



Corporate Plan

2011 / 2013

February 2011

**Welcome from Wesley Fitzgerald, Leader and Erika Wenzel,
Chief Executive
Welcome to our Corporate Plan for 2011 to 2013**

The wording of this introduction is subject to finalisation of the budget for 2011/12

This is our Corporate Plan for the third year of Cheshire East Council, and sets out how we will achieve our vision of:

“Working together to improve community life”

Cheshire East Council has worked with partners and local communities to develop our Sustainable Community Strategy, “*Ambition for All*”, which sets out seven priorities for action. In our Corporate Plan we identify what we, the Council, will do over the coming year to address these priorities.

There is no doubt that these are challenging times. We continue to strive for improvement in the quality and value of the services we provide, but within a context of reduced funding and growing demand. In Cheshire East the population is generally ageing, requiring more care, the demand for protection of our young people has also increased, and the weather has seriously affected the condition of our roads.

It is clear that we will have to do more with less. In setting our budget for 2011/12 we have had to respond to reductions in government grant, increasing cost pressures and reductions in ring fenced grants. Despite this cut, the Council has decided to increase funding in a number of areas including adult services, children in care, and roads maintenance. The Council has also decided to freeze council tax for next year.

Despite the challenges ahead, we must be ambitious in what we can achieve. This can be on a big scale, such as how we respond to changes in the delivery of health services or how we progress the localism agenda. It also means the improvements every team can make by continuing to put value for money and customer service at the heart of delivery.

We know that the wide range of services we deliver has a huge impact on a lot of people, and you have our commitment that we will be working closely with you to make sure that we are delivering first-class services at the right time and in the right place so that Cheshire East is a great place to live, work and visit.

Your Council, Your Services, Your Plan

Cheshire East Council Corporate Plan 2010-2013

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Who We Are and What We Want to Achieve
3. What Cheshire East is Like Now
4. Working With Our Partners
5. How We Are Performing
6. Listening to You
7. Transforming Our Services
8. What We Want for the Future
9. How We Will Resource Our Priorities
10. Organising to Deliver

Appendix 1

Corporate Objectives

Contacts and Further Information

Introduction

Cheshire East – the place

Cheshire East is the third largest unitary authority in the North West and has around 363,000 residents. Our neighbours include North Staffordshire, Manchester, Cheshire West & Chester, Stockport and Warrington. First impressions of Cheshire East are often of leafy lanes and wealthy households. Indeed as an area we host 5% of the North West workforce and 7.5% of North West businesses are based here. This can hide the reality that it is a diverse area with many differences in income, employment and health. Figures that really show this include the life expectancy across the area. In parts of Macclesfield the average life expectancy for a woman is 94, but in areas of Crewe it is 77 – a huge difference of 17 years. Household income also differs, ranging from £65,000 in parts of Macclesfield to £18,000 in parts of Crewe.

Cheshire East Council has a responsibility to ensure that all its services meet these different needs and that the way services are delivered across the area are developed and shaped to ensure that all who need them benefit from them. Our plan sets out how we will do this, who will be involved and how we will know if we have improved services for local people.

The Corporate Plan in the community context

Whilst the Council has statutory obligations to fulfil, regional priorities to consider, and National initiatives to participate in, this plan is based on what our communities have told us they want and need. Through this community focused approach and working with our partners, we have developed a number of key targets and priorities. The Corporate Plan focuses specifically on what we as a council will do to improve your services and get better outcomes for local residents, businesses and visitors. It keeps a clear focus on what Cheshire East will deliver for local people and how we will play our part to create strong and prosperous communities.

Other local organisations, such as the Police, Fire and Rescue and the Primary Care Trusts, have their own Corporate Plans that relate to outcomes for Cheshire East people. In addition, many local organisations work together with us to develop joint strategies and improvement plans, for example the Children and Young People's Plan.

To turn our priorities into reality, we have developed departmental and service plans that provide fuller detail about how the Corporate Plan will be delivered.

Our staff play a vital role in the successful delivery of these priorities and they, along with other key partners, have been asked for their contribution to setting out how we as a council will work to improve local services.

We believe that excellent services can only be provided through fully engaged, satisfied and capable staff. We will work with staff to raise awareness of the priorities and to gain their input on outcomes and actions, including how services will contribute towards the achievement of the priorities. We will also consult with key partners.

The Corporate Plan will be updated each year to ensure that new priorities and objectives are included. This will mean that the Council will be able to respond to emerging issues and community views. Our Annual Performance Plan will clearly show how the Council performed against its priorities and how improvements for the future will be made.

This diagram shows how the long-term vision for Cheshire East, set out in Ambition for All the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS), links to our Corporate Plan objectives, and then through to the specific strategies and action plans right down to team and individual objectives. Each member of staff and each service area should be able to identify how their work contributes to the achievement of the Council's corporate objectives and to the overall vision for Cheshire East in 2025.

DIAGRAM OF KEY STRATEGIES AND PLANS

Key Strategies and Plans

consists of:

*Local Development Framework,
Local Transport Plan, Housing
Strategy, Economic Development
Strategy, Visitor Economy Strategy,
Carbon Management Strategy, Climate Change Adaptation Strategy,
Health Inequalities Strategy and Children
and Young People's Plan.*

Who we are and what we want to achieve

Cheshire East Council provides services which are important to everyone in their daily lives. The Council maintains the roads, provides transport services, commissions school places and specialist support services for vulnerable children and their families, educates children, provides social care to elderly and vulnerable people, and looks after waste and recycling, to mention but a few.

We are proud of our local area and feel a strong sense of responsibility towards its care. The beautiful diversity of the countryside, the rich cultural heritage and the character of the towns of Cheshire East provide a wonderful environment within which to live. From the dramatic scenery of the Peak District in the east to the open farmland and green spaces around the towns, people are never far from an area of natural beauty.

Macclesfield and Crewe are our largest towns, with Wilmslow and Congleton also providing substantial town centres. Our smaller towns of Sandbach, Poynton, Nantwich, Middlewich, Knutsford and Alsager historically provided market centres for local people and continue to play an important role in local life. The strong communities that exist within these towns and in our rural areas provide Cheshire East with vibrancy and give people a sense of belonging.

The Council wants to focus on the things that matter most to local people. We aim to make Cheshire East a thriving and vibrant place where people can enjoy a good quality of life and good health. This includes being able to learn and develop their skills and put them to good use in our local communities and further afield, with opportunities for everyone to fulfil their potential. Our thriving community should provide everyone with greater wealth to share, aiming for greater equality amongst its members in a range of ways.

A flourishing business community is essential to sustaining this success. In addition, the Council aims to make our communities safer and stronger, and develop good local involvement in decision-making about local services, providing personal choice where appropriate. We want to see an appropriate mix of house types and tenures to support economic growth ranging from affordable housing to executive economic growth ranging from affordable housing to executive housing to ensure that people can reside close to their place of work. In short, we want: *'Cheshire East to be a great place to live, work, visit and enjoy.'*

As a council we work closely with a range of partner organisations to help us achieve our ambitions, within the private, public, community and voluntary sectors. We believe this is important to ensure people receive integrated services that are good value for money.

Cheshire East Council is governed and guided by 81 councillors, with a Conservative majority (82 with effect from the elections in May 2011). Together with talented and committed employees, our Council wants to deliver excellent services for, and with, the people of Cheshire East. This Corporate Plan sets out our ambitious plans for the next three years.

What Cheshire East is like now

Cheshire East is already a great place in a range of ways:

- Our communities are generally well-off, with most people reporting a good quality of life
- Our children tend to do well at school, with levels of achievement above the national average
- The crime rate is one of the lowest in the country
- Residents tend to enjoy better health than elsewhere in the region and nationally
- Our strong economy contributes a large amount to the North West's economic output, relative to our population size

We want to celebrate these good stories, while recognising that the Council still has much work to do. Cheshire East has a strong local economy with household income above the national average. However it is not immune from the national economic recession and unemployment has been rising. The population of working age is expected to fall over the next twenty years, so limiting the capacity to expand the labour supply.

Despite recent decreases in house prices, affordability remains a concern within Cheshire East. In terms of relative affordability, the borough is ranked the 6th least affordable district in the North West.

Cheshire East schools generally perform well; children get off to a good start with a large percentage of childcare establishments, nursery education and primary schools judged to be better than similar areas.

The population is older than the average for England. Most of these older citizens are active, engaged and make a large contribution to the community. A small but significant and growing proportion require health and social care support.

Cheshire East has a diverse rural/urban profile. The area is classed as significantly rural, with more than half the population living in rural or rural market town areas.

There are a number of people in the area who experience poorer quality of life in many respects, and they tend to be clustered within certain urban locations, many of which are in Crewe. The differences that exist between certain groups of our society presents a challenge for the Council – one that we aim to address in this Plan. The challenges are described within five themes

Health and Well Being

Cheshire East's population profile is ageing dramatically. We have a population that is slightly older in make-up than that of England and Wales as a whole

The number of people aged over 65 has increased by 20% since 1991, and a much greater increase is predicted for the coming years (a 59% increase by 2027). By contrast, the number of children in Cheshire East is decreasing, with a 4% decline predicted over the same time.

This ageing of our population will result in a smaller working population combined with an increasing population of older people, many of whom will be frail and dependent. Our social care services are rising to the challenge of redesigning services to deal with this change and through our housing service we are developing the housing options available to enable older residents to remain living independently within the home of their choice.

While overall health is good within Cheshire East, people have different experiences. Life expectancy varies from 73.4 years (for men in Alexandra Central and Valley) to 94.1 years (for women in Macclesfield Town and Tytherington). In particular, we need to improve the prevention and care of coronary heart disease, lung cancer, chronic lung conditions and alcohol-related liver cirrhosis.

Alcohol poses a significant health issue for Cheshire East, with levels of alcohol-specific hospital admissions for males, females and under-18's significantly worse than the England average. Hazardous and binge drinking rates are also significantly worse. With such a strong link existing between alcohol and liver disease, a range of cancers and anti-social behaviour, reducing alcohol consumption is a significant challenge for the next few years.

Finally, while teen conceptions in Cheshire East are the third lowest in the North West, there are parts of the area where there are particularly high rates.

With our partners and through the Children's Trust we have identified that around 10,000 children aged between 5 and 16 have some form of mental health disorder. We need to ensure that investment in this area meets actual need. If we identify this need early enough, it can prevent the need for more costly services and can also have an impact on the behaviour and aspiration of our children.

Children and young people

One of our most important responsibilities is to ensure that children in Cheshire East are protected from abuse and neglect.

It is a key challenge for us to ensure we respond well when children are referred to our services, completing assessments when appropriate and in a timely way, and providing good-quality care when needed. A challenge for us and partners is to understand the profile of the children, young people and their families that we are in contact with. A key objective for us is to develop joint locality working arrangements to ensure we can intervene early enough to make a difference to their lives and future demand on our services.

A key priority for us working with our partners is to address the rise in the number of children and young people experiencing emotional health and wellbeing issues.

Cheshire East's children generally tend to do well at school, and go on to Further/Higher Education, employment, or training. However, children who are 'cared for', tend to do significantly less well, in education and in other important areas. Another challenge is to ensure that children with special education needs, as well as children from a less advantaged background, have the opportunity to achieve at school.

The number of children coming into the care of the Council has increased over the last twelve months although over recent months that number has now begun to reduce. This plan gives a high priority to achieving our role as corporate parent. This places collective responsibility on us to achieve good parenting for all children in our care. It requires ownership and leadership at a senior level and includes all our elected members. We need to ensure that these children are healthy and safe, are able to achieve and can contribute to the community. Young people who have been in care face particular challenges when they leave. They may have missed opportunities and have little or no family support. We seek to provide the support a good parent would give on housing, education, training and employment. This can make the difference between achieving independence and requiring long-term help.

Every one of our schools runs a school council and just over 500 young people gained a Duke of Edinburgh award last year. We have a successful and well attended Youth Parliament where 12,643 voted in the UKYP, last year. There are lots of ways for our children, young people and their families to get involved, but we need to develop these methods even further to ensure that everyone feels part of the community and feel able to contribute to our plans.

Most children and young people in Cheshire East positively progress into adulthood, making the most of the opportunities available to them and achieving economic independence. We want to offer targeted information, advice and guidance (IAG) to those children and young people identified at risk of becoming vulnerable and those who are vulnerable to improve their outcomes. Offering personalised learning pathways, employment and training. To support this, we want to encourage greater awareness and activity in those numbers of apprenticeships available to target employment and training.

Economy, Transport & Housing

In order to reduce carbon emissions and levels of traffic on our roads, we will focus on localising and integrating our systems of public transport.

We will also encourage cycling and walking by developing infrastructure for these healthy and carbon-free methods of travel. With 79% of people travelling to work using their car, only 4% using public transport, and 14% walking or riding a bicycle, transport is an important area of work for the Council in the future.

The effects of the national and global economic recession have been felt strongly in Cheshire East. We have experienced a greater increase in unemployment than either the North West or the UK as a whole, with the number of claimants of Jobseeker's Allowance in Cheshire East rising by 118% between March 2009 and the same month in 2010.

Although the number of claimants has fallen from its 2009 peak, it is still more than 5,400. We need to do more to help our unemployed residents find work and safeguard the jobs of those already in employment. We also need to support key industries and service sectors in Cheshire East that show a commitment to sustainable and responsible business growth.

We will continue to work to make life experiences for people of Cheshire East the same no matter where they live. This covers aspects of life such as income, health, crime and unemployment. While we generally perform well in supporting people on this, pockets of deprivation exist mainly in the Crewe area, along with other areas including Handforth, Macclesfield and Congleton.

House prices in Cheshire East have not been affected by the economic recession as greatly as elsewhere in the North West. While they declined in 2008, this was at a lesser rate than for the region as a whole, and within the last year, house prices have begun to rise again, more quickly in Cheshire East than for the North West. With the average house costing £157,000 in Cheshire East (compared to £119,000 in the region overall), increasing the provision of affordable housing and making the best use of our existing housing stock is therefore a key issue for the Council.

The Localism Bill proposes a number of changes that will affect Cheshire East: proposals to reform social housing by introducing a more flexible local authority affordable rent tenancy, reforming the social housing allocation system a National Homeswap Scheme to encourage social tenant mobility and enabling local authorities to discharge homelessness duty into the private rented sector. The proposals set out a fundamental reform of social housing in England.

Environment and Climate Change

The relationship between climate change and carbon emissions (from electricity production, the use of gas and vehicle use) is now widely accepted, and the people of Cheshire East are concerned about this issue. Collectively we do not perform well in this area – the average person's domestic emissions of carbon dioxide being 2.8 tonnes per year, higher than both the North West and the UK.

There is a lot of work to be done in improving energy efficiency, encouraging the use of renewable sources of power, promoting smallscale electricity generation within local communities, and improving non-car transport options. This will not only assist us to reduce our carbon footprint, but also to improve our resilience for a lower-energy future in which less carbon-based fuels are available for power production.

In addition to working with residents and businesses to reduce carbon emissions, we have developed a carbon management plan in association with the Carbon Trust. This plan puts in place a 5 year strategy to reduce our carbon emissions by 25% by 2016.

Cheshire East residents are excellent at recycling domestic waste with rates of recycling as high as 50% with recent trends indicating residents continue to recycle more. There is a limit, however, to how much of our waste can be recycled, and the challenge for the future relates to reducing the amount of waste produced overall, for example by using less packaging and reducing food waste.

Another important environmental challenge is the ability for residents to produce their own food locally. Cheshire East is currently struggling to meet the demand for allotments, with substantial numbers of people on waiting lists. Providing people with space to grow their own food, and the development of local markets in the area will both be important as we rely less on internationally-traded, out-of-season-food.

Safer Communities

Our communities are relatively safe places to live, with significantly lower rates of crime than in the North-West or England and Wales.

While a relatively low proportion of people in Cheshire East perceive anti-social behaviour to be a problem, the main issue identified in this area relates to teenagers hanging around on the streets. Our young people have expressed their concerns over a lack of facilities, with 67% of respondents to the Young People's Leisure Survey 2008/09 stating that they do not feel there is enough for them to do where they live. Providing activities and informing young people of what is available is a key area of work for the Council.

Road safety is also an important issue. There were just over 1,800 people involved in road traffic accidents on our roads in 2009/10, which is more than in previous years. However, since 2008 the number of adults killed or seriously injured has steadily fallen. There is much to be done in improving the safety of our roads in a range of ways.

Recently reduced government funding in road safety has necessitated a radical rethink on road safety spending across the partnership areas. The Council and partners are therefore exploring new ways of working to determine a way forward for the future. Road safety remains a priority for all the partners and speed enforcement including the use of speed cameras, will still be part of our work.

Crime and nuisance against older and disabled citizens is a small but significant issue and one that the Council and its partners take seriously and for which a co-ordinated strategy is emerging.

Working with our Partners

Partners work together through the PACE (Partnerships for Action in Cheshire East) Local Strategic Partnership which aims to improve quality of life for residents, to support business and to enhance Cheshire East as a visitor destination.

Working in partnership enables more effective use of public money through a shared understanding of the needs and issues in Cheshire East and co-ordinated provision of services. This joint approach has never been more important than in the current economic climate where public funds are reducing but expectations on services rightly remain high.

The aims and ambitions of our Corporate Plan cannot become a reality without the support of our partners. They play a vital part in shaping, developing and, in many cases, helping us to deliver first-class local services. This partnership sets the vision and priorities for the area, ensuring that different initiatives and services support each other and work together across Cheshire East.

Major changes to the partnership landscape are being developed, namely the establishment of a Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) for Cheshire and Warrington and the creation of a new statutory Health & Well Being Board for Cheshire East. The Council will work with its partners to ensure these new Partnerships are effective and fully supported. We will also need to assess how these new developments will impact on the PACE arrangements in place in Cheshire East and make any changes necessary.

There are also seven Local Area Partnerships (LAPs) covering the areas of Congleton, Crewe, Knutsford, Macclesfield, Nantwich, Poynton and Wilmslow. Their role is to improve services, ensure local people influence decision-making and to actively engage and empower communities. LAPs bring together a wider range of people from the statutory, voluntary and community sectors. By working together at a local level, they focus collective action on what really matters, delivering improved outcomes for local people and places.

During 2010 PACE developed the first Sustainable Community Strategy for Cheshire East, "Ambition for All", which sets out a clear vision for the next 15 years which is:

"Cheshire East is a prosperous place where all people can achieve their potential, regardless of where they live. We have beautiful productive countryside, unique towns with individual character and a wealth of history and culture. The people of Cheshire East live active and healthy lives and get involved in making their communities safe and sustainable places to live"

All partners have a collective responsibility to deliver Ambition for All to overcome many of the challenges described earlier in this document. Ambition for All identifies seven priorities for immediate action which will enable us to achieve our vision. These are:

- Nurture strong communities
- Create conditions for business growth
- Unlock the potential of our towns
- Support our children and young people
- Ensure a sustainable future

- Prepare for an increasingly older population
- Drive out the causes of poor health

By bringing a range of public, private and voluntary partners together to plan programmes and services, prioritise needs and manage delivery, we are ensuring that important connections are made and services are properly integrated. We are also ensuring that we minimise duplication and are able to put our collective resources to best use.

Some key examples of what partnership working means in practice can be seen in the next section, where we discuss our performance.

How we are performing

It is important that we have a realistic view of how council services are being delivered; for instance what are doing well and want to continue to do well, and where we are not fully addressing particular challenges and need to do further work.

We are committed to ensuring that the Council does its job well, and responds to local people and the evidence we collect about the performance of our services. We are also committed to our performance plans and the current state of our performance being transparent and open to the public and other interested parties.

As a council, we are committed to improving and have gathered our own evidence so that we can look at our performance since April 2009 and make any necessary changes for improvement. From this we will know what is going well and what we need to improve. Some key examples are shown in the next section.

What's going well?

The following are just a few examples of our recent achievements:

- During our first year, we have made £25 million of savings that have been reinvested in priority areas across the Council, such as children's services.
- Improving parks and green spaces – the refurbishment of Queen's Park in Crewe is progressing well, with new bridges installed, a bandstand restored and lake works completed. This £6.5 million project is now set to transform the park, with a £2.78 million contribution from the Heritage Lottery Fund.
- Within their annual performance ratings, Ofsted have rated Cheshire East's Children's Services as performing well
- Improving schools – the majority of settings and institutions inspected by Ofsted are judged as good or better.
- Children's Homes – Inspection judgements were 'good' and one was judged as good with outstanding features. These two homes replaced facilities previously judged as 'inadequate'
- Adoption Services - The overall judgement was good with outstanding features.
- Reviewed membership and governance of Children's Trust arrangements to improve involvement and contribution of key agencies
- Successfully conducted a pilot of a scheme to provide 10 hours of free childcare per week to most disadvantaged two-year-olds.
- Supporting independence – our Services for Adults are using a new model for supporting people, in particular those who are elderly, to live independently in their homes, and providing support for carers. A new approach is being made to providing equipment, information, advice and support, including providing people with personal choice of the services they want.
- Reducing offending – the Safer Cheshire East Partnership has set up the Priority and other Prolific Offender (PPO) team, resulting in a massive reduction in offending rates. The team involves a number of partner agencies, reducing duplication and improving risk management.
- Tackling domestic abuse – the Cheshire Domestic Abuse Partnership has implemented a best-practice model to tackle domestic abuse, termed the Coordinated Community Response. This provides support for survivors increased

accountability for perpetrators and voluntary change programmes. Again, many partner organisations are involved.

- Transformation of Building Control Services – electronically-based systems now allow the customer to view drawings and submit applications online, as well as providing big efficiencies in departmental working.
- Ambitious plans for Crewe and Macclesfield have been agreed which will lead to strong business growth and major town centre development.
- The Sustainable Towns Framework is actively working on projects across our market towns which include renewable energy initiatives, clean up campaigns and public realm improvements.
- Cheshire and Warrington Local Economic Partnership established - one of the first in the Country.
- Supporting businesses and local people through the recession – we have supported town centres through dressing empty shop windows with vibrant displays; increased the take-up of benefits available from Government by £1.2m; and supported businesses through clinics and seminars on local procurement.
- Providing choice in housing – we have launched Cheshire Homechoice, a new choice-based lettings system that allows new and existing customers to apply for housing vacancies which are advertised widely across Cheshire East. This is a new way of allocating housing, avoiding the traditional waiting list approach.
- Improving community safety – our team of Community Wardens has achieved the Community Safety Accredited Person's Certificate from Cheshire Constabulary. This means that they are now accredited with a range of new powers to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour.
- The standards for social care in Cheshire East as measured by the Care Quality Commission, are among the highest in England
- The Council is the third best council in England for delivering personal budgets

Some key areas we need to improve on

- We need to improve our planning service to make it more efficient and customer-friendly. We are radically changing how we do business in this key area to ensure value for money and simplify our systems.
- We are working hard to harmonise the way in which we collect and manage household waste across Cheshire East to move away from three approaches inherited from the previous Councils into a simplified, cost-effective service.
- We will place more emphasis on the assessment of carers and provision of information, advice and support where this will help them to maintain their support for their loved one and achieve a good quality of life for themselves.
- We will place more emphasis on linking people with social care needs and their carers to resources and opportunities in their local communities, to support their ability to access the same resources and facilities as others.
- Making the best use of our existing housing stock, by bringing empty homes back into use
- Improving our ability to respond earlier to the identified needs of vulnerable children, young people and their families.
- Address the health and wellbeing needs of our children and young people
- Improve outcomes for children cared for by the Local Authority.
- Continue to strengthen our arrangements for safeguarding children.
- Offer youth support targeted at our most vulnerable groups
- We will revise programmes to tackle the rising 16-18 NEET population. This is particularly important with our most vulnerable young people who require new approaches and initiatives using a wider range of providers.

Listening to you

As we have said, fundamental to setting our priorities and improving our services is listening to you, acting on what you say, and regularly checking your feedback about outcomes.

We will work hard to improve our methods of communicating and consulting with local people and our partners. We are keen to ensure that everyone who lives or works in our community has a voice and is able to make their thoughts, aspirations and concerns heard.

Examples of key projects recently undertaken as a result of what the people of Cheshire East have told us include:

Housing Needs Survey

The former Councils within Cheshire East conducted a number of Housing Needs Surveys designed to understand the issues/concerns. These surveys received more than 7,500 responses and highlighted the need for affordable housing in many locations. The household survey identified that 9.4% of black & minority ethnic households were in some form of housing need which compares with 6% for Cheshire East. Affordability and the condition of the property were most likely to be cited as reasons for housing need.

The results from the survey are currently being used to help inform the Housing Strategy and future local area plans.

Quality of Life Survey

During the autumn of 2010 thousands of households across the Cheshire East area received a questionnaire asking for their views on what it is like to live in the local area. The survey asked residents for opinions about aspects of quality of life in their local area, including housing, health, local services and community safety. As this is the first Quality of Life Survey undertaken it will be important in planning future services. We also used the information to understand which services are most important to residents to help us decide how we can reduce our budget in light of cuts in funding from central government.

Issues and Options Consultation

The Council recently completed consultation on the Local Development Framework Issues and Options for the Core Strategy. The consultation included eight workshops with stakeholders such as Parish & Town Councils, the Cheshire East Citizens Panel, environmental groups, the business community, infrastructure providers, social housing providers and house builders.

The response to the consultation includes in excess of 1,000 comments, from around 500 people/organisations. This information will be used to inform the next stage of consultation which will involve work taking place with local communities to consider their future needs and the options for future development.

We do know that as a relatively new organisation, the task of consulting, listening, responding and checking is work in progress. We are committed to getting this right and the Local Area Partnerships that have been set up are vital in helping us with this task at a local level.

Transforming our Services

Key to driving the improvement of our services and doing more with less will be our transformational approach to service delivery. Our Corporate Plan discusses how we will provide better value for money, focus on core services, and work well with partners. It also explores how we will ensure services are more responsive to individual and local needs, eradicate waste and inefficiency, and ultimately improve overall performance. We recognise the need to radically review our approach, in partnership with other organisations, to achieve these things.

Our plans as to how we can achieve this are laid out in our corporate Transformation Programme. Traditional approaches no longer meet user needs effectively, and demand for services is changing and rising rapidly which means significant financial challenges. It is clear to the Council that in rethinking our approach in these areas, much more can be done to achieve our priorities, often for less cost.

The current programme includes a major redesign of services for children, adults, health and wellbeing and transport, and a huge amount has been achieved so far. For example, in Adult Services we have achieved significant savings by eliminating duplicated efforts, and providing integrated services with health partners. We have already invested and made improvements in safeguarding, preventative and re-ablement services – keeping people safe, independent and well for as long as possible.

The Transformation Programme is dynamic and is reviewed regularly, taking into account our performance, local needs and views, budget constraints and national guidance. It plays a key role in helping to shape and deliver the objectives within this Corporate Plan and individual service plans, working within the Council's emerging financial scenario. For the future, we will focus on improving services at a local level and examining which services might be better delivered by other agencies and partners.

What we want for the future

We want to make Cheshire East a place that people choose to live in, work in and visit. We want it to be a place that people say good things about, which has a great range of things to do, is a great place to live, a place where people feel happy and successful with fantastic open spaces and that is run by an excellent council.

We are committed to making this happen and are carefully planning our priorities to make sure it does and have set ourselves rightly ambitious corporate objectives. These objectives will be the basis upon which departmental and service plans are written and will form a fundamental part of every day life for all staff working within the Council. We will make sure that everything that we do as a council contributes towards making Cheshire East 'the' place.

A summary of the objectives is set out in the following pages, the full objectives can be found in Appendix 1.

Corporate objective one:

To give the people of Cheshire East more choice and control around services and resources

We want all people in Cheshire East to have more choices and access locally to good information. We will develop new ways of working, be honest about what the Council can offer and help people when they want that help. We will draw upon people's experiences and ideas and help them to play a much bigger part in informing plans for future services. **We will use technology to support us wherever possible such as in the development of the 'Empower' card that gives people control over their personal social care budget.**

Corporate objective two:

To grow and develop a sustainable Cheshire East

We want to ensure that we provide the right environment for businesses to grow. We will provide business support, plan for the needs of future generations and provide employment and public services where people need them. We will work with our partners across the public sector to increase aspirations and realise the potential of all members of our community. We will provide transport solutions, support cultural projects and revitalise town centres. We will increase the number of visitors to Cheshire East through marketing our towns and major attractions.

Corporate objective three:

To improve life opportunities and health for everybody in Cheshire East

The opportunities offered by the integration of public health within the Council will enhance the Council's ability to improve the health of our residents. We will work with partners to ensure that the integration is effectively handles.

We will develop plans for the new lifestyle centres to bring together leisure, health and social care functions to provide a better service to our customers, more cost effectively and efficiently.

Corporate objective four:

To enhance the Cheshire East environment

We will provide clean and well-maintained streets, public spaces and protect our heritage, natural and recreational environment for the benefit of local communities. We will tackle the need for carbon reduction and deliver a sustainable solution to

waste across Cheshire East. We will continue to maintain and improve conditions for all road users, and in particular, focus on reducing the number of road traffic accidents.

Corporate objective five:

To be an excellent council and work with others – to deliver for Cheshire East

We will focus on core services that best meet the needs and aspirations of local people and communities. We will work to ensure that services and priorities are properly resourced and successfully managed within budget. As part of this, we will ensure that the overall increase in Council Tax does not exceed inflation and is below inflation where possible each year. We will work to deliver services fit for the 21st century.

Delivering the objectives will be a challenge but one we will rise to and achieve. We will be constantly looking at our performance and ensuring that we are always working towards our objectives and making changes and improvements to make them a reality. We know that we will have to make difficult decisions, but we will make them and be very clear about why we have made them and how they will contribute to our objectives. We will publish our service plans so that you can see in greater detail the daily work that we will be doing to move this forward, how this work contributes to our objectives and what difference we are making

How we will resource our priorities revenue budget 2010-2013

TO BE REVISED FOLLOWING BUDGET SETTING

Cheshire East Council spends over £700m a year on delivering services to local people. Approximately one quarter of this is funded through Council Tax, with the majority of funding coming from Central Government Grants. Since Local Government Reorganisation the Council has driven down the cost of Supporting Services putting greater emphasis on frontline spending. Recent published data showed that spending on Central Services at Cheshire East was in fact half that of the unitary authority average.

The Council operates a rolling three year Business Planning Process, which enables the Council to develop longer term plans which anticipate and respond to changes in funding levels and new demands. Figure 1 (right), shows where the Council allocates resources from all sources.

Current estimates predict that gross expenditure (excluding schools) will rise by only 2.5% (£12.7m) over the medium term up to 2013. Due to the level of savings being achieved this is actually less than estimated inflation for the same period. During the period, funding levels from government are also expected to decrease. This makes it increasingly important that the Council allocates its own resources to priority spending areas.

Although spending will increase overall the most positive impact will be realised in caring for children, caring for adults, on the road network and in housing. This will be funded through high levels of efficiency, particularly in Support Services, which allows the Council to divert resources towards key service priorities. Figure 2 (right) demonstrates the changes in local funding that the Council will make by 2012/2013. This reflects the impact of policy options to recognise and protect priority areas.

In social care provision there is a successful transformation programme underway to reduce costs and make the service sustainable. This explains the reduction in discretionary spending in that service.

DIAGRAMMATIC REPRESENTATION

Organising to deliver

Council Leadership and Cabinet

Cheshire East Council has appointed a Leader and a Cabinet to make strategic decisions for the organisation. Cabinet meets once a month, and their meetings are open to the public, with time being made available for members of the public to speak.

Each Cabinet member has their own area of responsibility, and act as champions for key issues. They work closely with managers to ensure we perform well as a council.

In addition to the Leader of the Council, Cabinet is made up of members with the following portfolio responsibilities:

- Safer and Stronger Communities•
- Health and Well-being
- Environmental Services
- Performance and Capacity
- Procurement, Assets and Shared Services
- Adult Services
- Children and Family Services
- Prosperity

Overview and Scrutiny Committees

We recognise how important it is that the administration of your services is challenged and suggestions made for their improvement. Our five Overview and Scrutiny Committees involve 58 council members and ensure that the Council is being run efficiently and effectively. Again, you are more than welcome to attend these meetings. The five committees are:

- Children and Families
- Environment and Prosperity
- Sustainable Communities
- Corporate
- Health and Adult Social Care.

Elected members

Cheshire East's 27 wards are represented by councillors (52 wards and 82 councillors as of May, 2011). The role of these elected members is to reflect the views, and pursue the interests, of the communities that they represent.

The full council meets six times per year, and is responsible for setting the overall policy directions and the budget. A range of committees look at issues including planning, licensing and school organisation.

Through these various council meetings, we make sure that the concerns and suggestions that councillors bring from their communities are properly considered and acted upon. These are public meetings and details are published on our website and anyone is welcome to attend. We also make sure that our councillors are properly supported in their work with their communities, providing tools and expertise to make a real difference to their area.

The full council appoints committees to deal with statutory decisions on planning, licensing and regulatory matters. There is also a Standards Committee which ensures the probity of our operations.

Managing the Council

Our Corporate Management Team is led by the Council's Chief Executive, and includes:

- Strategic Director, Places
- Director, Adults, Community, Health & Well Being
- Director, Children and Families
- Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development
- Head of Policy and Performance
- Head of Corporate Improvement
- Borough Treasurer and Head of Assets
- Borough Solicitor (Monitoring Officer)

This Team is responsible for ensuring that our corporate objectives are met and that the right priorities are set to make this happen. They listen to the feedback from partners, local people and communities, set the priorities and then allocate the tasks to colleagues across the Council. They work closely with Cabinet and provide information and advice where needed.

Managing our performance and risks

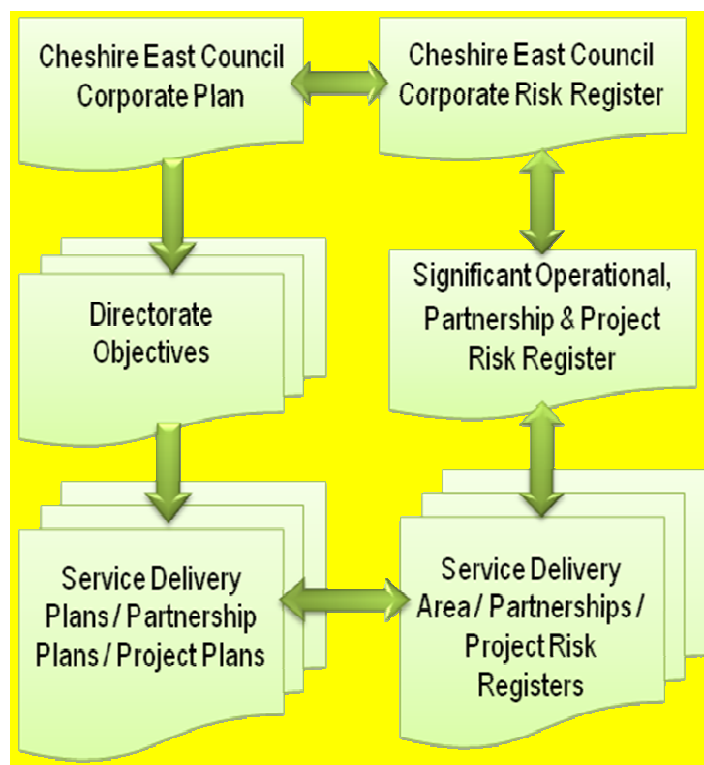
In order to deliver the improvements that we detail in this plan, we have robust performance monitoring and management arrangements in place. These involve the regular review of the Council's key priorities and projects, along with the setting of clear targets and actions for staff. This gives the strong evidence to demonstrate our improvements and to highlight areas that require attention.

In managing our risks, through using an effective risk management framework, we aim to add value by improving decision-making, planning and prioritisation. This contributes to a more efficient use of resources and optimises our performance and delivery.

Good management of our performance will involve setting clear objectives, developing robust service plans, reporting progress to Corporate Management Team and Cabinet and reviewing and updating our plans according to developments.

A risk is concerned with a threat or a possible future event which will adversely or beneficially affect our ability to achieve our objectives. By managing risks objectives are more likely to be achieved, damaging actions or events are avoided or minimised and opportunities maximised. We aim to ensure that the level of control activity is proportionate with the risk the Council faces and we will continue to review this as our internal and external environment changes.

The actions necessary to manage and mitigate our key strategic risks are embedded in the programme of activity set out in our delivery plans. By integrating risk management with the Council's strategic planning process we are able to monitor risks in achieving our objectives, determine which risks have the most significant impacts and prioritise resources accordingly. Identification of risks is both from a top-down strategic risk approach with the bottom up operational risks meeting in the middle.



Good management of our performance will involve setting clear objectives, developing robust service plans, reporting progress to Corporate Management Team and Cabinet and reviewing and updating our plans according to developments.

Working for Cheshire East

We want the Council to be at the heart of the community, a great place to work and an employer of choice. We want to continually raise our game and improve performance and efficiency to ensure the delivery of excellent services to the people in the community. To do this we need great people. We want high performing, customer focused, skilled, flexible and motivated employees who are proud to deliver excellent services.

As a service provider we embrace the philosophy “treat employees as you want your customers to be treated”, recognising the importance of engaging both staff and customers. We believe that the employee experience matters. To support this, a strategic three year workforce development plan “fit for the future” has been developed. This focuses on five key workforce priorities which directly support our corporate objectives and plan:

1. Developing the organization – effectively building workforce support for new structures and new ways of working to deliver customer focused and efficient services in partnership.

2. Developing leadership capability – building visionary and engaging leadership which makes the best use of both the political and managerial role, operating in a partnership context.

3. Developing workforce skills and capacity – with partners, developing employee's skills and knowledge in an innovative, high performance, multi-agency context.

4. Resourcing local government – with partners, taking action to address key future occupational skill shortages, promote jobs and careers, identify, develop and motivate talent and address diversity issues.

5. Pay and rewards – modernising pay systems to reflect new structures, new priorities and new ways of working and to reinforce high performance.

To measure our progress towards achieving these five priorities and ensure we build a culture of continuous learning and performance improvement, we are working towards retaining Investors in People which provides a best practice standard in people management and development.

Our values – ASPIRE

Our core values reflect our aspirations for both our culture and our standards for serving the people of Cheshire East and we strive to demonstrate these values in all that we do:

Action - take responsibility for making the right things happen

Support - work and learn together in order to succeed

People - put customer and community needs at the heart of what we do

Integrity - be open, honest and fair, expecting the same of others

Recognition - value all views, efforts and achievements

Excellence - strive to improve all that we do

Equality and inclusion

Cheshire East is committed to providing high-quality, customer focused services for all people living in, working in or visiting the area. Promoting fairness and providing equality and inclusion is one of our important values, and relates to:

- Accessing the Council's services
- Accessing employment opportunities with the Council, or with its contractors who supply goods or services to the Council
- Accessing voluntary work supported by the Council
- Developing policies and plans that impact upon communities and individuals.

We are determined to develop further our equality and inclusion agenda to provide quality customer services, meet our statutory responsibilities, and as part of the achievement of our corporate aims and objectives. Our aim is to deliver inclusion for all

Cheshire East Council Corporate Plan 2010 – 2013

Appendix 1

Corporate Objective One

To give the people of Cheshire East more choice and control about services and resources

What do we want to achieve?

We will have a good understanding of the communities that make up Cheshire East and have mechanisms in place to enable us to listen to their views

We want all people in the borough to have more choices about the help they receive and greater control over the resources which are available to help them. To achieve this, we want to ensure that people have access locally to good information, advice and guidance about our services and those of others.

We want to be clear about the services local people and communities want from the Council and its partners. This will enable the Council to focus on core services that best meet the needs and aspirations of local people and communities, along with whether those services can be best delivered directly or in partnership with other organisations including Town & Parish Councils. In this way, we will see the number and scope of services being delivered by partners increase.

What will we do to achieve our ambition?

- Analyse the results of Community Survey to provide information about perceptions of local population
- Set up and deliver liaison processes through LAPs on roadworks
- Undertake equality impact assessments of services
- Provide effective support to carers in their carer role to ensure they have a life outside being a carer
- Develop a range of commissioning strategies to deliver best value services for the people of Cheshire East
- Redesign of children's services to ensure needs in families and carers are identified early
- Target support to families and carers and improve the capacity of parents to care for their children
- Work with partners to deliver services at as local a level as possible
- Build on our success in offering personal budgets by making greater use of our prepayment card – the Empower Card – to give people more choice and control

How will we know if we have been successful?

- A steadily increasing number of people will be getting direct cash payments and making their own decisions about how to use the money to improve their lives
- The monitoring of our Access Points will show that an increased number of people are getting the information, advice and guidance which they need
- Informal carers will routinely and consistently be offered a separate assessment of their needs and that information will be used in the commissioning of services
- As an employer, the Council will have recruited a greater number of disabled people into its workforce
- Where local people want to take on the running of services and facilities, those services and facilities will have been passed into their hands.
- The provision of services will match need

As a result of this work, we want people to say:

“There is easier access to a wider range of services which meet my needs and circumstances and deliver the outcomes I require”

Corporate Objective Two

To grow and develop a sustainable Cheshire East

What do we want to achieve?

We want *to foster economic growth and regeneration* through providing the right environment for businesses to grow, We need to plan for the needs of future generations and provide employment, housing and public services where people need them.

We want to celebrate the distinctiveness of all our towns and villages and *provide attractive and sustainable environments* for all.

People want to feel *safe* where they live and we will work with our partners towards realising the potential of all our communities and ensuring they have *sustainable* futures.

We need to lead on the development of major strategic *infrastructure* to support the aspirations of the Sustainable Community Strategy and ensure we have strong transport and digital links across the borough

What will we do to achieve our ambition?

- Deliver a new Local Development Framework, Local Transport Plan, Economic Development Strategy, Housing Strategy and Visitor Economy Framework
- Contribute to the revitalisation of the communities of Cheshire East through investment in cultural & leisure sites, facilities and activities
- Work towards ensuring there is a sufficient, decent, accessible and appropriate supply of housing by maximising provision of affordable housing, making best use of existing stock and ensuring there is a mix of provision to meet the needs of a changing population
- Work with partners to reduce the incidence of crime and fear of crime, particularly by reducing Anti Social Behaviour by implementing a set of minimum standards and taking a pro-active stance to complaints of nuisance
- Deliver the schemes contained within the Highways Capital programme and work with others to bring about new infrastructure projects such as Crewe Green Link Road, Poynton By-pass and the Middlewich Eastern by-pass

How will we know if we have been successful?

- Our Local Development Framework and Local Transport Plan will reflect the priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the needs of businesses and residents
- The economy of Cheshire East will continue to grow above the rate of growth across the North West
- Our market towns will thrive and prosper, supported by strong local partnership arrangements
- The Council will increase performance in key service areas whilst reducing costs such as development management and highways and transport
- The number of affordable homes available across the area will exceed current targets. The level of long term empty homes will decrease and provide an additional supply of housing in the Borough
- The value of the visitor economy to Cheshire East will exceed £700m per year
- The levels of young people who are positively engaged in education, employment and training is high and they report positively on the opportunities and experience
- People will report that they feel safer

As a result of this work, we want people to say:

“Cheshire East is a great place to live, where we can make real choices around housing, jobs and where to enjoy our leisure time, whilst feeling safe in our communities”

Corporate Objective Three

To improve life opportunities and health for everybody in Cheshire East

What do we want to achieve?

We want people in Cheshire East to make more *healthy lifestyle* choices and ensure they have the support and information to enable them to do so.

We want to see higher aspirations on the part of children, young people and their families about what they can achieve in their lives.

We want to see some *narrowing of the gap* which currently exists in both opportunities and health between those who are most successful in Cheshire East and those who are most challenged in their lives

As the older population in Cheshire East continues to grow, we need to ensure services are provided appropriately so that people can enjoy full and active lives for as long as possible, retaining their independence in a home of their choice.

What will we do to achieve our ambition?

- Seek to increase the numbers participating in health and well-being activities, particularly those from priority communities and will offer a comprehensive Lifestyle programme across Cheshire East targeting those who need it most
- Establish a corporate approach to health improvement and reducing health inequalities with a particular focus on alcohol harm reduction
- Seek to raise standards and narrow the gaps in learning outcomes and ensure that young people develop the appropriate skills to enable them to enter adulthood and the world of work
- Develop and implement a Health & Well Being Strategy specifically for children and young people
- Develop strategies that address the demands of the ageing population such as the Dementia Strategy and the Ageing Well Strategy
- Develop a housing strategy to ensure that residents have the ability to access decent and appropriate housing by reducing the level of non decent homes across the authority, continuing to invest in Disabled Facilities Grant to aid independent living and provide specialist housing solutions to enable those with support needs to sustain their homes
- Work with partners to ensure effective integration of public health functions into the Council

How will we know if we have been successful?

- We will have seen, within the whole clientele of those using leisure and cultural services, a shift in the balance between the general public and those specifically referred, either by themselves or by others in order to address particular health and well-being challenges. In particular people will use Personal Budgets to access these services
- The implementation of a whole system plan for reducing the harm caused by alcohol abuse will have helped more people to reduce their drinking to safe levels and will have consequently reduced the calls upon the NHS and other services which arise from alcohol harm
- Schools which are not doing well or which are just coasting will have improved their performance, so that all become either good or outstanding
- A greater proportion of our school leavers are engaged in work, training or further education of some sort
- A significant reduction has been made in the most extreme of the health inequalities, and, in particular, for older people more of their remaining years are healthy years
- Progress will have been made in putting in place a comprehensive pattern of specialist provision for people with dementia and their carers
- The Children Trust will have shifted the whole system for children and families, so that interventions are made much earlier, when problems become apparent.

- Children who are cared for by the Council will achieve far better at school, and a much greater proportion of them will progress from school into worthwhile, paid employment.

As a result of this work, we want people to say:

“I feel happier, healthier and more successful than before”

Corporate Objective Four

To enhance the Cheshire East environment

What do we want to achieve?

We believe in taking a responsible approach to enhancing and nurturing our environment. We will provide clean and well maintained streets, public spaces and protect our heritage, natural and recreational environment for the benefit of local communities.

We will seek to ensure our services are good value for money for the residents and council tax payers of the borough and are both efficient and effective.

We will continue to develop an approach for sustainable waste management and will seek opportunities to improve existing practices.

The built environment is important to local people and communities and we will seek improvements whenever possible.

We will tackle the effects of climate change through a comprehensive approach to managing our carbon emissions and by implementing an adaptation strategy.

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What will we do to achieve our ambition?

- Develop and implement a Waste Management Strategy for Cheshire East and optimise and implement revised waste collection rounds
- Deliver an effective streetworks service and management of the highway asset which will include making our roads safer
- Centralise waste and recycling operations as part of our Rationalisation Project
- Deliver the Total Transport transformation programme
- Procure a garden waste contract for Cheshire East and a dry recyclables processing contract
- Investigate the potential of implementing a kerbside food waste collection service
- Achieve improved standards of green space design, management and maintenance
- Seek to improve the public realm and promote environmental sustainability wherever possible.
- Tackle fuel poverty through improved information and advice to enable our residents to improve the energy efficiency of their homes

How will we know if we have been successful?

- Customer satisfaction in key areas such as street cleansing and waste management will have increased and the services will be operating more efficiently
- Highway condition will be maintained on main routes despite recent winter damage and expected reduced investment from Government
- Casualties from road accidents will continue to fall in areas where targeted support has been provided
- Carbon emissions from the Council will have reduced and the Council will be respected as a leading example across the Borough on carbon management and climate change adaptations
- The residents of Cheshire East will feel safer in their local communities.
- Improvement in SAP rating within domestic properties across the authority

As a result of this work, we want people to say:

"We have a fantastic environment across Cheshire East. Public spaces and recreational areas are well maintained and our heritage and natural environment is protected and nurtured by the Council"

Corporate Objective Five

Being an excellent Council and working with others – to deliver for Cheshire East

What do we want to achieve?

We want our customers to find it easy to access our services and be satisfied with the timeliness of our response. Sufficient information should be provided in a variety of mediums to ensure people can find out what they need to know.

Key to what we can achieve will be the challenging financial situation. We will therefore carefully and strategically plan so that our services and priorities are properly resourced and successfully managed within budget and deliver value for money.

So that we can deliver services fit for the 21st Century, we will develop a multi-skilled workforce, which is flexible, competent and capable and is supported by effective processes

We recognise that many other organisations are key to the future success of Cheshire East and we will work with them to develop approaches to service delivery and joint working arrangements

What will we do to achieve our ambition?

- Shift the profile of customer contact to access channels that are more convenient to the customer and more cost effective for the Council
- Develop more responsive customer services through the use and analysis of customer insight data
- Seek opportunities to share service access points with other partners
- Develop an Asset Management Plan
- Identify efficiencies across services and ensure resources are aligned to priorities
- Develop an excellent workforce by developing the skills for improvement
- Implement a Monitoring & Performance System for the Council
- Develop an ICT Strategy and establish a fully functioning shared service
- Continue to develop Partnerships for Action in Cheshire East (PACE), particularly through the Local Area Partnerships and the implementation of area plans

How will we know if we have been successful?

- Our local people and communities will say that the Council provides excellent services and uses its resources well in doing so
- Council Tax rises will be at or below inflation
- The people of Cheshire East will provide positive feedback about the Council and its performance
- We will deliver value for money services within budget each year
- Employee satisfaction and engagement levels will increase each time we hold an employee survey
- We will have increased the number and scope of council services delivered with or by our partners /local communities each year.

As a result of this work, we want people to say:

“The Council is very well managed and uses its resources effectively in supporting the key changes and improvements we want to see in Cheshire East”