to set out how they will “improve service performance and reduce wasteful expenditure” in productivity plans as part of an additional £500m in funding for 2024-25 that social care authorities will share. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities will establish an “expert panel” involving the Office for Local Government and the Local Government Association to review the productivity plans which could inform funding settlements in the future.

**Timescale for managing risk to an acceptable level:** Controls that mitigate this risk are based on the current landscape and timetable for local and national elections. The ability to manage this risk is not completely within the council’s gift.

<b>Risk Name:</b> Failure to Adhere to Agreed Governance Processes		<b>Risk Owner:</b> Director of Governance and Compliance (Monitoring Officer)
<b>Risk Ref:</b> SR11	<b>Date updated:</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> February 2024	<b>Risk Manager:</b> Director of Governance and Compliance (Monitoring Officer)
<p><b>Risk Description:</b> The council is a complex public sector organisation with a broad range of objectives, some of which it is legally obligated to deliver, its goals for the borough are identified within its Corporate Plan. Formal reporting and decision-making within the council is, to a degree, prescribed by local authority regulation. The decision-making process at all levels, must comply with regulatory requirements while also delivering those stated goals.</p> <p>Detailed consequences: Robust governance requires clear aims and policy objectives and identified and delivered. Governance processes should facilitate the lawful delivery of those objectives and prevent the misapplication of resources in achieving other goals. Ultimately this can result in a reduction of living standards and physical health and mental wellbeing of residents. Failure to provide a reasonable level of service to residents at an appropriate cost, or to follow legal decision-making protocols, can result in increased regulatory scrutiny and reputational damage. Possible outcomes of which may be, public censure, financial penalties or direct central government intervention.</p> <p>Detailed causes: The volume and complexity of the council's services and objectives, coupled with finite resources and differing stakeholder views, make the application of the Corporate Plan into 'good' decision-making, a challenge. Examples of governance failures are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Variations in interpretation and non-compliance with agreed process and internal controls.</li> <li>• Deviation from core objectives as result of prioritising presenting issues.</li> <li>• Failure to allocate limited resources in line with the requirements of agreed objectives.</li> <li>• Inadequate internal controls across the organisation or vertically with a directorate.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Interdependencies (risks):</b> Failure to Achieve the MTFs, Stakeholder Expectation &amp; Communication, Leadership Capacity, Ability to Achieve Organisation Change, Failure to Manage the Consequences of Policy Uncertainty and National Policy Frameworks</p> <p><b>Key Mitigating Controls:</b>                  Council's Constitution covers decision making processes, including finance and contract procedure rules. The Constitution is reviewed and amended on an on-going basis to ensure legal compliance and operational continuity. Following the adoption of the Committee system, mechanisms were put in place to capture Member's feedback and are reported to the (Constitution Working Group). The number, nature and terms of references of the Committees are assessed on an on-going basis, with refinements being implemented via full council decision.</p> <p>Constitution is a publicly available document; guidance on the use of the decision-making processes is provided by enabling services including Legal, Finance, Democratic Services, and Audit and Risk. Constitutional updates are overseen (recommended and administrated) by the Director of Governance and Compliance (also the Monitoring Officer) in response to regulatory changes and Full Council decisions.</p> <p>Administration of local, regional and national elections and monitoring of behaviour in the period of heightened sensitivity beforehand. During which time, appropriate adjustments are made to the publishing or reporting of controversial issues or anything that seeks to influence voters.</p> <p>Reports to Committees are developed and reviewed by senior officers and enabler sign off, briefings are arranged with Committee Members to address any further knowledge requirements ahead of the relevant meeting. All decisions are formally recorded in meeting minutes and administrated in line with delegated authorities as per the constitution.</p>		<b>Lead Service Committee:</b> Corporate Policy Committee

<p>Schemes of delegation; local and financial are in place to provide clarity on responsibilities ensure separation of duties is in place where required and minimise the risk of inappropriate management override.</p> <p>Assurance mechanisms on the organisations' compliance with it's decision-making processes are provided through the external audit (Statement of Accounts) and the work of the Internal Audit team. Internal Audit's assurance is achieved through the development and delivery of an annual plan and follow-up monitoring of agreed actions. There are other external inspections, such as Ofsted, which may examine elements of our decision-making processes through their work, although this is not usually the primary focus.</p> <p>The organisation publishes an Annual Governance Statement identifying significant governance issues which have occurred, any known areas which may cause issues if not managed effectively and updates on issues previously identified.</p>	
<b>Actions (Monitoring):</b>	<b>Target Date for Completion</b>
Review of shared service governance arrangements with specific actions to be identified	2024/25
<p><b>Comments this quarter:</b> The recruitment of a new Chief Executive took place during Q3 with the appointment being announced in the first days of the 2024. During the period here have been positive examples of cross committee working to ensuring audit recommendations are implemented, with oversight and assurance being provided to the Audit &amp; Governance committee. The risk rating remains the same, supported by the fact that issues are being identified and resolved.</p> <p><b>Timescale for managing risk to an acceptable level:</b> March 2024</p>	

<b>Risk Name:</b> Stakeholder Expectations and Communication		<b>Risk Owner:</b> Chief Executive																															
<b>Risk Ref:</b> SR12	<b>Date updated:</b> 5 <sup>th</sup> February 2024	<b>Risk Manager:</b> Head of Communications, Head of Business Change																															
<p><b>Risk Description:</b> The risk that the council does not understand the expectations of its stakeholders and that its communication and engagement with those stakeholders does not result in their understanding of the council's actions, nor appropriate involvement and influence. The council has an obligation to provide as high a level of service to its residents as its funding will allow. This requires not only considering both the short and long-term but also the expectations of all of its stakeholders.</p> <p><b>Potential impacts:</b> A lack of understand and poor communication and/or failure to effectively engage with stakeholders will cause damage to the council's reputation, if this is severe enough it may result in poor performance, increased complaints, regulatory inspection, challenge from central government, low morale, increased staff turnover and make the borough a less desirable place to live and work in.</p> <p><b>Potential drivers:</b> To a certain degree the council cannot fully control the view that its stakeholders form. At times it will have to make decisions that are unpopular, this can be due to the context of these decisions not being effectively communicated, understood or just being disregarded by stakeholders. Management of this risk should be considered on the basis of the objective regard for and interest in the council its policies and its services (measured via surveys, media coverage, customer relations activity, etc.) and an assessment of the quality of its engagement (both listening and telling).</p>		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Orange</td> <td>Red (Net)</td> <td>Red (Gross)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Orange (Target)</td> <td>Red</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Green</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Orange</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Green</td> <td>Green</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Yellow</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td colspan="3" style="text-align: center;">Impact</td> </tr> </table>	4	Yellow	Orange	Red (Net)	Red (Gross)	3	Yellow	Yellow	Orange (Target)	Red	2	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	1	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow			1	2	3	4			Impact		
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<b>Interdependencies:</b> Increased Demand for Adult's Services, Complexity and Demand for Children's Services, Failure to Achieve the MTF5		<b>Lead Service Committee:</b> Corporate Policy Committee																															
<p><b>Key Mitigating Controls:</b></p> <p><b>Communication &amp; Media</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective monitoring and reporting of organisational reputation and sentiment.</li> <li>• Weekly reputation reporting to senior managers.</li> <li>• Monitoring of social and traditional media.</li> <li>• Communications and media function advised at an early stage of all future demand and emerging issues to enable effective planning.</li> <li>• Providing a 24/7 emergency communications on call function.</li> <li>• Communications strategies for key projects and issues developed agreed and reviewed with senior stakeholders and decision makers.</li> <li>• Positive proactive communication across multiple channels to celebrate the council's successes and achievements, building positive reputation.</li> <li>• Comms programme planned and reviewed over short-term (daily) and long-term (monthly / annually), including review of council service plans, consultation and engagement programs.</li> <li>• Review communications business continuity, priorities and emergency / crisis comms protocols and plans.</li> <li>• Media relations protocol and approvals process.</li> <li>• Media training programme for key spokespersons.</li> <li>• Regular meetings with comms leads from public sector partner organisations to collaborate, share plans and intelligence.</li> <li>• Values and behaviours for officers and members are established and organisational culture is monitored and supported through a range of initiatives.</li> <li>• Ensure that information about the Council, its services and how to access them is easily available in a range of formats for a wide range of audiences.</li> <li>• Monitor public sector press (e.g. MJ and LGC) and maintain and develop relationships with these media outlets to maximise opportunities for positive coverage.</li> </ul>																																	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development and delivery of communication strategies to influence public awareness of and informedness about key universal services, inc: planning, highways, waste and recycling.</li> <li>• Communications handling requirement for each service committee meeting agreed with lead officer(s).</li> <li>• Quarterly ‘Conversation with the Leader and Deputy Leader’ videos.</li> <li>• Regular internal communications to members and officers.</li> <li>• Use performance management reports for council services and programmes to identify reputational opportunities and risks at an early stage.</li> <li>• Continue to develop proactive direct comms to be issued via e-mail / SMS – we currently have 54,000 subscribers for ‘push’ notifications across a range of topics.</li> </ul>	
<b>Consultation</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that consultation is undertaken when proposals are still at a formative stage.</li> <li>• Design consultation which gives sufficient reasons for any proposal or change to permit stakeholders to undertake intelligent consideration and response to the options.</li> <li>• Consultation and engagement activity will be used as evidence when making decisions and adequate time will be given between the end of a consultation and a decision is made, to allow for consideration of and where required, a response to, the output of a consultation or engagement.</li> <li>• Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) are completed, appropriate for the purpose of use and that they are signed off before any consultation can begin.</li> <li>• Make it clear HOW consultation and engagement activity, EIA and other intelligence has been conscientiously taken into account when finalising the decision.</li> <li>• Use the equality impact assessment toolkit, guidance, and template to provide clarity around what the equality impact assessment is and how it should be used.</li> </ul>	
<b>Actions (Monitoring):</b>	<b>Target Date for Completion</b>
<b>Communication &amp; Media</b>	
Ensure alignment of annual communications programme and consultation and engagement programme (Quarterly)	Q1 2023/24 and planning ahead for 2024/25
Review annual business plans for communication requirements (Annually)	Q1 2023/24 and planning ahead for 2024/25
Delivery of the Communications Strategy for Residents 2022-25 priorities. Review in the context of 2023/24 financial position and emerging position for 2024/5 and the new Cheshire East Plan, as It is being developed and once established. (Six monthly updates to CPC. however, the Communications Strategy for Residents will need to be reviewed and realigned to the new Cheshire East Plan, once that is approved and adopted.)	Through 2023/24 and planning ahead for 2024/25
Provide communications support for implementation of MTFs proposals to ensure all stakeholders are well-informed about any changes to service and policy. (Annually)	Through 2023/24 and planning ahead for 2024/25
Review use of social platforms and other digital communications and engagement channels in the context of changing technologies and cultures on those platforms. (Quarterly)	Q1 2024/25
<b>Consultation:</b>	
Delivery of Equality Impact assessment training to Equality champions (Annually)	Q2 2023/24
Undertake a residents survey linked to the Corporate Plan refresh (Biannually)	Q3 2023/24
Complete the service restructure to enable recruitment to vacant posts in the research and consultation team (TBC)	Q3 2023/24
<b>Comments this quarter:</b>	
<p><b>Communication &amp; Media:</b> No change to the risk ratings at this time. Coverage and public/media interest in the council through Q3 was dominated by the council’s financial position and the potential impacts of the governments’ announcement of cancellation of HS2 North of Birmingham. Q3 saw a significant escalation in public interest in pressures on council finances and the impacts on residents, local economy and environment. This is ongoing at a local and national scale and is reflected in national polling regarding resident satisfaction and perception of local councils. Interest in the council’s financial position included in-year forecasting of budget gap, implementation of budget proposals from 2023/24 budget and looking ahead to future years.</p>	

Key proposals attracting most interest included parking review, garden waste subscription scheme, strategic leisure review and green spaces maintenance. These were (and continue to be) supported with comprehensive communications plans, aligned to consultation activity, project plans and key decision-making. Despite this, when proposing or making significant cuts or changes to valued services, residents and other stakeholders will be concerned and will voice opposition. We also saw developments and interest in flood mitigation plans for Poynton Pool, the ongoing planning issues relating to a housing development in Crewe, and concerns about review of household waste recycling centres. During this period the council also submitted plans to DfE as part of the safety valve programme, relating to high needs funding and SEND service reform. This is of key interest locally and nationally. Ensuring that the council's messages, information for residents and opportunities to influence decision-making (and understand the impact of that input), amid heightened interest from a range of voices and stakeholders, remains a significant challenge.

**Consultation:** The Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) training has now been approved and is available on learning lounge. Work is underway to explore if this package can be made mandatory for Head of Service as they have final approval and sign-off EIA prior to publication. This will ensure assessment is undertaken at the right level and that any impacts are understood and mitigated where possible.

A residents' survey has been undertaken during the period. Results are being analysed and summary reports will be drafted ready for wider distribution. Discussions will be undertaken to assess the responses and work with services will be undertaken to address any areas identified where performance needs to be improved. A shift to digital has reduced costs. Issues around accessibility were addressed through targeted use of paper copies and responses rates have provided for a good level of confidence in the results at town and borough level. Many significant consultations have been undertaken during this period, with some timescales for reporting being short in some instances. Efforts are being made to ensure that the outcomes of these consultations are taken into account prior to any decisions being made.

**Timescale for managing risk to an acceptable level:** N/A

<b>Risk Name:</b> Information Security and Cyber Threat		<b>Risk Owner:</b> Head of Information Communication Technology and CIO	
<b>Risk Ref:</b> SR13	<b>Date Updated:</b> 24 <sup>th</sup> January 2024	<b>Risk Manager:</b> ICT Programme Manager	
<p><b>Risk Description:</b> (Cause) There is a risk that as the Council continues to move towards using new technology systems to reduce costs and fulfil communication, accessibility, and transaction requirements, (threat) it becomes increasingly vulnerable to a security breach, and, or loss of information, either maliciously or inadvertently from within the Council or from external attacks by cyber-criminals. (Impact) This could result in many negative impacts, such as loss of information, distress to individuals, legal, financial, and reputational damage to the Council, in addition to the possible penetration and crippling of the Council's IT systems preventing it from delivering its Corporate Outcomes.</p>			
<p><b>Interdependencies:</b> This risk has interdependencies with corporate risk Business Continuity and Stakeholder Expectations and Communication. It also has links to the Financial Resilience risk, as funds for maintenance and replacement will be stretched, placing additional strain on assets and resilience of information security controls.</p>		<b>Lead Service Committee:</b> Corporate Policy Committee	
<p><b>Key Mitigating Controls:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The CIO is an advocate of and reports on Information Risk to the Corporate Leadership Team and the Audit and Governance Committee and makes the Annual Statement of Internal Control of Information Risk.</li> <li>The Council has a number of Information and Data Security policies which are published on the Centranet and help to protect from the Council from inappropriate and unauthorised access and communicates what to do in the case of an incident. Policies; Information Security Policy Overview, ICT Access Policy, ICT Communications and Operations Policy, ICT Computer, Telephone and Desk Use Policy, ICT Email and Messaging Policy, ICT Flexible and Mobile Device Policy, ICT Incident management Policy, ICT Infrastructure Policy, ICT Internet Policy, ICT Legal Responsibilities for Data Policy, ICT Personnel Standards for Information Security, ICT Protection Policy, ICT Removable Media Policy and ICT Software Policy. Policies review and guidance materials updated to strengthen advice to staff on how to manage various information types</li> <li>Progress on Information Risk and Information Security is monitored through the Information Security Steering Committee (ISSC), Strategic Information Governance Group (SIGG) and the IG Collaboration Group.</li> <li>The Council has an Incident Reporting process which has been communicated to staff, all incidents are scored and assessed by SIGG to ensure that the breaches are minimised, and future breaches are reduced.</li> <li>The Council complies with the Public Services Network PSN Code of Connection, NHS Data Security and Protection Toolkit, DWP's MOU and NHS Digital controls, work continues with the consolidation and enhancement of elements of the security estate to meet the ever-developing threat profiles. This includes third party IT hardware and software tests undertaken by accredited security vendors, these validate that the network and hardware are secure and robust, if any vulnerabilities are found then a mitigation plan is drawn up and actioned.</li> <li>The Council has an Information Asset Register which is reviewed on an annual basis and has been published on the open data portal.</li> <li>There is also an Information Assurance Data Management (IADM) programme of activity to increase awareness and maturity of information assurance and governance across the Council. The programme is tasked with guiding the organisation to manage its information in a compliant and efficient way.</li> <li>Data Classification has been rolled out to the organisation; this allows the categorisation of information so that appropriate controls can be employed to protect the information.</li> </ul>			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Council provides security and compliance e-learning modules (which are mandatory for all employees) on the Learning Lounge. This includes several modules of Data handling, Cyber Security, and Information Assurance. There are also several best practice guides on the Councils Lighthouse on the best ways to use technology and to protect information. These modules and best practice guides are updated regularly to reflect changes in working practices and as a response to additional threats.</li> <li>Controls are in place to restrict access to the data centres and network equipment and risk assessments of existing systems and networks are on-going.</li> <li>The Council has a Data Protection Officer who assists in ensuring compliance with GDPR and to specify the procedures to be adopted.</li> <li>The Council's ICT Services have a strategic direction to move to a "Cloud First" principle, whilst this enables an evergreen environment which is always up to date, additional controls are needed to prevent compromise or inappropriate use and access. This includes contract compliance and monitoring to ensure ongoing protection of information. To support the strategic direction and architecture principles all technical solutions are reviewed at the Technical Design Authority to ensure correct alignment.</li> <li>In addition, the Council is looking to move to Zero Trust architecture, this is a direct result of increased threats posed to the working infrastructure. This shift is in line with the latest thinking and guidelines issued by the NCSC.</li> <li>In support of this a high-level business case for Infrastructure Investment of which Security &amp; Compliance is an element was submitted and subsequently approved. This additional funding will be used to develop the necessary tools to start the implementation.</li> </ul>	
<b>Actions (Monitoring):</b>	<b>Target Date for Completion:</b>
Identity Management (Information Security Steering Committee (ISSC), Information Assurance and Data Management (IADM))	March 2024
Application Management (Information Security Steering Committee (ISSC))	March 2024
Data Security (Information Security Steering Committee (ISSC))	March 2024
Data Quality (Information Assurance and Data Management (IADM))	March 2024
Information Management (Information Assurance and Data Management (IADM))	March 2024
<p><b>Comments this quarter:</b> No change to the risk rating at this time.</p> <p>Identity Management – projects are continuing to ensure that identities are protected through increased monitoring and controls. These will ensure that correct level is applied to identities across the estate.</p> <p>Application Management – review of current estate and alignment to the asset register.</p> <p>Data Security – continued enhancement of the existing security controls to ensure that the latest threats are mitigated and protected. Development of a remediation plan to ensure that vulnerabilities are proactively monitored and addressed. Work is continuing to strengthen the resilience capabilities of data storage and protection. Work is progressing on a refreshed Cyber Incident Response Plan to ensure that the Council is best equipped should an incident occur.</p> <p>Data Quality – Continuation of the MDM projects across several data fields to ensure that the councils' solutions have the correct data embedded with them, updated seamlessly across multiple systems. This is a key area to support any future drive to AI.</p> <p>Information Management – continuation of projects to deliver and improve the maturity of information both through its storage and use of information. This will enable both greater protection for that information but also enable efficiencies through accurate management information and improved compliance through controlled retention and ease and speed of access to critical information. This is a key area to support any future drive to AI.</p>	
<p><b>Timescale for managing risk to an acceptable level:</b> N/A</p>	

<b>Risk Name:</b> Business Continuity		<b>Risk Owner:</b> Director of Governance and Compliance (Monitoring Officer)																											
<b>Risk Ref:</b> SR14	<b>Date updated:</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> February 2024	<b>Risk Manager:</b> Head of Audit & Risk																											
<p><b>Risk Description:</b> Failure to maintain business continuity after an unusual or unexpected, disruptive event or events. The risk that, some or all, of the council’s services, projects or initiatives are unable to resume operations within the expected timeframes after a disruption. A disruptive event, or multiple events, may occur either in isolation, or across the whole organisation.</p> <p>Detailed consequences: The council has a number of safeguarding obligations to its residents, a failure could result in it being unable to fulfil those obligations, and as such not protect them from mental or physical harm. Failures may also cause an unacceptable loss of local services.</p> <p>Detailed causes: The unavailability of staff, ICT systems, equipment or a suitable working environment are the most common causes of a material failure. Many different social, economic, environmental or public health factors can drive these causes to manifest themselves. Underlying this may also be a failure to reasonably allocate resources to eliminate single points of failure in these areas.</p>		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Orange</td> <td>Red</td> <td>Red</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Net (Orange)</td> <td>Gross (Red)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Green</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Target (Yellow)</td> <td>Orange</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Green</td> <td>Green</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Yellow</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> </tr> </table>		4	Yellow	Orange	Red	Red	3	Yellow	Yellow	Net (Orange)	Gross (Red)	2	Green	Yellow	Target (Yellow)	Orange	1	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow			1	2	3	4
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<b>Interdependencies (risks):</b> Information Security and Cyber Threat, Pandemic Virus, Fragility in the Social Care Market, Council Funding, Organisational Capacity & Demand		<b>Lead Service Committee:</b> Corporate Policy Committee																											
<p><b>Key Mitigating Controls:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BC Plans held for each service area – clear format, identifying critical and serious priority activities with recovery time objectives.</li> <li>BC impact assessments undertaken across the organisation to understand challenges to service delivery ahead of known events, informing decision making and mitigation plans.</li> <li>High level course on Business Continuity Management has been added to the Council’s Learning Lounge</li> <li>ICT Shared Service also have a Crisis Recovery Plan that has been updated to take account of lessons learned as a result of ICT outage incidents. This Crisis recovery plan overview contains key information for the ICT Shared Service disaster recovery</li> <li>Ongoing liaison with Emergency Planning Shared Service</li> </ul>																													
<b>Actions (Monitoring):</b>		<b>Target Date for Completion:</b>																											
Review and refresh of the Business Continuity Framework (2-year review cycle)		May 2024																											
Development of SharePoint BC system (one off project)		Begins January 2024																											
Rollout and training for the SharePoint BC system (2-year review cycle)		Post SharePoint system development																											
Work with Emergency Planning on scenario exercises		Began March 2023 – on-going																											
<p><b>Comments this quarter:</b> No material change to the risk, time with a system analyst has been booked in for January to develop the scope for the BCP SharePoint App. Emergency Planning exercise planned for February based around a cyber security breach, the learnings from which will feed into the app development and inform further development of the organisation’s business continuity approach.</p>																													
<b>Timescale for managing risk to an acceptable level:</b> Q4 2023/24																													

<b>Risk Name:</b> Capital Projects - Place		<b>Risk Owner:</b> Executive Director of Place																														
<b>Risk Ref:</b> SR15	<b>Date updated:</b> 31 <sup>st</sup> January 2024	<b>Risk Manager:</b> Place Directors and Business Managers as relevant to																														
<p><b>Risk Description:</b> Failure to deliver major capital projects.</p> <p>The council delivers a broad range of capital projects in support of the aims and objectives of its Corporate Plan. The range of projects includes transport infrastructure, town centre regeneration, refurbishment and improvement of existing council assets such as schools and leisure centres, and renewable energy generation.</p> <p>Impact: Without a robust system for managing the capital programme and individual projects, the stated objectives may not be delivered. Projects could also fail to deliver to the time, cost and quality parameters set out in business cases. This could have significant financial and reputational implications for the Council. Due to the nature of the projects and their large cost, delays can materially impact the ability to deliver future projects, thus negatively impacting the borough.</p> <p>Likelihood: The scale and complexity of the overall capital programme is challenging. Appropriate governance and controls are important to ensure resources and funding are prioritized effectively, and where required agree adjustments to the time, cost and quality parameters set out in the business case. Where appropriate, members are updated on significant changes to agreed objectives through briefings to the relevant committee.</p> <p>The broad range of partners and stakeholders for individual projects and interdependencies between projects are also significant challenges that require effective management.</p>		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Orange</td> <td>Red</td> <td>Red (Gross)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Orange</td> <td>Red</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Green</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Orange (Net Target)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Green</td> <td>Green</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Yellow</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td colspan="4" style="text-align: center;">Impact</td> </tr> </table>	4	Yellow	Orange	Red	Red (Gross)	3	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Red	2	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Orange (Net Target)	1	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow		1	2	3	4		Impact			
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<b>Interdependencies (risks):</b> Climate change, Infrastructure Investment, Economy, Council Funding		<b>Lead Service Committee:</b> Economy and Growth, Environment and Communities, Highways and Transport																														
<p><b>Key Mitigating Controls:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Capital Strategy and overall Capital Programme is presented annually as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy at full Council.</li> <li>New projects and schemes are subject to the approval of detailed business cases in accordance with the Finance Procedure Rules</li> <li>The Assets Board provides strategic oversight of the Council's land and property assets including recommendations and reports on acquisition, disposal and development.</li> <li>The Capital Programme Board undertakes detailed appraisals of projects and business cases; undertakes gateway reviews and risk management reviews of major capital projects; and receives post project completion reports to assess benefit realisation and lessons learnt.</li> <li>Appropriate and proportionate governance has been established to oversee project delivery, including risk registers. This includes project boards to manage individual projects and thematic programme boards to provide additional strategic oversight and manage interdependencies, e.g. Carbon Neutral Programme Board, Leisure Investment programme Board, Place Board. This governance considers and makes practical decisions on the prioritisation of resources and funding including, where appropriate adjustments to agreed time, cost and quality parameters.</li> <li>The Place Board provides strategic oversight of all the major Crewe-centric and Macclesfield-centric projects, including strategic housing sites, to ensure individual projects are fully aligned to the overarching vision and delivery plan for each town.</li> <li>Financial monitoring undertaken quarterly, with summary data reported to Finance Sub-Committee and appropriate service committee.</li> <li>High level progress updates are reported to the appropriate service committee twice a year. More detailed progress reports on individual projects or programmes are provided on a periodic basis.</li> <li>Regular 121s between Executive Director and Directors which includes updates on key capital projects</li> </ul>																																
<b>Actions (Monitoring):</b>		<b>Target Date for Completion:</b>																														

<p>A new module within the Unit4 ERP system will improve financial monitoring to provide more regular information on actual and forecast spend</p>	<p>Revenue module now in operation, capital module deployment ongoing – date TBC</p>
<p><b>Comments this quarter:</b> No change to the risk ratings this quarter, controls and action review, no material changes identified. The Middlewich eastern bypass full business case was submitted to the DfT for funding, with a decision anticipated in the spring.</p> <p>The effects of inflation continue to be felt across the wider programme of capital projects in Place, larger capital investments are continually assessed to understand whether they remain viable and will deliver the required benefits.</p>	
<p><b>Timescale for managing risk to an acceptable level:</b> N/A (Net score is equal to target) - Major capital projects by their nature are high risk. The controls are designed to proactively manage risks and mitigate their impact if a risk is realised. It is not realistic to expect the risk to be managed any lower.</p>	

<b>Risk Name:</b> Failure of the Local Economy		<b>Risk Owner:</b> Executive Director of Place																															
<b>Risk Ref:</b> SR16	<b>Date updated:</b> 8 <sup>th</sup> February 2024	<b>Risk Manager:</b> Director of Growth and Enterprise																															
<p><b>Risk Description:</b> Failure of the local economy</p> <p>The risk that the local economy does not realise the expected level of growth due to an inability to attract, grow and retain commercial enterprises, residents and visitors. The borough has a strong local economy, an above average Gross Value Added (GVA), some areas of deprivation and is reliant on a number of different industries.</p> <p>Consequences: The failure of enterprises reduces the local money supply, reducing the standard of living for residents and council income. Secondary effects can include a reduction in public health and the loss of highly trained or skilled individuals. Consequences and causes, over the medium to long-term can have a symbiotic relationship, creating either an upward or downwards spiral. An example of this is shops closing in a town centre, then reduced footfall resulting in further closures.</p> <p>Causes: The local economy is significantly driven by changes in the national economy, taxation and other government policies. However the failure to maintain parity, or offer benefits above other boroughs, can lead to a relatively larger economic downturn. As noted above poverty and deprivation, like other issues, can be both a consequence and cause causing a snowball effect.</p>		<table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Orange</td> <td>Red</td> <td>Red (Gross)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Orange</td> <td>Orange (Net Target)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Green</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Orange</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Green</td> <td>Green</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Yellow</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td colspan="4" style="text-align: center;">Impact</td> </tr> </table>			1	2	3	4	4	Yellow	Orange	Red	Red (Gross)	3	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Orange (Net Target)	2	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	1	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow		Impact			
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<b>Interdependencies (risks):</b> Capital Projects, HS2 Infrastructure Investment, Pandemic Virus, Climate Change		<b>Lead Service Committee:</b> Economy and Growth																															
<p><b>Key Mitigating Controls:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cheshire East Business support hub has been launched.</li> <li>Business forum to engage and plan future support.</li> <li>Investment plans to support regeneration and development.</li> <li>Place marketing and inward investment.</li> </ul>																																	
<b>Actions (Monitoring):</b>		<b>Target Date for Completion:</b>																															
<p>Launch of business support grants: (Quarterly returns to government)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repurposing our high street grants from Crewe town centre</li> <li>Decarbonisation grants for business</li> <li>New employment space grant</li> </ul>		March 2025																															
<p><b>Comments this quarter:</b> The national economic situation continues to be monitored by the Economic Development Service. There is no change in the economic position, with the economy flatlining. Locally, the cancellation of HS2 has impacted confidence.</p>																																	
<p><b>Timescale for managing risk to an acceptable level:</b> N/A, net score is equal to target score.</p>																																	

<b>Risk Name:</b> Climate Change (CEC Carbon Neutral Status 2025)		<b>Risk Owner:</b> Executive Director of Place																																	
<b>Risk Ref:</b> SR17	<b>Date updated:</b> 31 <sup>st</sup> January 2024	<b>Risk Manager:</b> Head of Environmental Services																																	
<p><b>Risk Description:</b> Failure to achieve Carbon Neutral status for the Council by the 2025 milestone target due to requirement to secure statutory consents, seek viable and affordable solutions and other external market forces outside the Councils control.</p> <p>Likelihood is based on a number of external factors, partnerships and key outcomes being delivered in a timely manner.</p> <p>Impact will result in non-delivery of a key priority in the Council’s Corporate Plan. It will also contribute to climate change temperature rise and severe weather events which could have an impact on public health and safety. It could also have financial implications with increased need for adaptation of key infrastructure for severe weather events across the borough.</p>		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Orange</td> <td>Red (Net)</td> <td>Red (Gross)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Orange (Target)</td> <td>Red</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Green</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Orange</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Green</td> <td>Green</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>Yellow</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td colspan="4" style="text-align: center;">Impact</td> </tr> </table>		4	Yellow	Orange	Red (Net)	Red (Gross)	3	Yellow	Yellow	Orange (Target)	Red	2	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	1	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow			1	2	3	4			Impact			
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<b>Interdependencies (risks):</b> Economy and World Events, Organisational Capacity and demand, Council funding, Capital Projects		<b>Lead Service Committee:</b> Environment and Communities																																	
<p><b>Key Mitigating Controls:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk is reviewed as part of the Brighter Futures Transformation Projects Board, operational board and member steering group</li> <li>• Carbon Neutral Program established with Program Board reviewing progress and risks monthly</li> <li>• Member Advisory group overseeing its delivery</li> <li>• Annual update on progress reported to relevant committee</li> <li>• Climate change is a key consideration as part of our statutory planning duties as an authority and within the development of local planning policy</li> <li>• Planned natural offset set at 10% more than required to reduce risk of non-delivery in any one project area</li> </ul>																																			
<b>Actions (Monitoring):</b>		<b>Target Date for Completion:</b>																																	
Secure planning permission for second solar farm (Delegated Authority granted at March 2023 Economy & Growth Committee. Action will be reviewed monthly at Carbon board chaired by Head of Environmental Services)		March 2024																																	
Transition of Electric Fleet project, failing to meet targets (New Capital funding secured though 2023 MTFS Action for fleet transition and tree planting progress, will be reviewed monthly at Carbon Board chaired by Head of Environmental Services)		March 2024																																	
Progress of Natural Offset planting failing to meet targets (In response to capacity issues at Mersey forest, more of the project work to be delivered by CE for Oct – May planting season)		1 <sup>st</sup> October 2023																																	
Budget proposal to defer capital spend and target for Council to be Carbon neutral to 1st April 2027 (Decision at Full Council Q4 2023/34)		January 2024																																	
<p><b>Comments this quarter:</b> The council has projects in progress to achieve the target it has set itself to be carbon neutral by 2025, however this is now unlikely to be achievable based on time constraints for the following reasons;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to the complexity of the projects required and how their practical delivery has been influenced by external market forces. These external factors are issues such as securing off takers for solar energy and an ability to acquire the necessary volume of small fleet vehicles over a restricted time period;</li> </ul>																																			

- The budget proposal to be considered in Quarter 4 at Full Council on 27th February 2024 to defer capital expenditure on the second larger solar farm and transition to EV fleet. This is proposed on the basis of the Council's very challenging financial position and the need to defer spend, in this case the cost of prudential borrowing, to future years wherever practicable.

If agreed at Full Council in Q4, this would revise the 2025 target for the Council to be Carbon Neutral to 1st April 2027. Recognising the challenges described, the net score increased from 9 to 12, target score also increased from 6 to 9.

**Timescale for managing risk to an acceptable level:** Delivery milestone – Q 2025/26

<b>Risk Name:</b> Local Planning Authority Modernisation Plan		<b>Risk Owner:</b> Executive Director of Place
<b>Risk Ref:</b> SR18	<b>Date updated:</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> February 2024	<b>Risk Manager:</b> Interim Director of Planning, Head of Planning
<p><b>Risk Description:</b>                  Following the completion of the ‘Local Planning Authority Review and Service Transformation’ report and presentation to Environment &amp; Communities Committee on 31 October 2022 a Modernisation Plan has been developed to achieve the transformation of the service. This Plan will carry forward the recommendations made, document actions and monitor progress. The recommendations are many and varied but failure to complete the actions of the Modernisation Plan will undermine the planned transformation of the service, perpetuating and potentially extending the issues identified and undermining the reputation of the organisation.</p> <p>Detailed consequences: Failure to achieve completion of the Modernisation Plan will undermine the performance of the Council in its Local Planning Authority role, result in non-compliance with statutory processes, and reputational damage to the Council. By not achieving the Modernisation Plan within agreed timescales, the potential for additional budget pressure increases.</p> <p>Detailed causes: Insufficient resource to ensure completion of priority actions in the required timescales (staff and skills) while also ‘doing the day job’, Interim Service Review Lead/Planning Director limited contract duration, supplier resource to deliver new ICT system, failure to engage with internal and external stakeholders to affect necessary changes, lack of oversight from the Planning Transformation Board/Steering Group.</p>		
<b>Interdependencies (risks):</b> Organisational Capacity and Demand, Reputation, Council Funding,		<b>Lead Service Committee:</b> Environment and Communities
<p><b>Key Mitigating Controls:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environment and Communities Report 31/10/2022; Local Planning Authority Review and Service Transformation Report and Modernisation Plan.</li> <li>• Monitoring of progress against Modernisation Plan by Transformation Board and Environment and Communities Committee.</li> <li>• Regular meetings of Interim Director of Planning and Head of Planning and team managers to review action logs and progress on key priorities. Steering Group established to review workstream and focus priorities feeding into Transformation Board.</li> <li>• Internal Audit reports on Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 will inform the scope of a member/officer working group.</li> <li>• IT System Project has its own Project Board attended by supplier.</li> <li>• Weekly monitoring of resources / recruitment during manager’s meetings.</li> </ul>		
<b>Actions (Monitoring):</b>		<b>Target Date for Completion</b>
IT System Project escalation due to breach of contract (Weekly team and fortnightly Project Board meetings or as needed)		Q1 2024/25
Staffing Restructure – JDQs awaiting evaluations (Regular meetings and updates)		Q1 2024/25
External support from Capita retained to assist with backlog. Backlog funding secured from DLUHC, intervention from senior officers on older applications (Continued monthly reporting on application backlog)		Q4 2023/24
Continued monitoring of resources – recruitment to critical posts ahead of restructure (Weekly manager meetings)		Q4 2023/24
<p><b>Comments this quarter:</b> There is no change to the risk ratings at this time and the desired reduction in net risk score is not yet possible. This is due to several on-going issues; one of which is the delayed the delivery of the ICT system project for which we have no solid timescale for implementation from our external supplier. Engagement with the external supplier is on-going and current expectations are tentatively for a Q1 2024/25 delivery.</p>		

Restructuring the service has faced further delays due to job evaluation queries and HR resource. Further recruitment to key roles will be necessary before restructure is complete – which may now be pushed into Q1 24/25 and will also be impacted on by financial pressures.

Backlog of planning applications is reducing slowly but some sickness and further vacancies has impacted on progress. A backlog funding bid has been successful so additional Capita support should be secured for Q4.

Engagement with consultees on applications and s106 is largely complete. Validation checklist work to go to consultation and forward to adoption in Q4. S106 audit work progressing well with several recommendations completed and further work to be largely completed by end of Q4.

Further progression and timeframes on the remaining Modernisation Plan recommendations are dependent on resolution of priorities described above.

**Timescale for managing risk to an acceptable level:** 3-12 months (depending on priority)

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**Orbitas Bereavement Services, Detailed Risk Register – Confidential Document****Risk scoring:**

- CEC might score a risk as 16 for such potential impacts as over £1M, risk of death, severe reputational damage, project delay of over 3 months or service suspension of over 5 days
- Orbitas' risk tolerance is lower than CEC's and is based on what financial, political, compliance &/or reputational type risks Orbitas could survive.
- For Orbitas, a score of 16 reflects a financial burden of £50K or more and/or the risk of severe service disruption (1 week or more) and/or severe health and safety and/or high reputational damage or a known compliance risk

**Key:**

- L = Likelihood, I = Impact, O = Outcome.
- Each item is scored 1-4. Final Score = L x I = O
- 7 or below shows as green
- 8 or more shows as yellow/amber
- 12 or more shows as red

	Risk	L	I	O	Control Measures	Revised O
1	Pandemic Event	2	4	8	- Orbitas Pandemic Plan in place and revised to reflect experiences of Covid-19 pandemic - relationships established with CEC Emergency Planning Team	6
2	Financial Failure	2	4	8	- Company reserves provide security	4
3	General regional economic problems	2	2	4		4
4a	Loss of core contracts	2	3	6	- MA1 contract with Adults Commissioning continues to provide excellent value for money	3
4b	New competitors / options leading to reduced market share	3	3	9	- Business Plan includes several business development opportunities	6
5	Local Government spending constraints	4	3	12	- regular dialogue with Shareholder - Shareholder Business Plan - importance of income generation to address budget issues - service funded by income generated	9
6	Failure to attract investment for business development	3	3	9	- company reserves enable self-funding - potential to fund via borrowing - CEC appetite for risk from ADSV activity is low	6
7	Legislative change affecting Council-owned companies	2	3	6	- ADSV operating model previously challenged with positive outcome	3
8	Political change via general and local elections	2	2	4	- first year of Local Authority electoral cycle - likely General Election during 2024 thought to have lesser impact on Orbitas	4
9	Failure to meet political aspirations	3	4	12	- Cheshire East council currently reviewing the ASDV operating model - Orbitas co-operating providing all information requested - ASDV model has been challenged previously with a positive outcome for Orbitas	8

10	Reputational damage for the Company or shareholder	2	3	6	- Orbitas has an excellent track record due to systems, processes, policies, training, experience and governance in place	3
11	Loss of confidence in the Company, Board or key Personnel	3	4	12	- Cheshire East council currently reviewing the ASDV operating model - Orbitas co-operating providing all information requested - ASDV model has been challenged previously with a positive outcome for Orbitas	8
12	Industrial action	2	2	4	- good relations with recognised Trade Unions	2
13	Failure to recognise and recruit the necessary skills	3	2	6	- attractive benefits - comprehensive training programme providing development opportunities and meaning specialist skills not required prior to employment	4
14	Major H&S issue	3	3	9	- comprehensive training provided for staff - suite of Health and Safety Policies regularly revised and briefed to staff via Toolbox Talks - Operations Manual and Risk Assessments cover all activities - all necessary equipment and PPE provided	3
15	Quality issues	3	3	9	- comprehensive training provided for staff - suite of HR, H&S and other policies regularly revised and briefed to staff via Toolbox Talks - main processes fully documented and briefed to staff - annual external audit programme give assurance and aids business improvement - full induction process for new starters	3
16	GDPR issues / data breach	2	3	6	- regular GDPR training completed by staff - access to CEC GDPR Officer expertise - all data held on CEC networks	3

# RISK LOG

<b>PROJECT/PROGRAMME TITLE</b>	<b>Tatton Park Enterprises Operations</b>
<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>To ensure that TPE delivers its targeted budget contribution of £106k for 2023/24 whilst maintaining the good</b>
<b>Completed by:</b>	<b>Ian Barlow</b>
<b>Date Completed</b>	<b>20/02/2024</b>



Risk ID	Risk Type	Scope of Risk (Detail)	Gross Score (without)			Existing Controls	Net Score			Risk Treatment and Control Measures to be introduced	Anticipated Score			Officer Responsible for Risk
			L	I	Total Score		L	I	Total Score		L	I	Total Score	
			L	I	LxI		L	I	LxI		L	I	LxI	
OR1	THREAT	Gradual decline in turnover results in failure to hit annual budget contribution to the Tatton Park revenue account affecting the Park's financial performance	3	3	9	Regular financial monitoring by Cheshire east Council finance and the TPE Ltd Operations Manager.	2	3	6	Remedial financial and operational controls will be implemented currently throughout the Financial reporting period.	2	3	6	GJ/SW
OR2	THREAT	Factors affecting Front of House staff and poor operational Service delivery causing lack of repeat business from customers resulting in financial targets being missed.	2	3	6	In house control of staff through customer service training and food suppliers analysed for best value and quality.	1	3	3	Ongoing service and supply monitoring	1	3	3	GJ/SW
OR3	THREAT	Natural calamity affecting the Park being able to open, and therefore may be closed for a period exceeding a day, e.g. Foot and mouth epidemic resulting in financial targets being missed.	3	3	9	Statutory adherence through Health and Safety and completion of animal passports/transport Licences etc.	2	3	6	Contingency measures in place reviewing operation whilst Park is closed.	2	3	6	CH
OR4	THREAT	Temporary service closure through interruption to catering provision by external factors e.g. Power Failure resulting in financial targets being missed.	2	3	6	Emergency contact lines operating to help understand in particular how long the service interruption will affect the catering operation.	1	3	3	ensure all emergency contact data including phone numbers, Park staff responsible are available to contact in case of any emergency.	1	2	2	CH
OR5	THREAT	Lack of correct Insurance cover and limits placed on operational liabilities causing potential liability to both Tatton Park and Cheshire East Council resulting in financial targets being missed or additional contributions required from CEC	2	2	4	Risk Management procedure inn operation following advice with Insurance assessor.	1	2	2	Participate in annual risk assessment ensuring any changes in business circumstances are notified to the Insurer.	1	2	2	CH
OR6	THREAT	Physical operational risk and security of contents within both the Stables and Gardeners Cottage facilities resulting in loss of ability to provide an operation.	2	2	4	On going programme of reviewing risk Assessments, alarm maintenance and portable appliance testing including inventory updates to identify changes in Assets in both outlets.	1	2	2	On going Maintenance.	1	2	2	SW
OR7	THREAT	Poor food or service provision leading to potential closure of one or both outlets, or poor public reviews, leads to reputational damage to both TPE Ltd, Tatton Park and CEC with possible damage payments due.	3	3	9	Good communication lines operating both at Tatton Park and Cheshire East Council and any responses to customers etc. handled with speed, tact, diplomacy and honesty.	2	3	6	On going review of current procedures and affect any improvements whereby felt necessary by both TPE Ltd staff and Tatton Park.	2	3	6	Sw
OR8	THREAT	Bout of food poisoning (or similar) from one of the two catering outlets causing temporary closure leading to reputational damage to both TPE Ltd, Tatton Park and CEC with possible damage payments due.	3	4	12	Industry food hygiene standards maintained and annual visit from CEC Environmental Health Team.	2	4	8	Ongoing food standards and preparation training.	2	4	8	SW

SCORING CHART FOR IMPACT				SCORING CHART FOR LIKELIHOOD				
	Factor	Score	Effect on Project		Factor	Score	Description	Indicator
Threats	Critical	4	Complete failure or extreme delay of project (3 months or more). Critical impact on project objectives and performance and could seriously affect project reputation. Long term damage that may be difficult to restore with high costs - £1m.	Threats	Very likely	4	>75% chance of occurrence	Regular occurrence Frequently encountered - daily/weekly/monthly
	Major	3	Major impact on project objectives and performance, could be expensive to recover from (between £500k - £1m). Failure to achieve expected benefits and/or major delay to project (2-3 months)		Likely	3	40% - 75% chance of occurrence	Within next 1-2 yrs Occasionally encountered (few times a year)
	Significant	2	Significant impact on project objectives, performance and quality, could have medium term effect and be potentially expensive to recover from (between £100k - £500K). Significant slippage (3 weeks-2 months).		Unlikely	2	10% - 40% chance of occurrence	Only likely to happen 3 or more years
	Minor	1	Minor impact on project objectives and performance, could cause slight delays in achievements (less than 2 weeks). However if action is not taken, then such risks may have a more significant cumulative effect. (Costs less than £100k)		Very unlikely	1	<10% chance of occurrence	Rarely/never before
Opportunities	Factor	Score	Effect on Project	Opportunities	Factor	Score	Description	Indicator
	Exceptional	4	Result in major increase in ability to achieve project objectives.		Very likely	4	>75% chance of occurrence or achieved in one year.	Clear opportunity, can be relied on with reasonable certainty to be achieved in the short term.
	Significant	3	Impact on some aspects of the achievement of one or more strategic objectives		Likely	3	40% to 75% chance of occurrence. Reasonable prospects of favourable results in one year.	May be achievable but requires careful management. Opportunities that arise over and above the plan.
					Unlikely	2	<40% chance of occurrence or some chance of favourable outcome in the medium term.	Possible opportunity which has yet to be fully investigated by management.
				Very unlikely	1	<10% chance of occurrence	Has happened rarely/never before	

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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