

*Cheshire East Council*

# Corporate Plan 2021-2025

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



**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.

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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

## By 2025 we want:

## Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 3 Update

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.

## By 2025 we want:

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- 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:

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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.

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By 2025 we want:	Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 3 Update
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 7 projects are directly supporting our most vulnerable residents.</li> <li>○ 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.</li> </ul>
<p>Cheshire East is a welcoming and supportive place, where equality, freedom, fairness and opportunities are available to all.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify a suitable location within the borough and develop a traveller transit site</li> <li>• Increase collaboration with marginalised groups</li> <li>• Secure social value benefits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Training with Primary and Secondary Health Services has been facilitated to ensure those people, without an address, can access Health services and improve outcomes.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Marginalised Groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Continued integration &amp; development support within the ARAP (Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy) scheme for Afghan families.</li> <li>○ 12 families resettled into Cheshire East.</li> <li>○ 282 Ukrainian guests with sponsors matched with 165 households (all in education, training or work.)</li> <li>○ A further 284 Ukrainian guests living independently in either social housing, or private rented sector accommodations.</li> <li>○ Creation and chairing of the Internal Armed Forces Network EDI group.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Social Value <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 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.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## 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:

Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 3 Update

- 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

## Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 3 Update

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

## Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 3 Update

- 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

## Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 3 Update

- 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:

Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 3 Update

- 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

## Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 3 Update

- 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

## By 2025 we want:

- Increased use of technology

## Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 3 Update

- 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:	Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 3 Update
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
<p>Adults receive quality assessments of need and support planning and good quality services to keep them safe and maintain their physical and mental wellbeing.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully implement social work practice within adult social care</li> <li>• Maintain and improve the quality of care and support services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standards of Social Work practice and continuing professional development are monitored at a national and local level.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>

# 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

## Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 3 update

- 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:

High quality leisure and sports provision across the borough that delivers good value for money.

Key actions:

- Improve our leisure centres
- Provide walking and cycling recreational routes and outdoor recreational space

To reduce the number of long-term empty dwellings.

Key actions:

- Establish baseline and review current strategy and policies

New development to be appropriately controlled to protect and support our borough.

Key actions:

- To keep the Local Plan Strategy under review
- Provide an effective Planning Service with capacity to efficiently determine planning applications
- Robust and effective planning enforcement

## Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 3 update

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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
- 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.
- 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

## By 2025 we want:

- Implementation and maintenance of additional supplementary policy documents
- Effective and competitive Building Control Service
- Continued application of CEC Design Guide principles and focus on Place

To make best use of our surplus buildings and assets to support the borough and our partners.

Key actions:

- Review the community asset transfer policy

Continue to grow the Cheshire East visitor economy.

Key actions:

- Deliver Cultural Strategy and Place Marketing Action Plan
- Deliver Tatton Park business plan

## Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 3 update

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.

- 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.
- Building Control continues to adapt to new legislation and the changes required from the Building Safety Act , including formal registration of qualified inspectors.

- 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.

- 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.

- 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.

- 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.

- 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

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:

## Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 3 update

- 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:

- relevant fit for purpose policies
- Investment in technology to enhance CCTV delivery

## Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 3 update

- 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>

## By 2025 we want:

## Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 3 update

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.

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

- 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 Council's 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:

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

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

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

## Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 3 update

- 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

- 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.

- 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:

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