

Summary of how Cheshire East Council operates and makes decisions

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Our Constitution

This document is our Constitution which sets out the basic rules of how the Council operates and makes its decisions.

The Council is responsible for an area of [] square miles, for [] people and a budget of []. We make thousands of decisions each year affecting local people and have many powers which come from legislation. As a result, our decision-making and the structure of the Council are complex.

This Summary provides a brief guide to how we make our decisions and how we operate. Much more detail is contained in the rest of this Constitution and you should make contact with [] by e-mail [Hyperlink] or by telephone [] if you need any more information.

The Council is committed to operating in a way which is efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. If you have comments or suggestions, please make contact with [].

When the Council was established

The Council started its life on 1st April 2009, when the former Cheshire County Council, Macclesfield Borough Council, Congleton Borough Council and Crewe and Nantwich Borough Councils were abolished.

On that date, the Council took responsibility for all local authority functions which had previously been dealt with by the County and district councils.

Our Councillors

We have 81 elected Councillors who are Members of the Council until their terms of office end in 2011. Each Councillor represents the residents in their Ward, of which there are 27 in the Council's area.

The names, addresses and contact details of our Councillors can be found here [hyperlink].

Our Councillors are directly accountable to citizens for the running of the Council. Whilst they have a very broad role, they have a duty to represent the interests of all constituents in their ward. They may also represent the Council on external bodies at national, regional and local levels.

Councillors work closely with employed officers of the Council to develop policies and do other work so that the Council can deliver its vision, and to ensure that services are delivered to residents, businesses and visitors.

Councillors are expected to observe a Code of Conduct and Protocol on Member/officer Relations which are contained in this Constitution (see Part 5). We have a Standards Committee which is responsible for maintaining high standards of conduct amongst Councillors. The Committee also has responsibility for Town and Parish Councillors.

The Council and its decision-making structure

All of our Councillors meet together a number of times each year as the Full Council. The Council has appointed a Cabinet and a number of committees to make decisions. The Council's programme of meetings can be viewed [here](#) [hyperlink].

Full Council appoints a Chairman and Vice Chairman [[hyperlink to Chairman and Vice Chairman's details](#)] of the Council and the Leader of the Council [[hyperlink to Leader's details](#)].

[Council-led model] Council appoints 9 other Members who, along with the Leader, form the Cabinet.

[Strong Leader model] The Leader appoints 9 other Members who, together with him, form the Cabinet. The Cabinet can appoint committees, working groups or panels to carry out work on its behalf.

The following Councillors are Cabinet Members and have responsibilities in the following areas:

[Insert hyperlinks to Members and list their Portfolios].

The law requires many of the Council's decisions to be made by the Council's Cabinet, Cabinet committees, or officers acting on its behalf. Other decisions, such as planning and licensing decisions, have to be made by committees of the Council, or officers acting on their behalf. Part 3 of this Constitution explains where the responsibility for decision-making rests.

We have [] Overview and Scrutiny Committees which hold the Cabinet to account. These Committees report direct to the Council.

The Council's decision-making structure is set out in Table 1 below.

Your rights

The Council values its residents, businesses and visitors. Everyone has an equal right to access Council services and to enjoy high standards of service in all that the Council does.

Members of the public have rights to:

- Vote at local elections;
- Attend the Council's meetings except where confidential or exempt information is being discussed;
- Contact local Councillors about any matters of concern;
- Contribute to investigations by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees;
- Complain where there are problems with Council services;
- Complain to the Commission for Local Administration (the Ombudsman) if the Council has not followed its procedures properly;
- Complain to the Council if they believe there is evidence that a Councillor has not followed the Council's Code of Member Conduct;
- Inspect the Council's accounts.

You also have rights to view public reports to the Council, the Cabinet and the Council's Committees. These rights are set out in more detail in the Access to Information Rules in Part 4 of this Constitution.

The Council's staff

Councillors are supported by the Council's employees (officers) who provide advice, implement decisions and manage the day to day delivery of services.

Some officers have specific duties to ensure that the Council acts within the law, and uses resources wisely [[insert hyperlink to Monitoring Officer and S151 Officer contact details](#)].

The Council has a [[Management Team](#)] of the Chief Executive and [[Directors](#)]. The [[Management Team](#)] provides strategic advice to the Council and co-ordinates the Council's activities to ensure high standards of performance. [[Hyperlink to Management Team contacts](#)].

[[Heads of Service](#)] report to the [[Management Team](#)]. [[Hyperlink to Heads of Service contacts](#)].

The Council's management structure is set out in Table 2 below.

What's in the Constitution?

Part 2 of the Constitution contains [[\]](#) Sections. Each Section provides more information about the way the Council works and its values. The rights

of Councillors and members of the public are also explained, as are the Council's decision-making arrangements.

Table 1

[Insert Council structure chart]

Table 2

[Insert Management Structure chart]