

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Council**
held on Wednesday, 15th October, 2025 in the Council Chamber, SKA
Observatory, Jodrell Bank, Lower Withington, SK11 9FT

PRESENT

Councillor D Edwardes (Mayor/Chair)

Councillor J Snowball (Deputy Mayor/Vice-Chair)

Councillors S Adams, R Bailey, M Beanland, S Bennett-Wake, L Braithwaite, J Bratherton, M Brooks, D Brown, C Browne, L Buchanan, C Bulman, R Chadwick, C Chapman, D Clark, J Clowes, A Coiley, N Cook, S Corcoran, L Crane, B Drake, S Edgar, K Edwards, M Edwards, H Faddes, A Gage, S Gardiner, E Gilman, M Goldsmith, M Gorman, E Hall, A Harrison, A Heler, S Holland, M Houston, T Jackson, D Jefferay, N Mannion, A Moran, R Moreton, R Morris, H Moss, M Muldoon, J Pearson, J Place, J Pratt, P Redstone, J Rhodes, H Seddon, M Sewart, M Simon, L Smetham, G Smith, J Smith, J Smith, L Smith, R Vernon, M Warren and J Wray

41 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors L Anderson, P Coan, T Dean, R Fletcher, K Hauge, G Hayes, R Kain, A Kolker, C O'Leary, B Posnett, B Puddicombe, J Saunders, L Wardlaw, H Whitaker and F Wilson.

42 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Interim Director of Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer) declared that he would leave the meeting during consideration of Item 12 – Urgent Decisions, as this decision related to his appointment.

43 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

When proposing the Minutes for the 17 September 2025 meeting, the Leader referred to minute 39 resolution 8 and confirmed the new Cheshire East membership for the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee as follows:

Councillor Dawn Clark to be the voting member in respect of the business to be carried out in Part One of Appendix A (Subscriber Members), and Councillor Garnet Marshall to be the further voting member in respect of the business to be carried out in Part Two of Appendix A (Joint Committee Members).

The substitute members to be Councillor Marilyn Houston in respect of the business to be carried out in Part One of Appendix A (Subscriber

Members), and Councillor Mick Warren in respect of the business to be carried out in Part Two of Appendix A (Joint Committee Members).

RESOLVED: That

- 1 the minutes of the Council meeting held on 16 July 2025, and the Extraordinary meeting of Council held on 17 September 2025 be approved as a correct record.
- 2 the Cheshire East membership of the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee to be Councillors Dawn Clark and Garnet Marshall with substitutes Councillors Marilyn Houston and Mick Warren.

44 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor reported that the details of the mayoral events that he and the Deputy Mayor had undertaken since the last meeting were available on the Council's website.

45 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

Ms Lillian Burns spoke on behalf of the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) about the Adlington New Town proposal. She stated that the New Towns Taskforce report described it as a standalone settlement, but it would not be as it would close the green belt gap between Poynton, Bollington, and Macclesfield. Ms Burns stated that there were already another 1,000 homes planned for the former Woodford Airfield site, in addition to numerous applications for proposed developments between Hazel Grove in Stockport and Poynton in Cheshire East. Ms Burns stated that CPRE supported the right kind of development in the right places, which included some of the new town recommendations located on brownfield sites. However, the Adlington proposal was the worst possible example of unsustainable urban sprawl into the countryside. It would reduce the food resilience of the area; be on parts of the rivers Bollin and Dane that were prone to flooding; and would impact on habitats and wildlife. There were also big questions of the water and sewage capacity, as well as a lack of sustainable transport and infrastructure. It was an unsustainable proposition that should not be supported.

Mr Simon Gleave, Chair of the Adlington Parish Council, referred to the proposals for the Adlington New Town and stated that there had only been silence from Cheshire East Council regarding its views on the proposals. He stated that the residents of North East Cheshire were waiting to hear the view of the principal authority on this hugely important issue, which would have far reaching effects on them. Mr Gleave respectfully asked that the Council engage in discussion of this matter.

In response to the speakers, Cllr M Gorman, Deputy Leader of the Council, stated that the recommendations of the independent New Towns Taskforce had been prepared independently and not proposed by Cheshire East Council. The Council had no role in the proposals. The applicants had

contacted the Council to make them aware, in confidence, of their applications. The Taskforce had met with officers in May 2025 to ask questions on locations, economic opportunities, and challenges. Subsequently, the Council wrote to the Taskforce supporting opportunities in principle for New Towns, but highlighting the major planning, delivery and infrastructure challenges as highlighted today by the public speakers. The Council had no role or influence – it was an independent review. Cllr Gorman stated that the Council awaited further information from the Government on the proposals, with an expectation that more information would be published in Spring 2026, which would then be presented at full Council for discussion and debate.

Mr Richard Slater stated that he had recently received a communication from Jones Homes regarding the proposed roundabout between Broken Cross and The Cock Inn, Macclesfield, and the full closure of A537. He stated that there was no entry on the One Network portal for these works, which raised concerns as to whether the statutory notice had been properly published, so these works must not proceed. He asked that the Council confirm that no works would begin until the full three-month statutory notice had been issued and clearly visible on the One Network system and that there would be appropriate temporary restrictions or controls to prevent dangerous rat-running through Henbury's narrow lanes and Whirley Road.

In response Councillor M Goldsmith, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, stated that the developer had been working with the Council's Highways Team to put in place the legal agreement to construct these roundabout works, which allowed the developer to seek a Highways Permit to proceed with works. He explained that this would be agreed with the Council's Network Management Team and would include the need for advance notice, as per the regulations. Any communications from the developer thus far should be seen as additional to this and not part of any formal notice period. He stated that discussions with the developer were ongoing about the precise detail of the traffic management arrangements but confirmed that the team were fully aware of the sensitivities of this location and would be seeking to ensure disruption was kept to a minimum. This would also ensure that the roadworks could take place as safely as possible for everyone involved.

Mr Robert Douglas stated that fly-tipping was a risk to public health, endangered local wildlife and livestock and that every year, it cost Cheshire East's communities about £200,000 to clear up. He referred to the Government's published information about fly-tipping and fixed penalty notices for every council in England and stated that that for the year to March 2024, the level of fly-tipping per person in Cheshire East was 42% higher than Cheshire West, 71% worse than Warrington and over two and a half times that of Staffordshire Moorlands. Mr Douglas stated that two years ago, he pointed out to Cheshire East Council that for the year to March 2022, while Cheshire West was issuing one fixed penalty notice for every 20 incidents, Cheshire East Council was only issuing one for every

200. Two years later while Cheshire West was issuing one fixed penalty notice for every 16 incidents, Cheshire East was only issuing one for every 500. Every time Cheshire East issued a fixed penalty notice, Cheshire West would have issued 31. He stated that Councils were allowed to levy fines of up to £1,000 for fly tipping yet the Council's maximum remained at £400. He asked that the Council immediately increase the maximum fine for fly-tipping to £1,000, and that all fly-tipping incidents were investigated and pursued.

In response Councillor D Jefferay, Chair of Environment and Communities Committee, explained that the Council had recently improved reporting systems for members of the public to provide more information in relation to whether there might be information within the waste, or if they had witnessed the incident or had evidence that might lead to further investigation of the fly tip. This ensured that more cases were sent directly to the community enforcement team for investigation ahead of any clearance. He reported that from September 2024 to the present date, there had been 34 Fixed Penalty Notice's issued for breaches of waste legislation, i.e. Fly tipping, Domestic Waste Duty of Care and Breach of Section 46 waste receptacle notice. Twenty-three of these were paid in full; two had been referred to court for prosecution; four were currently outstanding, though still within payment time; and five had been cancelled. Councillor Jefferay stated that he had recently attended a conference in respect of Waste Crime, organised by the Police and Crime Commissioner. At this conference, actions were placed for more collaborative working between Cheshire East and neighbouring Councils and agencies, such as the Police and the Environment Agency. This would allow lessons learnt to be shared to help improve performance and disrupt organised waste crime - the perpetrators of which did not respect Council boundaries.

46 LEADER'S AND DEPUTY LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader, in summary:

- 1 reported that work continued on devolution with workshops and stakeholder sessions planned for November. Priorities for the Combined Authority would include transport, skills, rural economy, and regeneration, with a £10 million investment fund expected in year one. The first meeting of the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority Shadow Board would be held on 31 October 2025.
- 2 reported that the third Ofsted monitoring visit was currently under way, with the findings expected to be reported on 13 November.
- 3 stated that the Council was awaiting further information from the Government on the Adlington New Town proposals.

- 4 reported the appointment of Councillor Fiona Wilson as Member Champion for Councillor Safety and Councillor David Jefferay as Member Champion for Animal Welfare.
- 5 reported that the second round of consultation on the Local Transport Plan had commenced, which would close on 7 December 2025. He asked Members to promote participation in this consultation.
- 6 highlighted the recruitment campaign video for 'Someone Like You.'
- 7 reported that a commemorative plaque had been unveiled at Sound Common, Nantwich, to honour the British Romanichal families who once called the site home.
- 8 encouraged staff and Members to get flu and COVID vaccinations.

The Deputy Leader, in summary:

- 1 reported that work was underway on the transition to the Leader and Cabinet system of governance, with recommendations being brought to the December full Council meeting and the possibility of an additional meeting of full Council next spring.
- 2 reported that the Annual Household Canvass had taken place and resulted in 325,000 electors registered.
- 3 reported that the Registration Service had been awarded "Best in the Northwest" for marriage ceremonies.
- 4 reported changes in the Democratic Services team, with Katie Small now coordinating Council meetings and Chris Lunn joining the team.
- 5 reported in relation to the Council's finances that an overspend of £3.1 million had been identified with work being undertaken to reduce this ongoing, and the budget gap of £33 million being addressed. A Budget prioritisation survey had been launched with a strong initial response.
- 6 reported that two community assemblies were being planned in Macclesfield and Crewe with the aim to increase transparency and residents' involvement in budget decisions.
- 7 reported that the Council supported a dedicated BBC News page for Cheshire and Warrington devolution.
- 8 reported that major repairs were being carried out to the Mill House Bridge in Adlington following damage caused by a flash flood. Work would commence on the B5470 Macclesfield Road in Rainow later

in the month to repair the collapsed road with £1.6 million being invested in the embankment and road restoration.

- 9 reported that the Council had been awarded the Platinum Accreditation from the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance for work in tackling domestic abuse.

47 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FINANCE SUB COMMITTEE: FIRST FINANCIAL REVIEW OF 2025/26 - SUPPLEMENTARY REVENUE ESTIMATES REQUESTS AND SUPPLEMENTARY CAPITAL ESTIMATE REQUESTS

Consideration was given to the recommendations from the Finance Sub Committee held on 10 September 2025 and the Corporate Policy Committee held on 2 October 2025 in relation to the approval of supplementary revenue estimates and supplementary capital estimates.

RESOLVED: That Council

- 1 approve the Supplementary Revenue Estimate request for Allocation of Additional Grant Funding over £1,000,00 as set out in Annex 1, Section 3, Table 1 to the report, as follows:

Extended Producer Responsibility Grant	£2,591,000
Enterprise Cheshire & Warrington: Skills Bootcamp	£1,371,000

- 2 approve the Supplementary Capital Estimate request for Allocation of Additional Grant Funding over £1,000,000 as per Annex 1, Section 4, updated Table 5 to the report, as follows:

King George Playing Fields	£1,522,000
BSIP Phase 4 grant distributed over 4 projects:	
Public Transport Infrastructure	£ 700,000
Bus Priority	£ 623,000
Real Time Passenger Information	£ 750,000
Macclesfield Bus Station	£ 50,000

48 POLITICAL REPRESENTATION ON THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES

Consideration was given to a report relating to the political representation on the Council's committees. The report addressed the changes in political group membership since the last report to Council in May 2025.

RESOLVED:

That the political group and other representation, as set out in the Appendix to the report, and the methods, calculations and conventions used in determining this, as outlined in the report, be adopted and the allocation of places to Committees be approved.

49 **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE 2024-25**

Cllr Michael Beanland, Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee, presented the Audit and Governance Committee Annual Report 2024/25 to Council.

The report provided details of the work undertaken by the Committee and the assurances received during that year.

The Annual Report was received and noted.

50 **NOTICES OF MOTION**

Consideration was given to the following Notices of Motion which had been submitted in accordance with the Council's Procedural Rules.

Historical Rural Signage

Proposed by Councillor R Chadwick and Seconded by Councillor R Bailey

That Council resolves:

1. To acknowledge the historic importance of Cheshire East's rural signage and commit to safeguarding this aspect of our cultural heritage.
2. To request that the Highways and Transport Committee, in consultation with heritage and conservation officers, conduct an audit of surviving rural signage assets within the Borough.
3. To explore opportunities to adopt a preservation and maintenance programme for historic signs, working alongside volunteer groups, heritage organisations, and parish councils.
4. To ensure that, wherever possible, historic signage is restored, maintained in situ, or—if removal is unavoidable—recorded and, where appropriate, relocated to local museums or heritage centres.
5. To promote greater public awareness of rural signage heritage, encouraging residents to report damaged or at-risk signs.

RESOLVED:

That the Motion be referred to the appropriate committee.

51 **QUESTIONS**

Cllr M Brooks noted that Cheshire East was in the top 10 areas for the number of puppy breeding farms and stated that there were concerns nationally around the practice of some of those establishments. She asked whether the Council was confident that sufficient resources were allocated to ensure that licensing conditions were being robustly monitored and strictly enforced.

In response Cllr D Jefferay, Chair of Environment and Communities Committee, stated that Cllr Brooks was referring to a 2023 report and at that time the Council was reported as having 36 licensed dog breeding businesses. As of today, there were 26 licensed premises. Two larger sites had closed in the past two years, both as the result of business decisions. The Council's enforcement action was underpinned by the corporate and service specific enforcement policies and the Animal Welfare Licensing Policy.

Cllr R Chadwick asked that given the mobile waste recycling centres serving Bollington, Poynton and Middlewich were currently providing only an emergency service, covering a combined population of around 39,000 residents, could the administration confirm what the long-term plan was for restoring full recycling provisions in those communities, and if they would commit to reinstating permanent, fully functional recycling centres, or should residents now assume that those temporary arrangements were the new normal under the Council's financial strategy.

In response Cllr D Jefferay, Chair of Environment and Communities Committee stated that a briefing was being arranged for members of the Environment and Communities Committee regarding the Mobile Household Waste Recycling Centre. The briefing would also be extended to all other Members who expressed an interest in attending.

Cllr S Bennett-Wake stated that residents from Bollington and Macclesfield and Crewe were delighted with the new Sunday bus service enabling them to meet with family and friends. She asked the Chair of Highways and Transport Committee if, with the power and finances that come with devolution, was it envisaged that there would be easier access for residents with disabilities and also could an Under 16 travel card, similar to the IGO card in Greater Manchester, be introduced. She stated that in Macclesfield it cost children more to travel to school than it did for adults who could buy a weekly £12 Silk town bus ticket.

Cllr M Goldsmith, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, responded by stating that Mayoral combined authorities, otherwise known as strategic authorities, had various powers in relation to local transport, including bus services, fares, and ticketing across their region. Although, the three constituent authorities had agreed to set up a Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority, it was not anticipated to be established until 2026 and Mayoral Elections planned for 2027. It would be up to the Combined Authority itself to consider future bus services and ticketing as part of a strategic planning process and therefore, the Council was not able to determine at this stage, what future operations or ticketing regimes would be delivered through the combined authority, once established.

Cllr M Beanland asked if the Council supported the New Towns Taskforce Adlington application, who knew details of what and when regarding the Expression of Interest, and who decided it should be embargoed following the email to officers. He further asked if the Combined Mayoral Authority

would be ruling on this application and who residents should raise objections with.

In a separate question Cllr Beanland referred to the closure of Westfields and asked if the current cost of closure and expected future costs of the Westfields conversion be provided, along with the costs of refurbishing the Macclesfield and Crewe rooms.

Cllr M Gorman, Chair of Economy and Growth Committee, undertook to provide a written response.

Cllr L Braithwaite referred to the proposed sale of the Grosvenor Centre in Macclesfield and asked if there would be any impact on the operation of the council-owned refurbished Indoor Market, toilet facilities, and the multi-story car park?

In response Cllr M Gorman, Chair of Economy and Growth Committee, confirmed that the Council was near to completing a refurbishment project at the Market Hall, designed to attract more traders, reduce vacancies, and improve the offer for its residents. He stated that the Council would work with the new owners, once identified, and it was hoped more traders would come as works were completed. The sale of the Centre was by no means necessarily bad news. The Centre was being sold as a going concern with many existing leases in place and therefore there was unlikely to be any immediate impact as far as the public was concerned or on the Indoor Market. A new owner could bring a fresh outlook and creativity in terms of the tenant mix to fill vacant units. It was understood that potential purchasers had been invited to place bids by 5th November; bids would then be considered, and best and final offers may be called. Council officers would be ready to reach out to the new owners to understand their aspirations for the Centre and would of course want to work to support them in bringing forward any plans, to benefit the town centre offer for residents as well as to protect the value of the Council's adjoining asset.

Cllr L Smetham noted that there were several planning applications approved with certain amounts of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) approved at sites elsewhere, due to the planning site being unable to accommodate land for BNG provision. She raised a query in respect of a site at Adlington, which was currently in the news for up to 20,000 new homes, but had previously been designated / agreed to provide this BNG, and asked how the BNG would be achieved instead.

In response Cllr D Jefferay, Chair of Environment and Communities Committee, stated that there were three legal agreements which specifically identify sites for BNG on areas of land which was part of the Adlington Estate. The current landowners were aware that these obligations run with the land for 30 years so would need to be safeguarded in the future. There were other sites available for BNG.

Cllr J Clowes stated that in 2019 the conservative group prepared MTFS Proposals for Adult Social Care Assets including Bexton Court, Stanley House, and Mountview. Those proposals provided alternative supported living options for LD Adults and Young People with additional needs entering Adult Social Care. The proposals were fully costed with oversight by the S151 Team, approved by Cabinet, and approved for inclusion in the MTFS by full Council in February 2020. These plans offered a return on expenditure within five years and associated social care saving thereafter. Even after Covid and inflated construction costs, the corresponding rise in that area of care costs had meant that those proposals were still valid in principle. However, despite repeated requests for information about the future of those assets and bearing in mind the importance of Council assets to our Transformation Planning, no definitive information had yet been provided. Cllr Clowes asked how much Cheshire East Council had spent on maintenance and security costs for each of those empty assets since the MTFS decision was made in February 2020, and when would Councillors be provided with a definitive timeline for the effective disposal or re-use of these assets and for the information to be presented to members of the Adults and Health Committee at the earliest opportunity.

Cllr J Rhodes, Chair of Adults and Health Committee, undertook to provide a written response.

Cllr M Muldoon referred to the letter sent by the Leader and Deputy Leader in response to the Notice of Motion on Housing Targets to Rt Hon Angela Rayner on 29 August 2025. He asked the Leader to explain the apparent redirection away from the Motion that was agreed in July, and why did they not see fit to carefully and accurately reflect not only the Motions put forward by Cllrs Gardiner supported by Cllr Edgar and Cllr Browne, but also the further amendment put forward themselves regarding affordable housing. He asked that a more clear and consistently accurate letter be sent to Steve Reed MP, the new Secretary of State, making it perfectly clear that a period of grace, rather than a ramping up, was what was requested, and the wording of the letter be accurately and carefully in line with the Motions and amendment previously agreed by the Council in July 2025. He also requested that a copy of the letter be sent to local Members of Parliament.

In response Cllr N Mannion, Leader of the Council, said that the letter clearly stated that an uplift of 166% was incredibly challenging to the Council and called upon the Government to meet and agree tangible and realistic housing targets and provide assurances they would work with the Council on all the issues that had been pointed out. The issue was not that the Council had not got allocated sites, it was that some of those sites were outside the current local plan, and therefore greater control was needed on how and when they were presented to the Council and came forward as the Council prepared the new local plan, with assurances from the Government on their commitment to deliver the infrastructure that was required to meet the targets the Council would negotiate with them in dialogue. This would include what would be considered as green belt sites

that currently sat outside the local plan and may come forward if the Council could demonstrate land supply sufficiently and quickly enough – hence the purpose of the letter, and the ask for a leading in period to the Council's Local Plan. Cllr Mannion stated that affordable housing was just one element of the wider failures in the entire housing market system which the administration would seek to address – some of which would be social, others would be starter homes, and specialist housing for the eldest and youngest. Affordable housing alone was highlighting just one small aspect, where the council's strategies would be inclusive. Additionally, the Council had requested a named senior civil servant through whom it would work with. All of which would go much further than what was proposed at Full Council in July through the original motion.

Cllr S Corcoran asked if the Leader of the Council had written to the new Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Steve Reed, to ask for a grace period for Cheshire East before new housing targets applied and would the Leader also write asking that any new town in Cheshire East should, at least in part, count towards Cheshire East's housing land supply.

In response Cllr N Mannion, Leader of the Council, stated that the Council did not have clarification if the Adlington new town proposal would contribute towards Cheshire East's housing land supply targets, but it was seeking clarification, and a response would be shared with Members.

Cllr R Bailey stated that she had concerns regarding delays in the development of the Cheshire Road Safety Strategy due to the consideration of devolution and sought assurance that the Council would actively contribute to the delivery of the updated strategy. She stressed the importance of progressing a modern and responsive road safety strategy, particularly considering changing demographics and increased road usage within the borough.

Cllr M Goldsmith, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, undertook to provide a written response.

Cllr J Bratherton raised concerns regarding the lack of effective inter-agency cooperation and delays in enforcement in animal welfare cases and recent incidents in Crewe where animals were left in distressing conditions due to slow or absent responses from relevant authorities, including the police, housing associations, and the RSPCA. She asked Cllr D Jefferay, Animal Welfare Champion, what actions would be taken to strength enforcement, what steps would be taken to speed up the removal of an animal from an abusive situation and how would he fight for those who had no voice.

Cllr D Jefferay, Animal Welfare Champion, expressed a desire to establish collaborative links with external organisations not currently engaged with the Council, in order to expedite action on shared concerns. He referred to a recent discussion with a representative from Cheshire Police,

specialising in wildlife crime, which had highlighted opportunities for increased engagement. He emphasised the importance of broadening engagement beyond commercial animal welfare issues, recognising that the Council's remit was limited to welfare in commercial settings and does not extend to domestic cases and, despite these limitations, committed to encouraging public involvement by inviting residents to act as the Council's "eyes and ears" and welcomed direct contact from individuals with concerns outside the Council's formal responsibilities, pledging to assist where possible.

Cllr S Gardiner asked under what authority, did the Council as a corporate body, respond to consultations from government departments or affiliated organisations such as QWANGOs and specifically asked whether such responses were issued under the authority of the full Council, an appropriate committee of the council, or under officer delegation. Cllr Gardiner referred to a letter sent in June to the New Towns Board, which expressed views on the generic issue of new towns and additional development in northern England and expressed concern that this correspondence may have been issued without prior discussion or approval by the Council or its relevant committee.

Cllr N Mannion, Leader of the Council, acknowledged concerns regarding correspondence and clarified that the pathway the correspondence was allocated to was determined by the nature of the inquiry and may involve multiple factors, including local authority responsibilities and political considerations. Cllr Mannion confirmed that a substantive reply would be provided following consultation with the Monitoring Officer and the Chief Executive.

52 REPORTING OF URGENT DECISION TAKEN BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Council received a schedule of urgent decisions taken by the Chief Executive on behalf of the Council, which was reported for information in accordance with the Council procedure rules.

RESOLVED:

That the schedule of urgent decisions be noted.

The meeting commenced at 11.00 am and concluded at 12.58 pm

Councillor D Edwardes (Mayor/Chair)