

OPEN

Corporate Policy Committee

28 November 2024

Performance Report – Cheshire East Plan, Quarter 2 2024/25

Report of: Karen Wheeler – Interim Assistant Chief Executive

Report Reference No: CPC/34/24-25

Ward(s) Affected: All

Decision or Scrutiny: Scrutiny

Purpose of Report

- 1 To provide the Committee with oversight of organisational performance against the priorities and vision set out in the Cheshire East Plan 2024/25. The report covers Quarter 2 2024/25, 1st July 2024 to 30th September 2024.
- 2 This report supports the responsibility of the Corporate Policy Committee to have a co-ordinating role across all committees and to exercise corporate oversight of outcomes, performance, budget monitoring and risk management.
- 3 The committee can comment on performance and direction of travel and consider any amendments in reporting, and/or additional data and intelligence that should be included.
- 4 Appendix 1 provides the detail of progress against the Cheshire East Plan priorities for Quarters 1 and 2, and Appendix 2 provides a summary of performance against the organisational health indicators.

Executive Summary

- 5 This report gives an update on delivery and performance against the priorities in the Cheshire East Plan 2024/25 for Quarter 2 (July to September 2024) including progress since Quarter 1.

- 6 Appendix 1 of the report shows that there are 66 priority actions included within the Cheshire East Plan 2024/25 and progress can be summarised as follows:

	Q1	Q2	
Green – on track	48	50	↑
Amber – mainly on track, some minor issues	12	9	↓
Red – off track with major issues	2	2	↔
Complete	2	2	↔
Not yet started	2	3	
To be updated	0	0	
	66	66	

- 7 Appendix 2 provides a summary of key organisational health performance indicators.
- 8 The Corporate Plan 2021-25 has three key themes - Open, Fair and Green. Although the Cheshire East Plan has been refreshed for 2024/25 to better reflect the financial context, development of a new Plan for 2025 onwards is now essential to provide our residents, partners and the organisation with clarity of purpose and strategic direction aligned to a new operating model and MTFS. A small Member task and finish group has been set up to support the process. The draft new plan will be presented to this Committee then Council in February 2025 alongside the MTFS for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

The Corporate Policy Committee is recommended to:

1. Note and comment on progress and performance against delivery of the Cheshire East Plan 2024/25 in Quarter 2 2024/25.

Background

- 9 The Cheshire East Plan 2024/25 outlines three aims and 20 priorities for the Council aligned with the vision of being an “Open, Fairer and Greener Cheshire East”.
- 10 This report reviews progress with delivery and performance against the priorities and actions in the Cheshire East Plan and focuses upon a “One Council” approach to performance management. This includes a balance of quantitative and qualitative data.

- 11 Appendix 1 of the report shows that there are 66 priority actions included within the Cheshire East Plan 2024/25 and progress can be summarised as follows:

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- 12 Feedback from Corporate Policy Committee in September on the Quarter 1 report has been taken on board with a review of the RAG ratings applied to ensure consistency e.g. where action is yet to be taken and in line with other reporting. The Quarter 1 position is included alongside Quarter 2 so that Members can see the direction of travel.
- 13 The actions which are amber are set out below with an explanation and mitigating actions to be taken:

Priority Action	What will we do	Lead Officer	Q2 update
A1.1.1	Introduce a new decision-making framework to streamline the current arrangements and improve quality and clarity of reports.	Head of Democratic Services	Linked to Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan - Considering options to streamline committees, train report authors, emphasise Modern.gov software use – slightly behind timeline due to meeting schedule
A1.3.3	Deliver the savings set out in MTFS 2024-28 proposals within the agreed timescales to contribute to a balanced the budget and build sustainable reserves	Head of Finance	First Financial Review reported to September Cycle of service committees, showing forecast overspend of £26.5 million
A2.3.3	Update the Cheshire East Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy	Head of Service Early Help and Prevention	Service Manager in post since October. Interim DCS also in post. Priority is to update the strategy, using the findings from the Safe Lives review of the service, the feedback from the workshop already held and a further collaborative workshop session to review the initial revised draft plan. Meetings are already underway with key stakeholders such as

Priority Action	What will we do	Lead Officer	Q2 update
			commissioning and finance to ensure the new plan aligns with resources available. The performance is off target but will now be progressed at pace.
A2.4.1	Attract more foster carers to support Cheshire East children through the Foster4 collaboration	Head of Provider Services	New media campaign was launched and a further 7 carers being assessed, this means on target to recruit our 15 carers by March 2025. Enquiries have increased in this quarter compared to Q1.
A2.4.2	Prioritise care experienced adults as part of our recovery work to improve employment and training opportunities.	Head of Service: Cared for Children and Care Leavers	Now cared for ambassadors are in post and will be looking to progress this.
A2.4.3	Deliver the priorities of the Cared for children and care leavers strategy 2022-26	Head of Cared for Children and Care Leavers	Corporate Parenting Strategic group has been revised and new strategic Board planned for November, and task and finish groups set. Part of that is now have a 16-25 accommodation group looking at suitable and increasing provision to reduce the reliance on temporary accommodation. 100% of care leavers now have health passports and we are bringing in sexual health into the care leaver hub to be a continuous offer available to them. Preparation for adulthood requires a transformation programme to drive this and we are having early conversations about how to move this on jointly with adult services. Bus passes now available at no cost to care leavers. 4 care leaver ambassadors now in post to support co-production in care leaver improvements.
A2.8.1	Investment in Adult Social Care (MTFS 8)	Director of Adult Social Care	Growth included in budget for 2024/25 and under review for future years in line with MTFS development and transformation plan.
A3.5.3	Continue to pursue a compensation package following scrapping of HS2 Phase 2	Programme Director HS2	No specific response from new government. Future rail schemes such as Liverpool-Manchester Rail and Birmingham – Manchester Link being engaged.
A3.6.1	Deliver actions to achieve the objectives of the Carbon Neutral Action Plan 2027 (updated timescale)	Head of Environmental Services	Since the last quarter Council's First solar farm at Leighton Grange has been completed and is now fully operational providing power to the Council's Composting Facility. Commissioning of 11 Air source heat pumps and building mounted solar is progressing. 11 electric vans are now competing construction and starting to be delivered to electrify the

Priority Action	What will we do	Lead Officer	Q2 update
			Councils southern street cleansing operation. Capital Review continues to delay 2nd solar and further fleet decarbonisation putting 2027 target at risk in future quarters.

14 The actions which are red and not meeting target are:

Priority Action	What will we do	Lead Officer	Q2 update
A1.1.4	A clear and transparent budget setting process, where opportunities to inform and influence decision-making are clearly understood by stakeholders	Head of Finance	Strategic Finance Management Board drives MTFS review, budget setting process in progress but subject to further details on impact of Budget announcements before Christmas – Member briefings w/c 18 November and update to Corporate Policy Committee 28 November – see agenda item
A2.7.1	Deliver the Kingsbourne Academy primary school in Nantwich	Head of Education	The delivery of this primary school has been further delayed due to the ongoing legal issues. The project team has met with the developer and is hoping to achieve a resolution imminently.

- 15 The Quarter 2 organisational health performance report is at Appendix 2. This gives further details on progress made against delivery of the Cheshire East Plan during Quarter 2 of the 2024/25 municipal year.
- 16 There are 2,799 FTE staff in Cheshire East Council as at quarter 2, a reduction in the level reported in quarter 1 (2,829). The vacancy rate across the Council has increased from 13.05% in Q1 to 14.24% in Q2 2024/25.
- 17 The greatest numbers of vacancies are reported in Corporate (16.39%) and Place (14.82%) directorates.
- 18 There has also been an increase in the levels of staff turnover, from 4.4% in Q1, to 5.5% in Q2 2024/25. With the Children’s directorate reporting a rate of 10.3% for the period.
- 19 There has been an increase in the number of agency staff from 232 in Q1, to 246 in Q2 2024/25.

- 20 There has been a decrease in the variance between the forecast outturn and total net budget, increasing from 6.8% in Q1 to 5.1% in Q2 2024/25. Full details of finance reporting period 2 is a separate item on the committee's agenda.
- 21 Service committees receive performance information on a regular basis through their subject matter expert officers, specific to the subject of the committee. This performance report offers an oversight of progress against the Cheshire East (Corporate) Plan 2024/25 and should complement the more detailed performance and service specific dashboards that are considered at service committees.
- 22 The Corporate Plan 2021-25 has three key themes - Open, Fair and Green. Although the Cheshire East Plan has been refreshed for 2024/25 to better reflect the financial context, development of a new Plan for 2025 onwards is now essential to provide our residents, partners and the organisation with clarity of purpose and strategic direction aligned to a new operating model and MTFs. A small Member task and finish group has been set up to support the process. The draft new plan will be presented to this Committee then Council in February 2025 alongside the MTFs for approval.

Consultation and Engagement

- 23 Consultation was undertaken in developing the Cheshire East Plan and priority actions within it.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 24 The Corporate Policy Committee is responsible for reviewing and scrutinising performance against the strategic aims and objectives in the Cheshire East Plan 2024/25.
- 25 The performance management framework continues to be developed and seeks to provide a robust, customer focussed view of performance. Member input into this development is valued to ensure that performance management reports are of use.
- 26 Performance management is a tool to allow oversight of the Council's key activities and to enable transparency and understanding around where the Council is performing well, and what are the areas of challenge and improvement.

Other Options Considered

- 27 Not applicable.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

28 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

29 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Any financial implications arising from performance matters will be covered in other reports to respective service committees, including separate financial reporting in-year, as well as in further development and reporting of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, as required.

Policy

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

An open and enabling organisation.	A council which empowers and cares about people.	A thriving and sustainable place.
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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

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

Human Resources

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

Risk Management

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

Rural Communities

34 The Corporate Plan aims to support greater inclusion for rural communities. In 2022/23 a Rural Action Plan was approved by the

Economy and Growth committee, which includes priorities around digital connectivity, access, housing, visitor economy and support for rural based businesses.

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

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

Public Health

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

Climate Change

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

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Karen Wheeler – Interim Assistant Chief Executive karen.wheeler@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – The Cheshire East Plan Progress and Performance Report Q2 Appendix 2 – Organisational Health Performance Report Q2
Background Papers:	Cheshire East Plan 2024/25