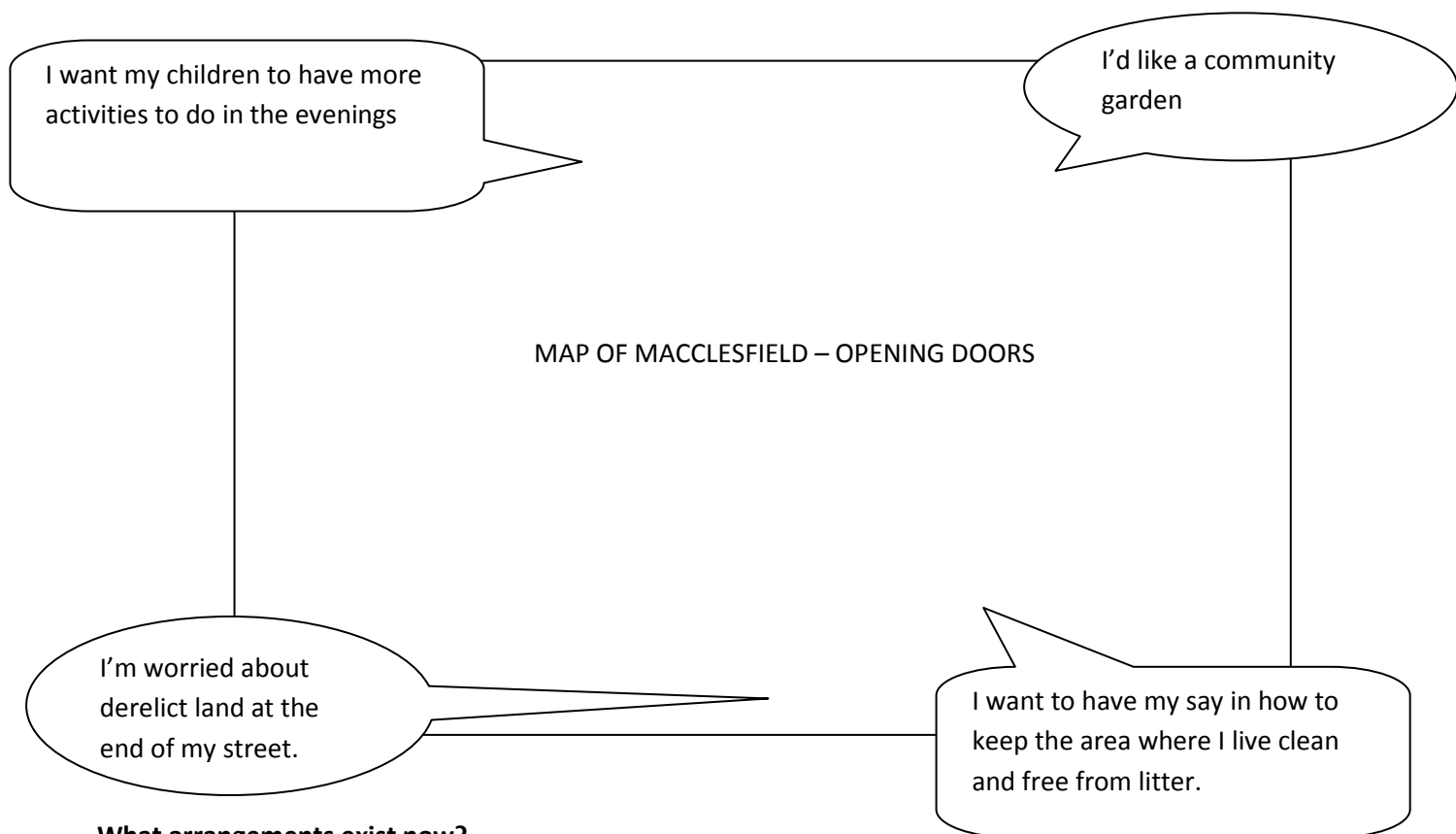


Macclesfield Community Governance Review

Cheshire East Council has committed to a programme of transferring services and assets to a more local level that best reflects local needs and aspirations. Where one exists, those services may well be passed down to Parish/Town Councils as they are, arguably, the most local form of community governance. Because Macclesfield does not have a Parish/Town Council, Cheshire East Council feels that it is appropriate to consider the governance arrangements for Macclesfield and put in place an arrangement that best reflects the needs of local people.

This leaflet explains the different options for local governance in Macclesfield.



What arrangements exist now?

At the moment, Macclesfield has a Local Area Partnership, more recently a Local Service Delivery Committee and a Charter Trustees arrangement (all explained overleaf).

How will I know what is best for Macclesfield?

Whatever option is chosen as the best form of governance for Macclesfield, there will already be an associated cost for delivering local services calculated as part of your Council Tax. If there is no change to the current arrangements, there is still likely to be the introduction of a Special Expense Levy to pay for services that are mainly for Macclesfield residents and you will continue to pay for the Charter Trustees – both totalling to approximately £8 per household per year.

If a Parish/Town Council were to be created these charges would be replaced by a precept raised by the new council and whilst broadly equivalent to the current arrangement, the exact amount would depend on which

services are delivered. If any of the other options are implemented, the special expense would still need to be raised to pay for the delivery of local services, as would the payment to the Charter Trustees.

Because all options would have an associated cost, this review will focus on three key criteria to decide which governance option (explained below) will best deliver the following outcomes:

- improved community engagement
- better local democracy
- more effective and convenient delivery of local services

We are consulting local people over the next few months and will take account of all views and opinions that we receive.

What are the options?

Local Area Partnership (LAP)

The Local Area Partnership in Macclesfield is one of seven across Cheshire East, bringing together a wide range of people from the legal, private, voluntary and community sectors to focus collective effort on what really matters in the local area. Their key role is to improve services, ensure local people influence decision making, and to actively engage and empower communities. They focus on local issues that cannot be tackled by one organisation alone, bringing together all those with an ability to make a difference. Area assemblies are held to engage local partners and residents, and local people are involved in a number of working groups.

The facts: an area management group made up of local partners manages the business of the LAP; they are not set up to represent local communities to the principal council (Cheshire East Council) on things like planning applications and highways, although the Council must consult with the area management group on these issues; they help to influence service delivery but do not have the power to deliver local services; they can't raise money to deliver local services.

This LAP arrangement will continue to function alongside any governance arrangement in Macclesfield, and is included here for information of how local communities are supported by Cheshire East Council to engage with local service providers.

1. No change – continue with Local Service Delivery Committee and Charter Trustees

Local Service Delivery Committee

Cheshire East Council has set up a local service delivery area committee for this area of Macclesfield (because there is no Parish/Town Council) to ensure that the provision of services is fair and consistent across the borough. So that this area has the same opportunities and choices as other areas with Parish/Town Councils regarding the provision of services, this committee will likely introduce a Special Expenses Levy (charge) on the residents of Macclesfield to deliver these services. The current value of these services is estimated to be approximately £6.40. These committees are often considered as a foundation towards the creation of a Parish/Town Council.

The facts: it is run by twelve Cheshire East councillors (not necessarily locally elected councillors); they do not specifically represent the interests of the local community to the principal council (Cheshire East Council) on things like planning applications and highways; they help in the delivery of services that can improve the local area (e.g., public toilets, allotments, Christmas lighting, floral arrangements); they can raise money (a special expense part of your council tax) to deliver those services. The Local Service Delivery Committee is an example of an Area committee.

Charter Trustees

Charter Trustees preserve the historic identity of an area by carrying out ceremonial functions (e.g., the Mayor) in areas that do not have a Parish/Town Council. If a Parish/Town Council was created in this area, the Charter Trustees would be replaced by that Council who would then carry out its functions, the cost of which would be included in the new charge for the Parish/Town Council. However, if another option (other than a Parish/Town Council) was selected, the Charter Trustees could continue to exist alongside it.

The facts: they are run by Cheshire East (Macclesfield wards) councillors; they are not set up to represent the interests of the local community to the principal council (Cheshire East Council) on things like planning

applications and highways; they do not have the power to deliver local services; they can raise money to cover the costs of their ceremonial functions - you currently pay £1.51 (Council Tax band D) to the Charter Trustees.

2. Parish/Town council(s) (you may see these words used separately but they mean the same thing)

Parish/Town councils are arguably the most local form of government and can represent areas ranging from around 100 people (e.g. Barthomley, which is a small local Parish Council of 180 people), to around 36,500 people (e.g. the newly formed Crewe Parish Council). The general rule is that a Parish/Town Council is based on an area which reflects community identity and interests, and is of a size that makes sense as an administrative unit of local government.

The facts: they are run by local councillors that are specially elected (at least five councillors); they represent your local community's interests to the principal council (Cheshire East Council) on things like planning applications and highways; they deliver services that can improve the local area (e.g., public toilets, allotments, Christmas lighting, floral arrangements); they can raise money (part of your council tax called a precept) to deliver those services.

The following options all generally function over a smaller area than local service delivery committees, Parish/Town Councils or area committees, and as such a number of each of the following options would need to be set up to represent the whole area of Macclesfield.

3. Neighbourhood management

There are many different views of what would be considered as a neighbourhood including a mix of homes around a local shopping centre, a shared open space, leisure facilities, a collection of roads or an estate. To account for this variety, there could be lots of different neighbourhood management groups covering this area of Macclesfield. Neighbourhood management programmes create the opportunity for residents to work on a voluntary basis to improve services at the neighbourhood level. They aim to improve 'quality of life' through implementation of (rather than making decisions on) better management of the local environment including safety, housing, and encouraging employment opportunities. They need support from all local partners, and tend to cover smaller populations than area committees or Parish/Town Councils.

The Facts: they are run by local volunteers and need the full commitment of local service providers; they are not set up to represent the interests of the local community to the principal council (Cheshire East Council) on things like planning applications and highways; they can influence local services but do not have the power to deliver local services; they can't raise money to deliver local services.

4. Community forums

Community forums may be set up by the principal council (e.g., Cheshire East Council), or created by local residents to act as a way of giving communities a say on principal council matters or local issues. Sometimes forums are set up to comment on a specific project that will impact upon the local area, and so may be time-limited. They increase participation and consultation, aiming to influence decision making, rather than having powers to implement services. They vary in size, purpose and impact, but membership usually consists of people working or living in a specific area. Some forums also include local ward councillors, and representatives from Cheshire East Council would be able to attend meetings.

The Facts: they are run by local volunteers or council officers; they can represent the interests of the local community to the principal council (Cheshire East Council) on things like planning applications and highways;

they can influence local services but do not have the power to deliver local services; they can't raise money to deliver local services.

5. Residents' and tenants' associations

Residents' and tenants' associations enable local people to participate when local issues affect their specific neighbourhood or housing estate, e.g., the local environment, crime, anti-social behaviour matters, or housing management. They can be set up by any group of people living in the same area, and they choose themselves who can be members, how they will be represented and what they want to achieve. In the case of tenants' and residents' associations on estates, they may be established with direct support from the Registered Social Landlord, as a way to communicate with the tenants and residents on its estates. To engage effectively with other organisations, residents' and tenants' associations must be able to show that they are accountable and represent the views of the whole community, rather than narrow self interests of just a few local people.

The Facts: they are run by local volunteers; they are not set up to represent the interests of the local community to the principal council (Cheshire East Council) on things like planning applications and highways; they can influence local services but do not have the power to deliver local services; they can't raise money to deliver local services.

6. Community associations/community development trust

Community associations/developments trusts offer a way for local residents and local community-based organisations in a defined neighbourhood to work together for the benefit of that neighbourhood. They can use a model constitution registered with the Charity Commission. The principal council (Cheshire East Council) may also be represented on the association's committee. They usually manage a community centre as a base for their activities. Membership is open to everyone resident in the area.

The Facts: they are run by local volunteers; they are not set up to represent the interests of the local community to the principal council (Cheshire East Council) on things like planning applications and highways; they can run some local services; they can't raise money to deliver local services.

If you are unsure which option you think is the best for Macclesfield – use our preferred option guide that accompanies this leaflet or visit us online at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk

We would like to hear your views and opinions on this governance review for Macclesfield.
If you would like to write to us with your views, all correspondence should be sent to this address:

Registration Services and Business Manager,
Democratic Services,
Cheshire East Council,
Westfields,
Sandbach,
Cheshire CW11 1HZ.

Alternatively, please email us your views at communitygovernance@cheshireeast.gov.uk