

FINANCE SUB COMMITTEE: 2 June 2025

Written responses to questions

1. Councillor T Dean/C O’Leary Agenda item: Final Outturn 2024-25

Question

2026 Mayoral Elections: it was noted that costs incurred would be reimbursed by the Combined Authority at its inception. The committee sought clarity on the interest rates and terms that would be applied. Officers committed to providing a written response.

Written response:

All costs associated with elections for the CA will be consolidated and invoiced as soon as possible. The Council incurs costs for MP elections and does not charge HM Government interest and terms for those costs that are 100% funded, and it is not practice doing so where it affects the public purse as it is all taxpayer money.

2. Councillor S Gardner Agenda item: Final Outturn 2024-25

Question

The committee noted the capital financing budget and anticipated interest costs on borrowing. The committee queried if the repayments were fixed or variable as having variable payments would make a significant difference to the cost to the council. Officers committed to providing a written response.

Response

Whether the Council borrows on a maturity or annuity basis, the interest rates are fixed at the point of taking the borrowing.

3. Councillor S Gardner Agenda item: Final Outturn 2024-25

Question

The committee noted that the Council Tax Support Scheme budget increased each year in line with the council tax percentage increases. The committee requested that a review of the Council Tax Support Scheme be added to the Work Programme to allow the committee the opportunity to review the scheme and identify if it was financially

sustainable. The committee also suggested a review of the empty homes premium could assist in revenue income whilst reducing the number of empty properties across the borough. It was felt that Cheshire East undercharged significantly for properties left empty for 2-5 years, when compared to other authorities.

Response

Council must set the LCTS Scheme each year. Members are asked if they wish to change it at the point of reporting. If yes, a further report must come forward in advance of the budget to provide members with options and recommendations. A briefing is being prepared relating to the CTS scheme and will be added to the work programme.

The maximum council tax a council can charge on an empty property in England depends on how long the property has been unoccupied:

- 1 to 2 years: Up to 100% extra (i.e., double the normal council tax rate).
- 2 to 5 years: Up to 200% extra (i.e., triple the normal council tax rate).
- More than 5 years: Up to 300% extra (i.e., four times the normal council tax rate)

Cheshire East Council has charged the maximum allowable premium on empty homes since the introduction of the empty homes premium.