

*Cheshire East Council*

# Corporate Plan 2021-2025

**Performance Report – Quarter 4 2023/24**



Open

Fair

Green

# An open and enabling organisation

By 2025 we want:

Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 4 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.
- Q4 has an average of 307 views a day for a total of 27,634 views on Insight Cheshire East across the quarter. Notable spikes were on Jan 15th at 713 views and March 29th at 781 views.

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 councils will involve managing the forward plan of themes, organising speakers, writing briefing note for Jackie Weaver, drafting agenda and notes.

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.

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- 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 and have continued to engage with services and teams across The Council.
- This activity is planned to continue throughout next year, with the Plan aiming to be approved and launched later in the year.
- Several consultations and surveys have been undertaken during Q4. Including, budget consultation, Strategic Leisure Review, Mark your Mark Ballot, Childrens Social Care Feedback survey, Crossing Strategy and the Highways Satisfaction Survey.
- Key stats for the last 3 months:
  - Jan-24, 8 consultations and 7,221 responses
  - Feb-24, 3 consultations and 270 responses
  - Mar-24, 4 consultations and 7,748 responses

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 project to introduce artificial intelligence (AI) to the 0300 telephone numbers is underway and should be in place by September 2024. This will enable customers to self-serve where appropriate and allow the contact centre team to support vulnerable customers seeking assistance with more in depth queries.
- The contact centre technology that sits behind the Capita Payments system is now fully PCI Compliant (Payment Card Industry) and means that customers can make secure payments over the phone to the contact centre, Adult Social Care team and the Business Rates team.
- Call and screen recording technology is live within the CX One telephony platform, used by the corporate contact centre. The technology will support training and quality monitoring and lead to an overall improved customer experience.
- 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.

By 2025 we want:

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

Key actions:

- Award of silver standard prior to award of gold standard

- We submitted our completed Gold MOD award papers in March and had this has been signed off by our MOD Employer Recognition Manager.
- It was sent to the first panel of judges the beginning of April and passed the initial stage then it has 2 more panels to go through at the MOD before the decision is finalised.
- We have been made aware our application is very strong following the work we have done previously and will be given the answer around the first week of July 2024.

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 reserve 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.
- Cheshire East Council has agreed a budget at a meeting of full council on Tuesday, 27th February and approved a 4.99% increase in Council Tax, the maximum amount currently allowed from April 2024.
- The budget outlines £30m in savings across council services to help ensure financial sustainability. For example, it will look at ways to generate income from assets such as libraries, close the three household waste sites at Bollington, Middlewich and Poynton, review the costs to its garden waste scheme and reduce council office accommodation.

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:

- Initial commissioned work has now been completed and will be considered at committee in June.

- Complete programme of reviews of ASDVs

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
- Implement Best4Business Unit 4 ERP system

- 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.

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

- The office closure of Westfields is still progressing with on-going planning taking place to align dates for our upcoming office moves.
- Logistics include - moving desks from Westfields to Delamere House, timing the removal and set up of ICT equipment for staff, clearing cupboards and lockers, so teams moving in have the storage that they need when they arrive, rearranging and tweaking floor plans (in Delamere) to meet the needs of directorates and booking removal companies for the right time to support teams when they move.

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

Resident satisfaction with The Council to be in line with similar councils.

Key actions:

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

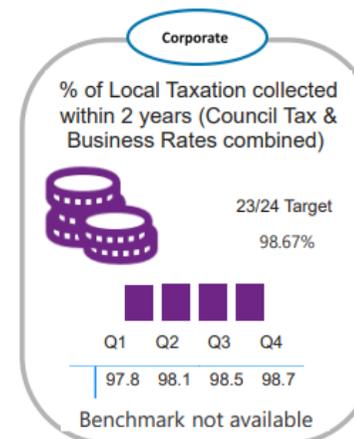
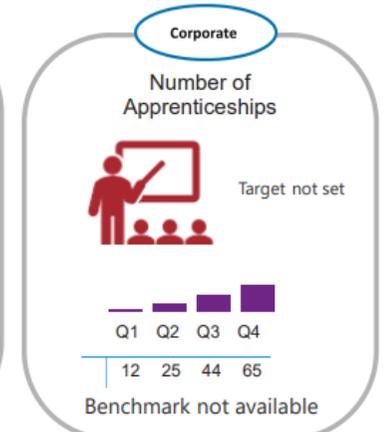
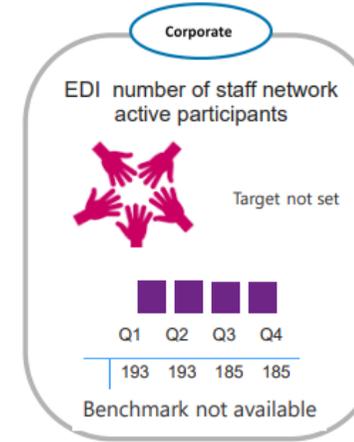
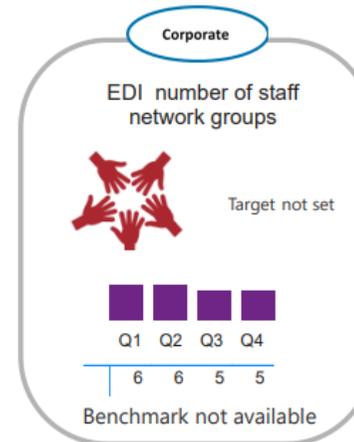
- Regular communications with residents, members and staff are undertaken through the communications and media team.
- A [Customer Experience Strategy](#) was developed and sets out our vision to deliver against this commitment and to provide the best possible experience for our customers, whoever they 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.

The Council to be regarded as a good partner.

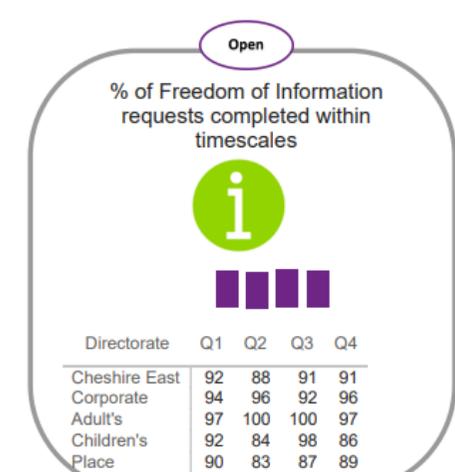
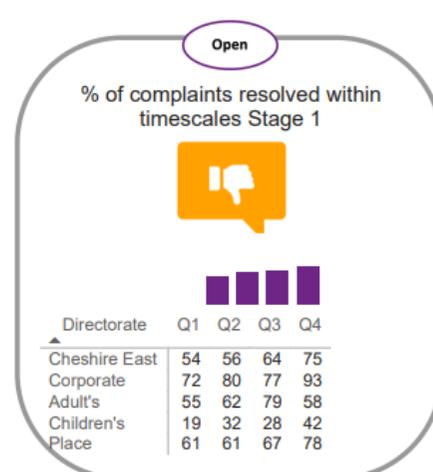
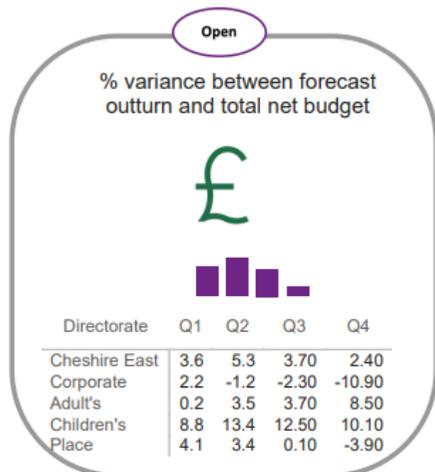
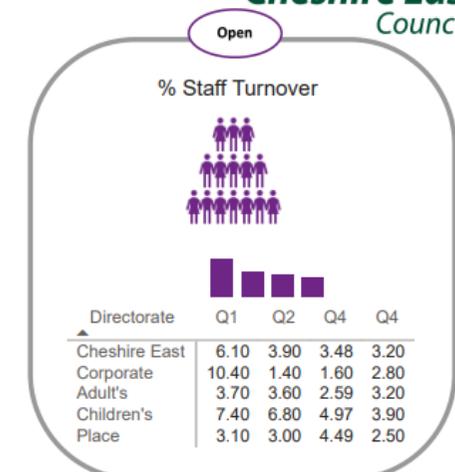
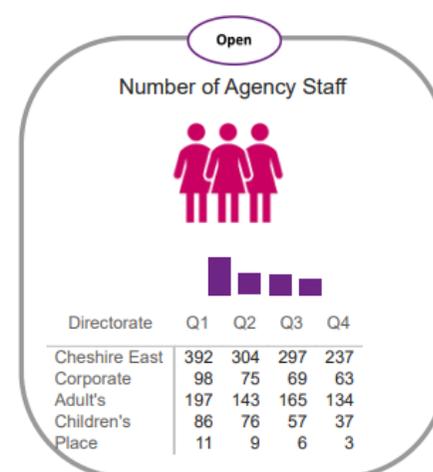
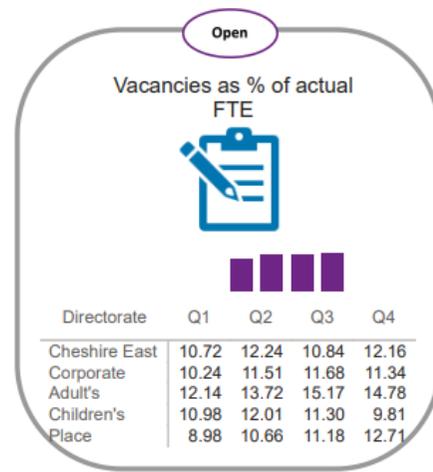
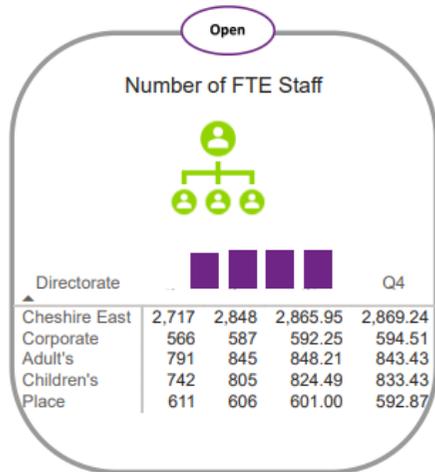
- An internal review of partnerships is expected to be undertaken and will seek to support the key ambitions of the Council and the aims and objectives of [the Corporate Plan](#).

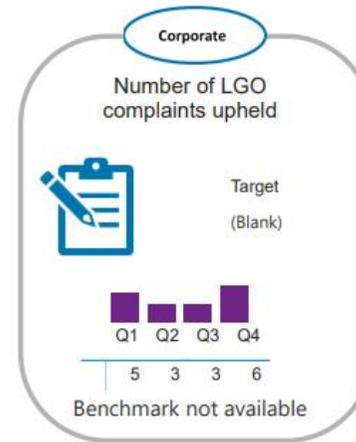
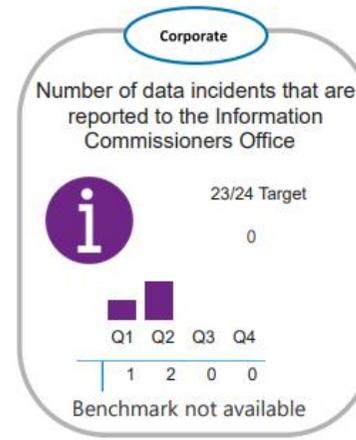
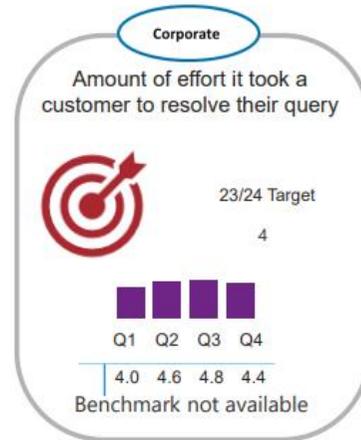
# Performance measures supporting An open and enabling organisation

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



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# A council which empowers and cares about people

By 2025 we want:

Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 4 Update

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

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

Key actions:

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

- Through the social value notice board, 7 organisations have offered help to the Voluntary, Community, Faith, Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector organisations in Cheshire East.
- The Council supports both Mental Health Partnership Board and the Learning Disability Partnership Board and both boards have representation from people with lived experience as well as third sector groups and Members of the Council. Their primary function is the oversee the implementation of the plans for mental health and learning disability and are answerable to the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- The One You Cheshire East service is currently being recommissioned. This has included extensive coproduction and engagement work with stakeholder organisations, residents and providers. This has included a healthy lifestyle survey which was circulated to circa 12,000 residents as well as focus groups and drop-ins with specific types of residents e.g. those in areas of deprivation.
- Procurement for the service is expected to commence in late May/early June with a view to the new contract commencing in November 24.

Families and communities are strong and resilient.

Key actions:

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

- Cheshire East Council is continuing to transform its support services for children and young people from birth up until the age of 19 (or 25 for those with special educational needs and disabilities) through the development of its family hubs. These hubs are bringing council, health and community services together, so that families with children and young people can access the right help and support, at the right time. Over the past 12 months the council has already opened five physical family hubs across the borough and are looking to develop further outreach provision through family hub 'connect' sites – giving the opportunity for more in-person support and advice. Through the recently launched new family hubs digital offer, families can expect online access to advice and information at the touch of a button, making it much more convenient for those who are unable to access a family hub near them.
- As part of our family hubs development, we have divided the borough of Cheshire East into eight collaborative areas, four in the north and four in the south. These areas bring together multi-disciplinary teams who work in specific geographies to improve the lives of children and young people. Each area has identified the specific priorities for that area and are currently working together to address these.

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## By 2025 we want:

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

### Key actions:

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

Work with partners for the benefit of our communities inspiring confidence in public services

## Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 4 Update

### Transit Site:

- Plans are on target to open a Transit Site in Cheshire East in the summer of 2024.
- The LIVE WELL page which provides information to Gypsies and Travellers has been updated to include advice re Lifestyle on Prescription to improve access to health services for people without a permanent address.

### Marginalised Groups:

- Continued integration & development support within the ARAP (Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy) scheme for Afghan families.
- 13 families resettled into Cheshire East.
- 294 Ukrainian guests with sponsors matched with 145 households (all in education, training or work.)
- A further 83 Ukrainian families living independently in either social housing, or private rented sector accommodation.
- Creation and chairing of the Internal Armed Forces Network EDI group.

### Social Value:

- The Connected Communities Noticeboard allows community organisations to identify areas that need support and request support for these directly from our Commissioned services and local businesses.
- 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.
- Publication of a Health Needs Assessment for our East Timorese community, recommendations from which will inform ongoing work to reduce health inequalities.

- Continued support of the 8 Veteran Breakfast clubs all throughout the borough.
- The Council's Veterans Officer continues to work with groups such as the Royal British Legion to organise Armed forces events across the borough.

## By 2025 we want:

developing community cohesion and community resilience.

Key actions:

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

## Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 4 Update

- Working in partnership with the Voluntary, Community, Faith, Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector, including 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. Such schemes include Welcome cafés, Informal ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes and Wellbeing and inclusion sessions.
- Procurement undertaken and a contract is now in place with collaborative partners to grow our VCFSE Sector and Town and Parish Council offer to meet the needs of vulnerable residents ensuring a fair and equitable approach to implementing the service. The overall aims and purpose of the service are:
  - Growing the market - Market shaping the VCFSE & Local Councils (LC) sector to meet existing and emerging needs.
  - Growing communication channels - Creating ways, forums and communication channels for strategic and thematic discussions to enable clear ways for information to be gathered and disseminated amongst the VCFSE & LC.
  - Growing influence on public sector decisions - Acting as leader to identify opportunities for the VCFSE sector and sustainable investments, by encouraging VCFSE & LC to act as advocates, or professional lead in key existing forums.
  - Active involvement in the PREVENT (national safeguarding programme) group and GRT (Gipsy, Romany and Traveler) steering group.
- The Council's Community Grants Team nominated and shortlisted for the Best team award at the Government Grants Award 2024.
- A third multi-agency workshop has been held to further discuss and shape the development of plans to increase physical activity levels and the number of people with a healthy weight in Cheshire East. An update was presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board and early drafts of the actions plans shared and endorsed. Further development work with partners is ongoing to support and enable the identification and delivery of actions to support people to eat well and move more.
- The Lifestyle on Prescription resource continues to be socialised with health and care professionals across Cheshire East. Engagement work with young people and practitioners has been initiated to develop bespoke and targeted resources to support and encourage healthy lifestyles and behaviour.
- Review of licensing applications from a public health perspective are continuing to be undertaken.
- Scoping and mapping of the local position re: smoking cessation and tobacco control has been initiated.

## By 2025 we want:

## Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 4 Update

- Public Health have also enabled and facilitated partnership involvement in the development of the Cheshire and Merseyside Smokefree Framework and facilitated a session at a sub-regional event.
- Work on the Social Isolation and Loneliness Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) is underway.

### 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
- To continue to support a zero-suicide approach

- Public Health played a key role in creation of the Health and Care 'Blueprint 2030'.
- Write up of the evaluation of developments in local delivery of the National Child Measurement Programme including analysis to track change in BMI between reception and year 6; analysis of parental feedback; analysis of professional feedback; and presentation of findings at the Behavioural Science and Public Health Conference in Liverpool.
- Work on improving uptake of physical health checks in primary care of patients with a Severe mental Illness is ongoing including training for the wider public health workforce.
- Planning and delivery of staff influenza vaccination programme, with almost 900 taking up the offer.
- Working with NHS colleagues to increase uptake of vaccinations and health checks through deployment of the Living Well bus.
- Work to continue to deliver a multi-agency approach to self-harm and suicide prevention is ongoing - Cheshire East Harm and Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2023-2025.  
Examples include:
  - Suicide prevention training is now available for all professionals in Cheshire East and being delivered
  - The Domestic Abuse and Suicidality toolkit has been launched
  - Targeted engagement with Children and Young People who have lived experience, to contribute to the design for the plan for the Safety Planning, Resilience and Protective Factors
  - Development and approval of a new collaboration with East Cheshire NHS Trust to support Public Health training and development in foundation programme junior doctors, and further integration between public health, communities and health and care.
- GP trainees are working to improve cervical screening uptake and MMR uptake in Crewe.
- There has been further presentation of JSNA work in Crewe to the Crewe Connect forum.

## By 2025 we want:

## Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 4 Update

- A JSNA conference was hosted by the Public Health team, which was well attended and received and served to promote the JSNA resources available as well as to shape next steps.
- Public health has contributed to the development of more integrated care community dashboards to enable them to address local challenges more effectively through both proactive and reactive measures.
- The Tartan Rug interactive dashboard has been published with an accompanying video user guide. This enables users to focus in on specific areas of health or specific wards and explore existing inequalities.

## 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

- Public health has led upon the commencement of an evidence review into the cost effectiveness of violence and crime prevention interventions which is feeding into Youth Justice Service health improvement discussions.
- Public Health contributed significantly to the Cheshire Child Death Overview Panel annual report which has now been finalised.
- An extension to the Household Support Fund (HSF) was announced by the government on 6 March 2024. A new package of HSF support in Cheshire East has been agreed up to September 2024, including crisis support to financially vulnerable households most in need. The fund has been made available to support immediate needs and help those who are struggling to afford household basics including food, energy and wider essentials. In addition, the fund is available to provide support to financially vulnerable households most in need that has a long-term sustainable impact.
- Work continued to ensure that Cheshire East Holiday Activities and Food programme (HAF) was in place for the easter holidays. This programme provides Cheshire East's children and young people from families who are in receipt of income/benefits-related free school meals the opportunity to attend free activities during the school holidays, where nutritional food is also provided. A new online booking method offers eligible parents the opportunity to browse and book with ease, with a clear breakdown of the activities available, and by which providers.
- The council's inspection of local authority children's services took place from 26 February to 8 March 2024. In summary, the inspectors looked at the experiences of children and young people, and what impact council services have made for them. Whilst inspectors recognised many strengths across the council, they also identified areas of improvement, including our support for care leavers up to the age of 25. Work is already under way to improve the experiences of our children and young people, learning from this inspection and building on the progress we have made over the last few years.

## By 2025 we want:

## Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 4 Update

- Timely assessments are one of the first indicators that the risks and needs of a young person's life experience are being promptly identified, enabling their support needs to be considered. The percentage of children's social care assessments completed within 45 days has continued on a positive trajectory and has resulted with an indicative outturn position of 81% for the reporting year.
- There is an increase since Q3 in the number of children supported with a child protection plan from the previous quarter and is a rate of 35.2 per 10,000. This still places us below the latest available published national figures for 2023, which show an England rate of 43.2 and a Northwest picture of 49.1. Our statistical neighbours ranged from 25.2 to 52.3, with those nearest (Cheshire West and Chester and Warrington) at 49.3 and 52.3, respectively.
- Cheshire East's Safeguarding Children Partnership held their annual Learning Week in February with an overarching theme of 'The Child's Voice and their Lived Experience'. Over 2300 practitioners took part, with 133 local experts presenting more than 66 topics, with some online sessions attracting over 100 attendees.

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.

### 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

- The Serious Violence Strategy has been published on the Safer Cheshire East Website.
- Cheshire Police launched Phase 1 of their Right Care Right Person programme in Cheshire. Adult Social Care are contributing to the implementation and have updated policy and procedures accordingly.
- An Annual Training Event was held in February 2024, for those Practitioners and Signatories who are involved in the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards to protect individuals who lack capacity living in Care Homes or are receiving treatment in Hospital.
- The Safeguarding Board held its first Multi Agency Practice Management Learning Session in January 2024 which focussed on the theme of Self Neglect and a report and recommendations will be shared with the Board in April 2024.
- Adult Social Care continue to share learning from our Safeguarding Adults and Domestic Homicide Reviews with Managers, Elected Members and Practitioners to promote a culture of learning and improvement.
- In response to the updated Prevent and Channel Guidance, Cheshire East and Cheshire West have refreshed their joint strategy. Prevent Benchmarking and Channel Self Assurance Protocols have been completed and returned to the Home Office.

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

- The Supported Internship will be expanded from September 2024 to support up to 65 young people (currently c40) with learning disabilities and/or neurodiversity into paid employment. The service currently supports 79% of young people accessing the programme into paid employment at the end of their internship and is well supported by local employers. This figure puts Cheshire East in the top quintile nationally for this type of support.
- The new Cared for Children and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy was approved by Children & Families Committee in February 2024, for the period 2024-2027. It will be updated annually to reflect changes in needs where required and to help communicate to the independent market where our current pressures are – currently we are working hard to mobilise additional emergency accommodation, following a recommendation in the recent Ofsted ILACS inspection, as well as additional units of accommodation for 18+ care leavers. Recruitment of Local Authority foster carers is also an area of significant activity.
- The Preparing for Adulthood team are gradually improving the number of young people assessed for Adult Social Care needs prior to the age of 18. Although at 38%, this remains well below the target of 70% the trajectory is moving in the right direction, with an improvement from 30% at the end of 2023. A composite Preparing for Adulthood cross-cutting plan has been developed, drawing actions from the 5 SEND Strategy workstreams, key recommendations from the analysis in this area undertaken by Impower consulting in 2023, and known areas requiring improvement from the NDTi Preparing for Adulthood audit tool undertaken in autumn 2023.
- The PFA team have also developed a new guidance booklet for service users and their families which sets out what to expect from Adult Social Care, and an updated SEND PFA toolkit for schools has also been developed by the Quality team in Education.
- There has been an increase in the number of cared for children in Cheshire East compared to the previous quarter, with 68 individuals coming into care in Q4, compared to 36 in Q3. Unlike previous quarters, this hasn't been heavily influenced by unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC), but rather a small number of large families with 4 of these families accounting for a third of all the entrants.
- There has been a small increase in the percentage of cared for children placed out of borough and over 20 miles from their home address. There is a continued focus as part of our ongoing sufficiency work to ensure that, wherever possible, young people are supported close to their home network. This quarter has seen the opening of the first of three new children's homes in the borough. It is important to recognise there will always be a cohort of young people placed at a distance to offer the best support for their future lives, especially where this is with extended family and/or their forever home.

## By 2025 we want:

## Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 4 Update

- In Q4, our long-serving foster carers were recognised for their dedication and commitment to caring for children at a ceremony held by Cheshire East Council. Seven fostering families, with nearly 160 years' service in total were presented with their awards at a special event. In total, these families have cared for more than 200 children and young people during that time.
- During March we made contact with all 209 care leavers aged over 21 at the time to ensure they were aware of the support available to them and offer them an allocated worker.
- We recently updated Cheshire East's cared for children and care leavers sufficiency strategy to outline our vision to intervene early, prioritising the safety of children by keeping them at home whenever possible. The strategy clearly identifies our planned initiatives in children's social care and commissioning to address existing gaps in provision, emerging demands, and to stabilise family environments.

### 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 percentage of eligible children in Cheshire East taking up the 2-year-old and the 3- and 4-year-old childcare offer is 75% and 97%, respectively. This compares well to the national average of 74% and 94%, respectively.
- We have continued to increase our reach to children in their early years and their families. For the year from January 2023, we have seen 9,542 adults, an increase of 12% on the previous year and 6,665 pre-school children (19% increase) through the roll out of family hubs and the increased parenting journey offer. More children and families are now accessing universal and targeted start for life services through a children's centre/family hub including our parenting journey, training, and family support.
- Socially isolated families with children with a development delay noted at their 2-year-old check are being supported through a new a home visiting programme - an 8-week intervention in the family home with transition activities to link the family into community early years provision by the end of the programme.
- We have achieved outcomes for 361 families in the Supporting Families programme (in 2023/24 to the end of January 2024).

## 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

- Governance arrangements to be reviewed to ensure multi-agency decision making (especially where there are implications for other system partners) are robust and planned strategic approaches well communicated and understood.
- Review of support for Children with Disabilities (including early help and short breaks) currently underway. Will also include development of pathways and approaches to support greater independence through childhood to prevent, reduce or delay additional need wherever possible. Work also underway to increase the take up of Direct Payments for Adult service users as rates of take up are high amongst under 18's with eligible needs but less-so amongst over 18's.
- The number of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in Cheshire East has significantly increased over recent years. As at March 2024 there has been a further small increase in the number of individuals being supported with an EHCP and represents a 12% increase from the same point last year.
- Due to the increase in EHCPs, we are increasingly looking at how we can provide the right service at the right time for our children with SEND. Through our recently approved revised Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) management plan, we will continue to increase local specialist provision and become less reliant on the independent sector, embed the graduated approach and inclusion across all schools and settings and strengthen SEN support and strengthen decision making and governance.
- Our family hubs are now hosting SEND drop-in sessions. These are hosted by our health practitioners to offer parents, children and young people support and guidance with all SEND-related issues, sharing expert advice to help you understand why your child may be struggling.
- The opening of the newly expanded Springfield School site in Wilmslow, creating up to 80 much-needed local school spaces for children and young people with SEND took place in February 2024. The satellite site has been designed and built with special consideration for the access, safeguarding, and sensory requirements of pupils aged four to 18.
- The council submitted a revised proposal for special school provision to the Department for Education (DfE) in March 2024, requesting a 120-place free SEND school for secondary age pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. The DfE have confirmed their support for this revised bid and indicated that the Free School process will start in May 2024. The new school will support children and young people requiring an Education, Health and Care Plan and is part of the council's plans to provide a wide range of SEND pathways to meet the needs of our young people. These additional special school places will enable children

By 2025 we want:	Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 4 Update
	<p>and young people to remain within Cheshire East and avoid the need to travel long distance to go to school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The premiere of ‘Hear my Voice’ – a series of five films which focus on prevention and effective communication to support young people with a learning disability and/or autism took place in March 2024 at the Heritage Centre in Macclesfield and was aimed at professionals who work with young people with autism or learning disabilities, with a focus on helping them when they are in crisis. The stars of the show were the children and young people from Jigsaw - Cheshire East’s SEND Youth Forum, whilst also being co-produced by CANNDID and Level Up, and funded by NHS England.</li> <li>• On National Supported Internship Day (27 March) an event was held for local businesses to let them know all about Cheshire East’s Supported Internships Programme and how this can help boost their business. The programme aims to help young people with a learning disability transition into paid work. During the session, businesses heard all about the programme and the benefits hiring someone with an educational healthcare plan can bring, having any questions answered from our Supported Internships Team.</li> </ul>
<p>Provision for young adults to live independently within in the community.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leisure, life and meaningful employment opportunities are developed to improve life chances for young adults</li> <li>• Promote citizen engagement and participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement has been undertaken with people with learning disabilities and carers who access learning disability respite, on proposals for a new learning disability respite model. This has involved surveys (including easy read) and face to face events in February and March 2024.</li> <li>• The new model seeks to ensure we can support a wide range of individuals with different support and accommodation needs who access respite and achieve improved outcomes by developing new skills, accessing a range of activities within the service and the wider community as part of their respite stay.</li> </ul>
<p>Priority: Ensure all children have a high quality, enjoyable education that enables them to achieve to their full potential</p>	
<p>All children enjoy the best education which prepares them to thrive in adulthood.</p> <p>Key actions:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work is ongoing (facilitated by Public Health) to run HENRY (Health, Exercise, Nutrition for the Really Young), an obesity prevention programme with the Family Hubs.</li> <li>• Public Health are continuing to support schools with suicide and self-harm prevention training and guidance.</li> </ul>

## By 2025 we want:

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

## Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 4 Update

- A public health registrar is working with rural schools around improving emotional and mental wellbeing in children and young people and school staff in rural areas.
- Cheshire East Council contacted thousands of parents and carers on national secondary school offer day (1 March), with 94 per cent receiving their first preference choice. More than 4,900 applications were received from parents and carers whose children will be moving up to secondary school in September 2024.
- There have been 6 school inspections in Q4, with 4 remaining good, one remaining outstanding and a newly converted school also judged to be good.
- The percentage of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in years 12-13 was higher than we have seen previously and possibly reflects the overall difficulties being seen in the job market. This however does relate to a relatively small number of individuals of which just over 30% are currently unavailable to the job market due to illness or parenting/ caring responsibilities. The youth support service continues to work closely with all individuals to support them with a range of options to find the best post-16 pathway.

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

- A tender to develop Mountview in Congleton into a site which promotes independent living and can meet the needs of those with learning disabilities and complex needs has gone live. Cheshire East Council is seeking to procure a provider to design, build, finance and operate 2 specialist housing schemes.

By 2025 we want:	Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 4 Update
<p>accommodation and extra care housing models</p> <p>People are cared for and valued by a professional and caring workforce.</p> <p>Care4ce to become an exemplar high quality trading company.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a quality trading company</li> <li>• Recruit and train a skilled and motivated workforce.</li> <li>• Provide a professional pathway for progression</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work is underway to work with people aged 18 – 24 to discuss a ‘day in the life’ of a support worker and offer taster sessions. All staff receive a robust induction and Care4CE has developed a training Programme for 2024 – 2025.</li> <li>• A 12-month Leadership and Development programme for Managers and Supervisors and Care4CE is looking specifically at succession planning and supporting career development. For example, Care4CE offers staff, who wish to progress their career, to work alongside supervisors and managers to gain insight into these roles.</li> <li>• Arrangements to improve recruitment are in place. They include linking in with the DWP, The Pledge, Colleges, Care Leavers and other partners to offer opportunities and promote roles within Adult Social Care.</li> </ul>
<p>To prioritise Home First for patients discharged from hospital. Where possible patients are discharged to a home of their choice.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand and develop the Home First service to support people to stay at home longer</li> <li>• Work to develop integrated health and social care teams</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On going work continues across the Integrated care system with a dedicated focus on Community Prevention and Hospital Avoidance. There has been an expansion of Community Connectors, maximising the use of Virtual wards and urgent community response, expansion of community connectors and we have to develop relations and maximise the use of the third sector.</li> <li>• Continued focus on strengthening system wide working at all levels across the pathways for people who use our health and social care system and have continued to deliver a multi-disciplinary team via the Transfer of Care Hubs and Urgent Community Response teams.</li> <li>• Targeting our hot spots to improve our efficiency and effectiveness of capacity use e.g., Occupational Therapy role and reablement and the homeless project.</li> <li>• Building our care communities across all 8 localities focused on the Business Intelligence data e.g., hypertension and ageing well clinics delivered across Cheshire East</li> <li>• Setting up new services focused on supporting people to say at home e.g., virtual wards, rapid reablement</li> </ul>

## By 2025 we want:

- Carers Strategy to be implemented
- Develop the Shared Lives service
- Increased use of technology

Adults receive quality assessments of need and support planning and good quality services to keep them

## Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 4 Update

- support to Urgent Community Response teams and virtual wards, falls prevention and digital technology offer.
- The principles of the all age carers strategy continue to be embedded and localised work with the carers hub remains a priority to ensure we are effectively supporting carers.
- Active works continues to expand and develop the shared lives by way of a focused recruitment campaign by the Shared Lives service. The focus is to recruit more carers who can provide sessions support and short to medium term placements across the Borough.
- The community Support 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.
- The Community Support Connectors, are 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:
  - Reducing the care packages by providing constructive challenge and alternative provision.
  - Increasing hospital discharge by providing constructive challenge and alternative provision.
  - Increasing VCFSE involvement in discharge packages of care.
  - Identifying the number of gaps in VCFSE provision where, if available, any other of the 3 outcomes would be achieved, this has resulted in:
    - 416 individual patient referrals received to the Community Support Connectors for patient discharge or hospital admission avoidance.
    - Number of social care visits avoided through Community Support Connector action through community sector input 208,
    - Since April 2023, 1443 individual patient referrals have been received to the Community Support Connectors.
- Standards of Social Work practice and continuing professional development are monitored at a national and local level.

## By 2025 we want:

safe and maintain their physical and mental wellbeing.

Key actions:

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

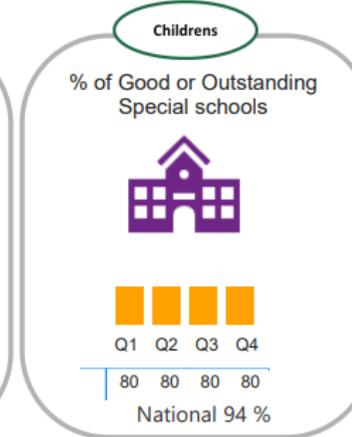
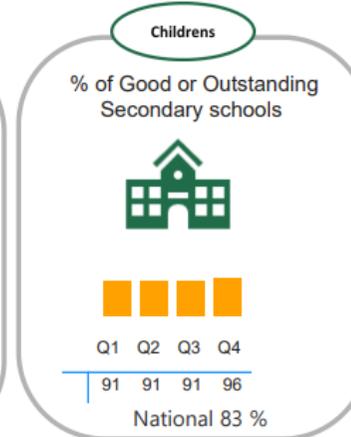
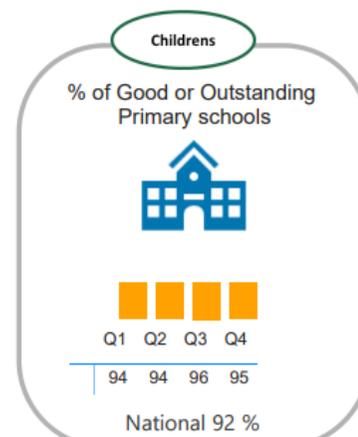
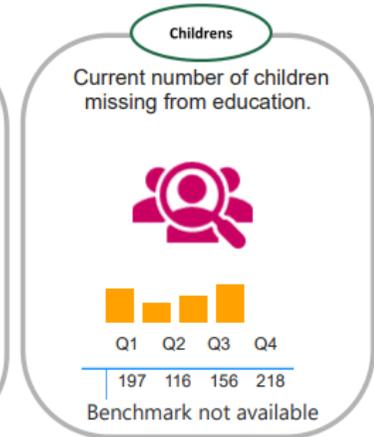
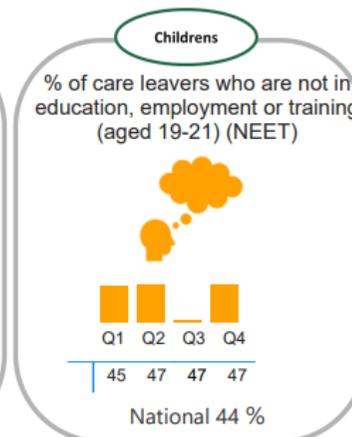
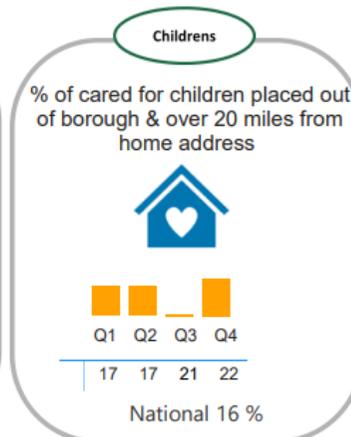
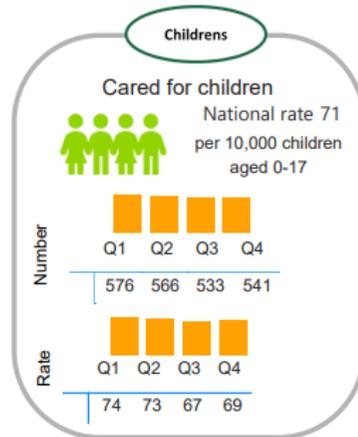
## Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 4 Update

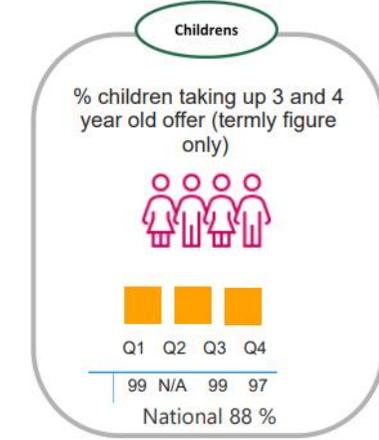
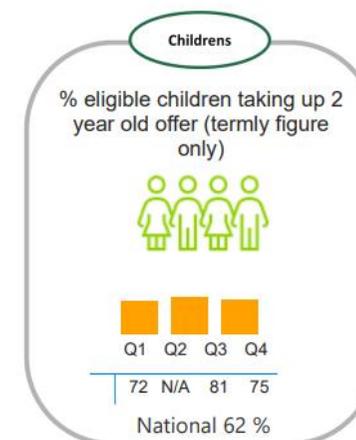
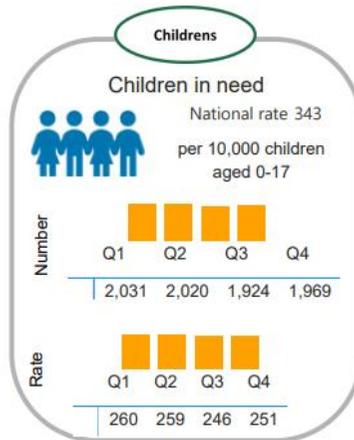
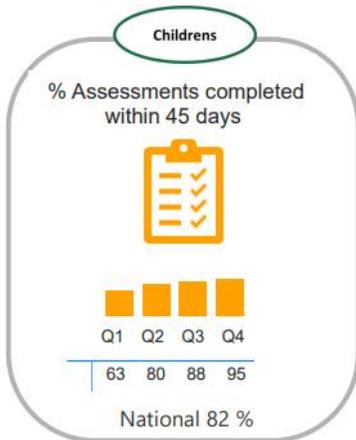
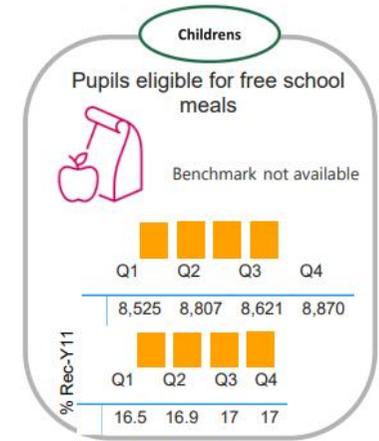
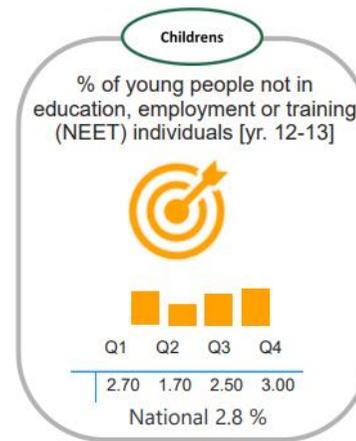
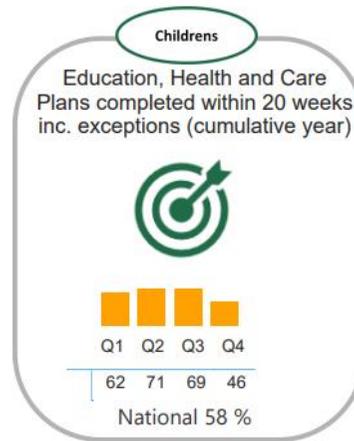
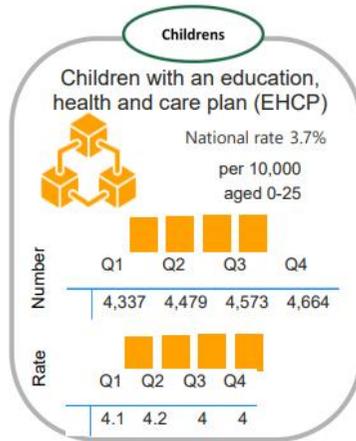
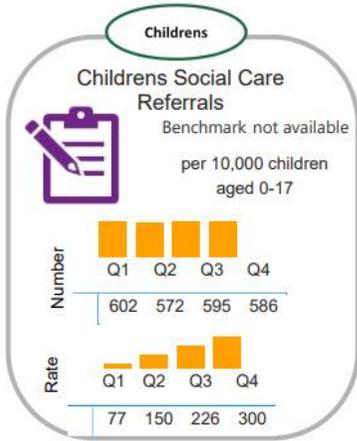
- The Cheshire East Practice Assurance Framework includes professional supervision, meeting the national Standards of the Social Work regulator (Social Work England): the Approved and Supported Year in Employment for newly qualified Social Work staff and Progression Panels for Social Workers, advancing from Grade 8 to Grade 9 Social Worker, thorough Approved Mental Health Professional reapproval Panels.
- There are scheduled case file audits to look at good practice and areas for improvement, feedback from people who use and access services.
- As part of our 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 we also monitor the quality of assessments, care planning and commissioned care available for our residents and carers.

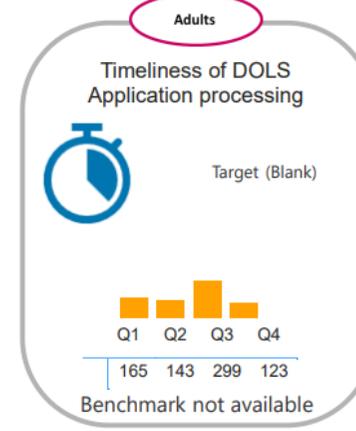
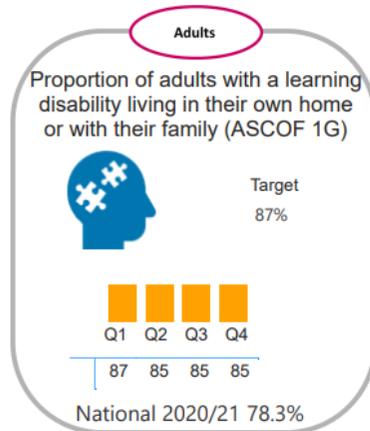
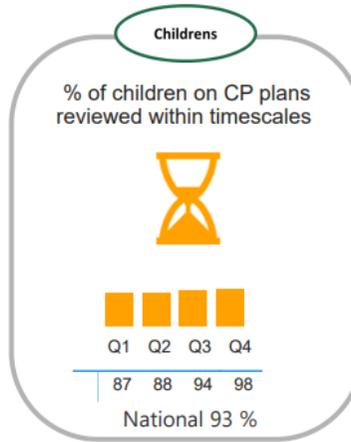
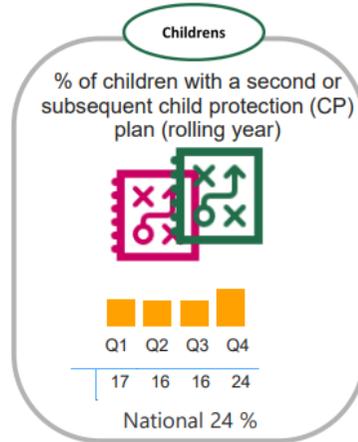
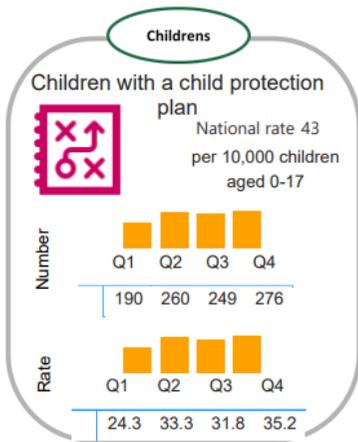
# Performance measures supporting A council which empowers and cares about people



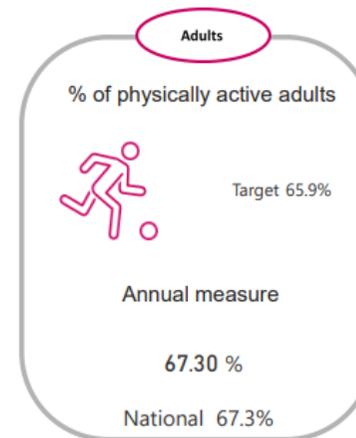
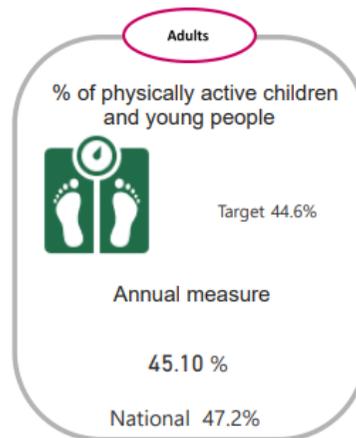
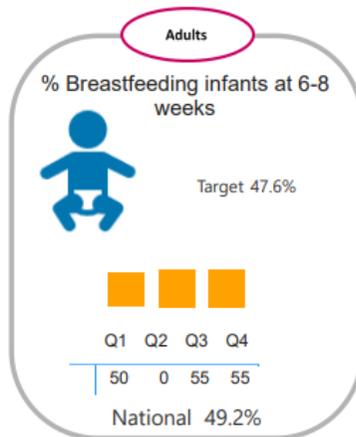
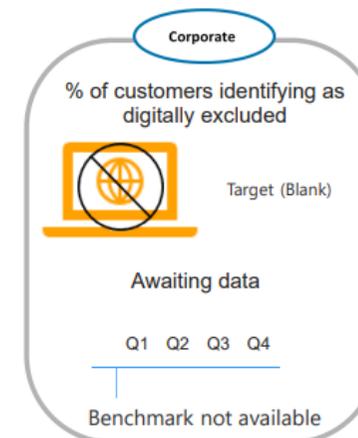
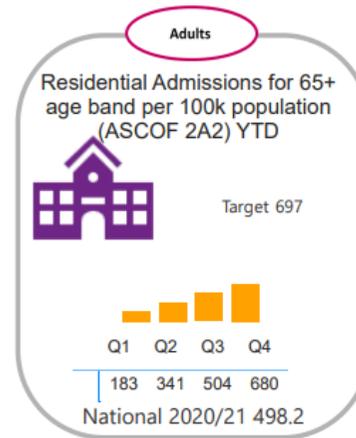
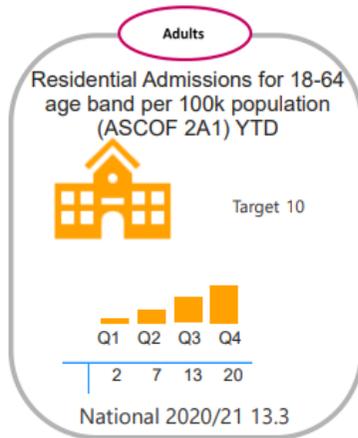
- Work together with residents and partners to support people and communities to be strong and resilient
- Reduce health inequalities across the borough
- Protect and support our communities and safeguard children, adults at risk and families from abuse, neglect and exploitation
- Be the best Corporate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







Open Fair Green



# A thriving and sustainable place

By 2025 we want:

Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 4 update

Priority: A great place for people to live, work and visit Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 4 Update

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 569 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 was approved by the Economy and Growth Committee in March 24.
- To meet the housing needs of some of our most vulnerable residents we have recommissioned our Housing Related Support Contracts, with services being implemented from 1st April 2024.
- 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 are progressing with an open procurement process to secure specialist accommodation for those with a Learning Disability on Council owned land. An invitation to tender was advertised through the Cheshire East Chest in March 24.
- We were awarded Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme funding to secure 4 units of accommodation for 18- to 25-year-olds in partnership with the YMCA.
- 218 households have been helped to improve their living conditions through the work of the Housing Standards Team.
- We Secured 4 homes for Afghan families through the Local Authority Housing Fund

OFFICIAL

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

- The Libraries Service review was successfully implemented on 1st December 2023 with new opening hours going live. This was supported by top up funding at the Crewe and Nantwich sites from the relevant Town Councils for a minimum 3-year period, adding in circa 1.5 days per week of opening time back into the service.
- The development of a new Libraries Strategy which will consider the long-term service requirements and focusing services in the areas of greatest need, as well as investment in service provision with demand warrants it, is ongoing with the intention of taking draft proposals to consultation later in 2024

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

- Strategic Leisure Review - Informed by a public consultation exercise undertaken in late 2023, at its March 2024 meeting the same Committee approved a series of proposals for the second stage of the Review (2024/25 onwards) which are designed to improve the value for money of the publicly funded leisure offer, whilst also targeting it at areas of greatest need and demand. These are in the process of now being implemented, with a further update on appropriate additional savings proposals to achieve a balanced budget position to be developed and presented to committee later in 2024.
- Play Pitch and Open Spaces Strategy - At the March 2024 Environment and Communities Committee an updated strategy was approved which sets out a framework to direct and prioritise future investment in the borough's outdoor sports and recreational spaces.

To reduce the number of long-term empty dwellings.

Key actions:

- Establish baseline and review current strategy and policies

- We continue to work with owners of empty properties to try and bring properties back into use. The level of long-term empty homes currently is 1% of the total number of residential properties, which is a slight increase from quarter 3 at 0.92%.

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
- 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

- Planning application performance against statutory performance measures is above target for major applications (100%) but below (87%) 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 reduction in number of applications in the backlog has slowed meaning there are approximately 200 over normal 'on hand' levels. Focus on older applications has continued to be prioritised. The number of applications, particularly householder applications, now being determined within 8 weeks is also improving.
- An Issues Paper for the new Local Plan has been prepared. Supplementary Planning Documents for Sustainable Drainage Systems, Environmental Protection and Developer Contributions have been adopted giving greater advice and guidance to support applications, and new Conservation Areas have been designated providing greater protection of the built environment.
- 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. The IT system implementation has been re-planned to ensure the supplier can deliver to identified timeframes, while resolving outstanding issues and the draft restructure has been finalised for consultation. Validation checklists have been updated giving customers better guidance on application submissions.
- Work on s106 audit recommendations has progressed well with updates to IT systems now largely complete enabling more effective and efficient reporting to be available going forward.
- Building Control continues to respond to new legislation and ensuring the formal registration of qualified inspectors in accordance with the Building Safety Act.

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

- The Council continues to receive expressions of interest from eligible organisation and currently has seven which are progressing through the relevant stages in line with the Asset Transfer Policy. Additionally, there are ten asset transfers instructed to legal services to progress, six of which are legacy transfers which were proposed prior to the implementation of the new Policy.

Continue to grow the Cheshire East visitor economy.

Key actions:

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

- After a challenging few years for the Visitor Economy, Cheshire East is recovering and growing at levels not seen since before the Covid pandemic. The latest data shows that the overall value of the Visitor Economy grew by almost 45% to £879 million, whilst welcoming almost 13 million visitors and employing over 9,000 people full time.
- A project led by Cheshire East visitor economy has provided hospitality training for unemployed residents to help fill vacancies in the sector, and also instigated partnerships between schools and hotels to change perceptions of hospitality as a career aspiration for young people.
- Cheshire East hotels are back to pre-pandemic levels with monthly occupation levels around 75%, whilst at the same time achieving record income for each room sold.
- Continuing partnership work with Cheshire's Destination Management Organisation, Marketing Cheshire, has generated positive publicity for Cheshire East towns and 'Cheshire Day', which shined a light on the whole County on the 30<sup>th</sup> March and was celebrated in Parliament. The award of LVEP (Local Visitor Economy Partnership) status to Marketing Cheshire this year will enable greater partnership with our national tourism agency, Visit Britain, as well as new funding opportunities.
- The shared service 'Archives - A Story Shared' transformation programme, including the building of the new History Visitor Centre in Crewe, has forged ahead this year with final building designs completed for both centres, training sessions for staff and volunteers, engagement with community groups across Cheshire (including youth theatre workshops and Congleton 'Beat of the Bounds' initiative), new digital resources, interpretation and audience development work, as well as progress on touring pods and the attraction of positive media coverage. Hoardings have been erected around the site showing images to help communicate the project.
- The new interactive art trail map for Macclesfield continues to generate positive publicity and additional footfall and visitors to the town. In Crewe, a Cultural Education Partnership (LCEP) has been established to bring together 20 schools and educational organisations with cultural organisations to provide improved cultural experiences and opportunities for children and young people.
- Public art murals have been installed in Lyceum Square in Crewe, following community engagement on designs and the successful programme of summer events and activities last year. Discussions to encourage new groups, audiences and individuals continuing use of this outdoor space is in progress. 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.

- The Lyceum Theatre, along with theatres across the UK, still face challenges with audiences yet to return to pre-covid levels. Christmas panto and other shows were well received by audiences however, and there were more performances, higher audience figures and occupancy levels than last year, so there is growth in all areas, indicating a gradual return to pre-pandemic levels.
- Across the borough, Community Cultural Activity Grants have been awarded to 20 organisations to deliver cultural and creative activity in line with the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and CEC cultural framework priorities. Over 300 borough-wide community events have received support during 2023/24, with event organisers receiving advice, technical support and permissions.
- Tatton Park continues to be a major contributor to the borough's tourism and visitor economy, being a key attractor as well as creating economic benefit through its supply chain and events. Tatton has also provided an important place for recreation, health and well-being for Cheshire East residents this year, as well as an educational facility for schools and adult learners and a provider of community benefits through volunteering opportunities, community events and outreach.
- As one of the region's foremost environmental, cultural and heritage assets, being the largest area of public green space in the borough, containing habitats of national and local importance, Tatton has continued to maintain and enhance biodiversity throughout the year, thereby contributing to the Council's Carbon Action plan through nature based off-setting. The impact of cost inflation, weather and changes in demand due to cost-of-living pressures continue to provide challenges to the day-to-day operation, but successful new events, partnerships and promotions have had a positive impact on attracting new audiences, visitor numbers and income this year. Tatton's functions and events expertise was recognised by winning Marketing Cheshire's 'Business Events venue of the Year' award and the diversity of attractions within Tatton generated a growing source of income as a filming location.
- Retail and catering outlets performed well throughout the year, with a continued focus on locally sourced, estate and farm produce. Collaboration with the Tatton Park Charitable Trust saw the launch of new products and retail offers to assist in growing donation levels to support future education, conservation and restoration projects. Tatton retained Green Flag and Green Heritage Site awards in 2023.

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

- Enforcement is a key part of work carried out by Regulatory Services and during the year we have a number of long-standing cases that have concluded with very positive outcomes as well as ongoing investigations that will carry forward in to 2024-2025. The Enforcement Services group chaired by the Head of Regulatory Services continues to meet, sharing intelligence and encouraging collaborative working across all enforcement services. The development of an enforcement consistency toolkit in conjunction with our legal services team (currently in final draft) will help to provide officers with key template documents for the creation of consistent and good quality enforcement files.
- The CCTV service logged over 17000 incidents during 2023-2024 and had some notable successes in supporting the police to track down offenders and bring them to justice. Specific cases including shoplifting, burglary, assault (in one case with a knife), possession of drugs and vehicle damage.
- The implementation of the new wireless CCTV network has been completed with infrastructure installed in the final towns of Macclesfield and Knutsford scheduled for early 2024-2025. in parallel with the new maintenance contract that was procured in 2023, we are now working on our 'snagging list' to ensure that equipment is operating properly and in synergy with the whole network.

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
- Raise awareness around safeguarding

- The Trading Standards Team received 2500 referrals from the Citizens Advice Consumer Service during 2023-2024, taking further action in nearly 70% of cases. Their Banking Protocol work saved Cheshire East residents a total of £156k during the year with savings of between £3-18K per person. In one case the team secured a full refund of over £13K for a Macclesfield resident in relation to their purchase of a second-hand vehicle.
- The CCTV service has received additional funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner as part of the Safer Streets initiative for a specific project in Crewe to install additional CCTV in the town centre. Initial work began in QTR4 but will continue into 2024-2025.
- The Council's new Taxi Licensing Policy had a specific requirement that all drivers needed to attend safeguarding training either at first grant or, for existing drivers, during the lifetime of their current licence. The Licensing Team have had great support from the Safeguarding Team to deliver fully funded training to over 600 drivers (approximately 80% of our total licensed drivers) to date.

- Raise awareness around safeguarding and community safety issues

To protect residents and improve our environment.

Key actions:

- Review local air quality through our Annual Status Reports, taking action to respond to areas of poorer air quality
- Air Quality Management Areas have an action plan outlining planned measures to improve quality
- A regulatory service that balances advice and education
- Provide a robust licensing regime for alcohol, gambling and hackney carriage private hire vehicles
- Proactive inspection and surveillance programmes

- The 2023 Annual Air Quality Status Report (ASR) was submitted to, and approved by, Defra in autumn 2023. The report identified that we are able to revoke a number of our existing Air Quality Management Areas due to significant improvements to nitrogen dioxide concentrations over consecutive years. This work will be completed during 2024-2025 and will incorporate the outcomes of full year monitoring results for 2023.
- Our Defra grant funded project to raise awareness on the impacts of domestic fuel burning and vehicle idling has concluded in year; objectives have been met and all funding has been drawn down. Specific work included the development and dissemination of an awareness leaflet to all Cheshire East households and the provision of a variety of anti-idling signs to local schools in the Borough. This project has supported our ongoing commitment to improving air quality across the Borough as part of our Air Quality Action Plan and overarching Air Quality Strategy for Cheshire East.
- Work to prepare for external consultation on the new Statement of Licensing Policy began in earnest with initial internal consultation with key partners. As part of this process the Environmental Protection Team took the opportunity to develop new noise guidance for Outdoor Concerts and Events which will form part of the refreshed policy and the Policy will also include reference to the incoming requirements of Martyn's Law to deal with terrorist threat. External consultation went live in early April and following this, and the passage of the Policy through our decision-making timetable, it will be presented to Full Council for approval in December 2024.
- The Council's Taxi Licensing Policy was approved in November 2022 leading to a significant change in processes and requirements with some of the changes staggered to mitigate any burdens on the existing trade. To further support the licensed trade the team held two separate engagement events with drivers during 2023 and have used the feedback to review aspects of the policy, clarify requirements and improve processes. It is planned to look at further engagement events in 2024-2025 alongside the development of a bi-annual newsletter for the taxi trade to provide advice and guidance.
- Regulatory Services undertake targeted inspection work in relation to specific issues or events over and above the usual routine inspection programmes. In year they have worked with Wolverhampton City Council enforcement officers to check compliance with Taxi and PHV licensing from cross border hiring and also attended the Nantwich Jazz Festival to ensure compliance with Licensing Act conditions.
- The Commercial Services Team achieved 96.5% of all programmed A - D rated food hygiene premises inspections; this figure includes inspections that were overdue following the reduced inspection requirements

mandated by the Food Standards Agency during the Covid-19 pandemic and to the end of March 2023. Very low risk premises (E rated) continue to be tackled by our trainee and contract officers and through the use of Alternative Enforcement Strategies (AES) permitted by the Food Law Code of Practice. Of those premises that receive a direct inspection, 97.7% are awarded 3 or above in the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme putting Cheshire East on a par with national standards.

- Key numbers for the year: The Commercial Services team dealt with over 900 service requests, investigated 60 workplace accidents and over 200 infectious disease and alleged food poisoning notifications. Environmental Protection dealt with over 1600 complaints from Cheshire East residents, provided over 2000 comments in response to planning and licensing applications and completed 90% of Environmental Permit inspections. The Animal Health and Welfare Team carried out over 300 inspections of licensed premises, farmed animal premises and feed premises including inspection and complaint work for Stockport Borough Council as part of a Service Level Agreement.
- Satisfaction with the Pest Control service remains extremely high with regular positive feedback received from our domestic and business customers. During 2023-2024 the service dealt with 544 requests for treatment in domestic premises (plus associated revisit work), fully serviced all commercial contracts and exceeded targets set in the control with United Utilities for sewer baiting; this contract helps to target the rat population in the wider environment. An excellent result for a small, two-man team.

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 being delivered by Q4 are near completion. McLaren Street and Derby Docks have had successful opening events where children, councillors, politicians and colleagues from Cheshire East and Ansa gathered to celebrate the works being completed.
- Queen Street and School Crescent have opening events planned for the May school half term. The remaining work still ongoing is the Skate Park at Queen Street which is near completion. Works have included major play area improvements, path improvements, installation of benches, trees and shrub planting and more!
- The two opening events that have occurred receives positive attention in the local media and the improvements across all four parks will offer health, wellbeing, and amenity enhancement to these vibrant green spaces amidst densely populated areas of Crewe.
- The Grounds Maintenance Review which was approved in February 2024 will bring a new maintenance regime from the 1st of April. Green spaces across the borough will still be maintained to a very high standard while allowing for more rewilded areas within our parks and open spaces with increased biodiversity across

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

Cheshire East. Alongside the new maintenance regime, a grounds maintenance software will be incorporated to allow the public to view which green spaces have been cut, their maintenance level and when they are due another cut.

- Cheshire East's Green Spaces for Wellbeing Project, delivered through The Council's arm's length company: Ansa Environmental Services, has been nominated for one of the awards at the Awards for Excellence in Recycling & Waste Management 2024. The programme has been shortlisted in the Local Authority Individual or Team of the Year! The programme has received continued Cheshire East Public Health funding for the next financial year which will allow for the team to continue delivering improved wellbeing for residents through local activities run in our green spaces.

### 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 estimated recycling rate for 2023-24 is 52%. This is in line with last year's result of 51.7%. We did not see as much of a drop as we expect to see with the introduction of The Council's Garden waste subscription charge in Q4 of this year. However, The Council will still need to look to additional measures to increase reuse and recycling in future years to achieve the national recycling target of 60 % by 2035.
- To contribute to this The Council is in early development of introducing a separate food waste collection service by 2026 mandated and funded by central government as part of the Simpler Recycling Scheme announced in Q3.
- The Garden green waste subscription scheme –approved at Committee in July 2023 has now commenced in January of Q4. At the time of writing this report the scheme has now seen a total of 84,555 paid for subscriptions. This level of subscription is in line with the business plan and will deliver its projected income target of £4.05M offsetting a significant proportion of the cost of delivering this non-statutory service.
- From January 2024 The Council has not been able to charge for domestic rubble deposited at the household waste sites due to change in legislation. We have seen an increase in the tonnage throughput since January compared to the same period in the previous years.
- The Council is finalising a public consultation on future levels of household Waste Recycling Centre Provision due to be open for responses in Q1 2024-25. Running parallel to the consultation work The Council is undertaking a procurement for the next service provider of household waste recycling centres with a decision on service provision levels due in September 2024 at the Environment and Communities Committee. Separate to this as part of the 2024 – 25 budget decision The Council will temporarily closure of 3 household waste centres and trial a mobile household waste centre as part of budget saving measures.

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

- The Council in Partnership with Mersey Forrest is currently on-site planting 15.9 Hectares of new deciduous woodland in Peover as part of the 120 ha of natural offset of carbon for its own emissions. This adds to the 30-ha planted in previous years and is part of a program of planting that will see our target reached in 2025/26.
- Additional areas for tree planting in the next season have been identified and designs are being progressed through the Forestry Commission.

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 (DfT) last year. The Council has been requested to undertake further work on the Business Case for the scheme by the DfT which will lead to a delay in the start of the scheme.
- The A500 Dualling scheme has been re-scoped following the cancellation of HS2 to provide a multi-modal corridor scheme, improving access to Crewe Railway Station. A revised Business case is in preparation which will confirm the scope of the improvements.
- Through the Winter season the number of highway defects has considerably exceeded business plan forecast with circa 33,000 defects appearing on the network against a business plan figure of circa 20,000
- The Pedestrian Crossing Strategy consultation has closed with analysis on the feedback being undertaken.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Speed Management Strategy measures are being progressed this financial year under the ODR process so no further changes on SMS</li> <li>• Tree Risk Management Strategy - The initial inspection of the highway network has been completed and inspection frequencies based on zoning will be fully implemented moving forwards.</li> </ul>
<p>Safer and well-maintained roads.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver planned investment to maintain the highway network</li> <li>• Review of appropriate strategies, such as speed management</li> </ul>	
<p>Investment in electric vehicle infrastructure in our key service centres</p>	
<p>To increase parking provision close to local transport hubs.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Local Transport Plan parking reviews</li> </ul>	
<p>To promote uptake of cycling in our local service centres.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Installation of cycle storage facilities in Cheshire East car parks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council has an extensive Active Travel programme; and has recently secured an additional £673,000 of funding from Active Travel England to provide improved facilities in Wilmslow.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invest in new cycle routes and improve existing ones</li> <li>• Prohibit parking in existing cycle lanes</li> </ul>	
<p>To improve the speed and efficiency of public transport and encourage more residents to make fewer car journeys.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feasibility studies into the creation of rapid transit routes connecting existing infrastructure with key employment sites</li> </ul>	
<p>To reduce areas of the borough not served by public transport.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit proposals to Rural Transport Fund</li> <li>• Develop quality bus partnerships with operators and town councils</li> </ul>	
<p>To encourage an increase in the use of public transport (especially buses).</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operators work together to share real time information</li> </ul>	

- Bus routes planned to provide multi-modal connectivity
- Cheshire East bus app developed

More residents to use walking routes.

Key actions:

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

- The promotion of walking and nature trails at The Council's countryside sites and Tatton Park is ongoing, whilst work with partners on the Bollin Way continues to develop shared routes where possible.
- The Public Rights of Way team continue to increase the accessibility of the path network, such as replacing stiles with gates and enhancing path surfaces, on both leisure and active travel routes. The 2023 random survey of paths across the network undertaken by volunteers from the East Cheshire Ramblers and the Peak and Northern Footpaths Society classed 93% of the inspected paths as being in a condition classed as good or acceptable condition.
- Maintenance of the borough's Public Rights of Way network, by resolving issues and obstructions on paths, involved well over 300 reports from the public during the year, the installation of 424 pieces of path furniture such as gates, bridges and signposts, and the maintenance of vegetation on 110km of path. Working in partnership with local communities and landowners to develop opportunities for improved access, the team helped to secure a new permissive path to avoid walking along an A-road on a long distance promoted route. The team also progressed a number of s106 funded improvement schemes to increase accessibility on routes between development sites and service centres and the wider path network, including projects in Wilmslow, Congleton, Brereton, Alsager and Langley.
- During 2023-24 the team assessed 323 planning applications in order to ensure the protection and seek enhancement of the path network, a slight increase on the previous year. By working with landowners and developers, the team processed legal orders to divert and improve Public Rights of Way to mitigate the impact of temporary closures where required to ensure the safety of the public.
- The Countryside Ranger Service 2024 event programme was launched, with a total of 88 popular events across Cheshire East, led by Rangers and event partners. The Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at Lindow Common in Wilmslow achieved another gold award in the "In your Neighbourhood" category of the RHS North West in Bloom competition as well as an award for Outstanding Achievement over 5 years. Tegg's Nose Country Park, Macclesfield Riverside Park and Brereton Heath Local Nature Reserve all retained their Green Flag Awards for another year.

- Important Ash dieback (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) control work was conducted at a number of countryside sites across the borough and the Middlewood Way Rangers created a new set of steps in Adlington to provide better access and safety for children attending Adlington Primary School.
- Countryside Ranger Service volunteers continued to provide a huge amount of support to the Rangers work across the Cheshire East countryside with over 9,000 hours of volunteer support this year. Support provided included working with the Rangers to plant trees at a number of sites as well as continuing maintenance work to resurface paths, replace rotten boundary fences, install new or replacement interpretive panels. Day to day operational tasks in managing and assisting visitors, dealing with storm damage and antisocial behaviour plus monitoring and improving habitats and diversity continued throughout the year.

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

- Work is continuing in line with the programme. The new Bus Station and Multi Storey Car Park are nearing completion.

Delivery of a strategic regeneration plan for Macclesfield.

Key actions:

- Successful delivery of the regeneration programme for Macclesfield

- Work is continuing in line with the programme. Improvement opportunities assessed for the Indoor Market.

Successful town centres in our other key towns.

Key actions:

- Work is continuing in line with the programme, and engagement with stakeholders such as Congleton Market Quarter.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with our partners and key stakeholders to understand what is important to our towns</li> </ul>	
<p>Maximise the commercial and regeneration opportunities associated with HS2 for the whole borough</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In October 2023, the Prime Minister announced that HS2 north of Birmingham was being cancelled. This included both phases 2a and 2b which would have passed through Cheshire East.</li> <li>• The Council is supporting the Department for Transport and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on a joint transport led deep dive to look at opportunities to accelerate regeneration around Crewe station</li> </ul>
<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> </ul>

Priority: To be carbon neutral by 2025

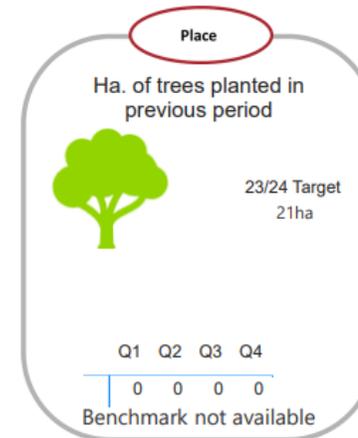
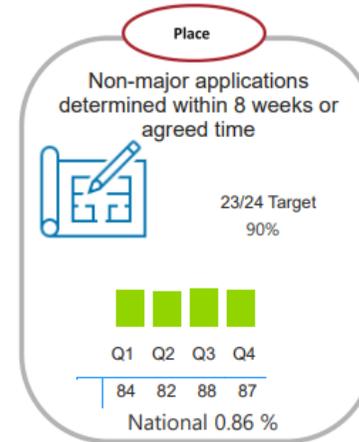
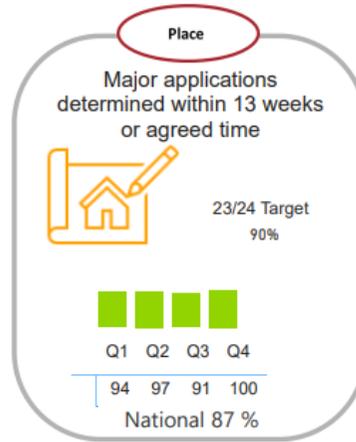
<p>To have delivered the milestones in becoming a carbon neutral council.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver actions in the Cheshire East Council Carbon Action Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full Council took the decision to revise the target date for the Council to be Carbon Neutral from 2025 to 2027 as part of its budget decision in February, due to the financial constraints of the authority. The Council is on track to be carbon neutral as an organisation by the revised target of the end of 2027. Our journey to decarbonisation consists of reducing our own carbon emissions and then insetting those emissions that cannot be reduced to nil.</li> <li>• Decarbonising council emissions has this year focused on our buildings and vehicles. Using grant funding we have installed 14 air source heat pumps, LED lighting arrays, roof insulations and 19 roof mounted solar canopies. These actions reduce the amount of gas used to heat buildings, with the increased electricity consumption coming from our own generation or the 100% green electricity The Council purchases. To begin the work of decarbonising the Council's fleet 24 EV charge points have been installed and the first tranche of electric vans have been ordered. There are further charge points and further vans in plan for the next year. To inset The Council's residual emissions work has begun on The Councils first ground mounted</li> </ul>
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solar farm. The electricity produced will be supplied to The Council's in-vessel compost facility, managed by Biowise, with any surplus power generated being supplied directly to the grid. A 15.9ha woodland planting scheme to sequester more carbon is in progress.

- The Council also has a target to be carbon neutral as a borough by 2045. Following completion of a baseline carbon analysis The Council has developed a draft action plan for 2024-29 which is now subject to public consultation. Houses within the borough are being helped to decarbonise through assistance with affordable warmth for those in need and the provision of a solar together scheme for those able to pay. Shared Prosperity Funding is providing grants to community groups with buildings requiring decarbonisation measures.
- The Council has commenced a detailed review of the scope three emissions that will form a part of the wider borough decarbonisation trajectory.

# Performance measures supporting A thriving and sustainable place

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



Open Fair Green

