

COUNCIL 16 July 2025

Item 15– Questions: Written Responses

4 Cllr Sarah Bennett-Wake

Written Responses

The Council year 4 allocation for family hubs funding was £342,400.

The areas of focus for 2025/2026:

1. Work to continue to integrate health partners into the new town centre delivery model at Crewe Lifestyle Family Hub.
2. Work to onboard/set up community hub venues within the most deprived areas (0%-30%), with a focus on parent voice and partnerships.
3. Work to enhance the Family Hub Training offer for our affiliated partners.
4. Development of a town centre Family Hub Connect site in Macclesfield (linked to Ash Grove Family Hub).
5. Work to continue to embed and strengthen the work of iThrive in Cheshire East.
6. Work to enhance the training offer for Family Hub staff with regards to local contextual issues (for example – substance misuse).
7. Establish the train the trainer UNICEF Breastfeeding accreditation and continue to embed the current breastfeeding friendly accreditation as the workforce evolves in line with the Children's Wellbeing Bill.

5 Cllr Reg Kain

Written Response

The feasibility study at Linley Lane railway bridge is being paid for from monies from the Sainsburys development. The study has been requested by the Highways and Infrastructure team to look at ways to improve the pedestrian access and drainage under the railway bridge and includes site investigation works.

7 Cllr Hayley Whittaker

Written Response

The Council, with Cheshire Resilience Forum (CRF) partners, has well-established joint operating principles and protocols for incident management and communications between agencies and with residents and other community stakeholders during emergency major incidents and major incident standbys.

However, that same comprehensive protocol does not come into force by default when an incident is not declared as a major incident or major incident standby, by a first responder agency.

British Transport Police were the lead agency for the immediate response to the Poynton Station incident. They convened a rapid review meeting. However, the incident was not declared as a major incident or major incident standby, in emergency

planning terms, and a council emergency management and response team ('CEMART') was not formally established, and so those protocols did not apply.

Nevertheless, in such a sensitive and tragic incident, great care must be taken to manage inter-agency, community and public communication appropriately.

It is appropriate to undertake a review of the response to any serious incident. Officers involved in the response have reflected on the incident and will be making recommendations for some changes, both for incidents such as that seen at Poynton station and other complex multi-agency incidents.

Formalising how and when to update town and parish councils, among other community stakeholders, will be considered as part of this review.

8 Cllr Stewart Gardiner

Written Response

Recent high turnover of senior staff at Cheshire East Council has related to staff being interim. The Council has had real success in its Senior Leadership recruitment campaign conducted in partnership with Starfish. Out of 15 roles the Council was successful in appointing to 11, giving us a 73% hit rate and we saw very strong and experienced candidates in all of our recruitment exercises. The Council is very pleased about that.

In addition, it was always planned to reduce the dependency on interims as senior permanent staff join. The Council's People team are also working with Directorate teams at the moment to review all agency spend and the team anticipate further turnover as the Council look to encourage interim staff to convert to permanent employment in high agency usage areas.

The Council's People team has developed a series of foundational deliverables which are progressing through internal governance and will go to Corporate Policy Committee in Autumn 2025 following relevant consultation and engagement. These deliverables include a recent refresh of our Council values, a Staff Engagement Strategy, People Strategy, Employee Lifecycle and a suite of new workforce measures. The council is also actively developing a new Leadership and Management Development programme which is being discussed with CLT shortly. Additionally, brand new suite of workforce development offerings is in development, including a review of our current apprenticeship strategy, developing career development and succession plan routes and significantly improving our performance management process.

11 Cllr Nicola Cook

Written Response

A meeting to be arranged with Councillor Cook to discuss the issues raised in her question.

12 Cllr Liz Wardlaw

Written Response

The Council's People team are actively developing a Staff Survey which will be launched in Autumn 2025. This will build on work that has already taken place in refreshing Council Values, which was completed with staff in March and April 2025. This work is part of the broader Workforce Transformation Programme.

The intention for the Staff Survey is to keep it:

- Focused and as concise as possible. Previous response rates have not been as high as the team would like and we need to design and promote the survey in a way that will encourage participation.
- Focused on our refreshed council values so that the outputs of our staff survey can be used to drive behaviour change and development of a high performing culture.
- Evidence based. The team are looking at including as many questions as possible that can be benchmarked to previous years, AND to LA benchmark for comparison and driving evidence-based improvement.

There will be a 'you said we did' exercise once the responses to the survey have been collated and analysed. An update will be provided in due course.