

Cheshire East Council

Corporate Plan 2009 - 2010



*Improving services
together*

www.cheshireeast.gov.uk

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Welcome to Cheshire East Council

Cheshire East is a new Council; it will build on the best of its four constituent predecessor Authorities, but will establish its own distinctive characteristics, priorities and ways of working. The creation of the new unitary council gives a real opportunity to remove many of the barriers that have in the past hindered the delivery of high quality, joined up public services. We will embrace that opportunity with enthusiasm.

This Corporate Plan has been developed as an interim Plan to allow Cheshire East to set the budget for 2009/10.

We have used the wider community priorities, outlined in the draft Cheshire East Sustainable Community Strategy (this can be found at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk), as the starting point and have also taken into account the priorities and objectives of the four local authorities that will come together to form Cheshire East. Those priorities were based on consultation with communities and partners at the time.

By setting out Cheshire East Council's objectives and priorities within this Corporate Plan, individual Departments and Services will be able to develop delivery plans which will enable staff to understand the contributions that they make to improving everyday outcomes for individuals and the wider community.

This Corporate Plan is split into two sections; the first (this publication) sets out Cheshire East's strategic direction for 2009/10, it also sets out our priorities for our first year. The second part (a separate publication) contains targets and performance data and aligns the National Indicator Set (Government targets which the Council has to adopt) against the relevant priority area.

This new Council will listen and consult with the public, partners and stakeholders and then review and refine its objectives and priorities for subsequent years.



Wesley Fitzgerald
Leader



Erika Wenzel
Chief Executive

Our vision is to...

Work together to improve community life

- We will enable all children and young people to fulfil their potential.
- We will improve the wellbeing, health and care of people.
- We will ensure that people in local communities have a greater say about how resources are targeted in their area.
- We will work with others to make all of our communities safer places to live, work and play.
- We will enable people to have a good quality of life irrespective of where they live or their social or economic background.
- We will shape and maintain strong and prosperous neighbourhoods in which our residents are skilled and economically active, where businesses want to invest and where people want to visit.
- We will provide an attractive and sustainable environment which communities can be proud of.



Political Structure

Political Composition

There are 81 Councillors, representing the 27 wards of the new authority. The political composition of Cheshire East is: 59 Conservative Members, 12 Liberal Democrat Members, 6 Labour Members and 4 Independents.

Councillors are directly accountable to citizens for the running of the Council and the overriding duty of Councillors is to the whole community. They are required to agree and follow a code of conduct to ensure high standards in the way they undertake their duties. The Standards Committee trains and advises Councillors on ethical issues.

Meetings of the Council are normally open to the public. Councillors, when they meet as 'the Council' will decide the Council's overall policy framework and prepare the annual budget.

The two main areas of the Council's political structure comprise the Executive and Scrutiny.

The Cabinet

The Council appoints the Executive (to be known as the Cabinet at Cheshire East Council), which comprises of the Leader together with nine other Members. The Cabinet is responsible for most of the day to day decisions about how the Council is run and is required to act within the policy and budgetary framework which has been decided by the Council.

Scrutiny

The Council's scrutiny arrangements ensure that Members of the Council who are not in the Cabinet may be involved in the scrutiny of the Cabinet and Council decisions. The Council has appointed five

Scrutiny and Overview Committees to oversee the Council's scrutiny functions. These Committees, which will also advise the Cabinet on policy development, cover the areas of:

- Children and Families
- Health and Adult Social Care
- Environment and Prosperity
- Sustainable Communities
- Corporate Scrutiny

Other decision-making Bodies

The Council has also appointed the following decision making bodies:

- Standards Committee
- Governance and Constitution Committee
- Staffing Committee
- Planning Committee
- Licensing Committee

We are also developing innovative plans for neighbourhood working which will be finalised by March 2009.

Details of the Calendar of Meetings and copies of meeting papers are available on the Council's Website at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk

Our Values

The overall aim of the authority is to have a positive impact on all sections of the communities that we serve. Cheshire East Council has developed a set of core values and key behaviours to underpin this aim.

Our values mean that we will:

- **Action** - take responsibility for making the right things happen
- **Support** - work and learn together in order to succeed
- **People** - put customer and community needs at the heart of what we do

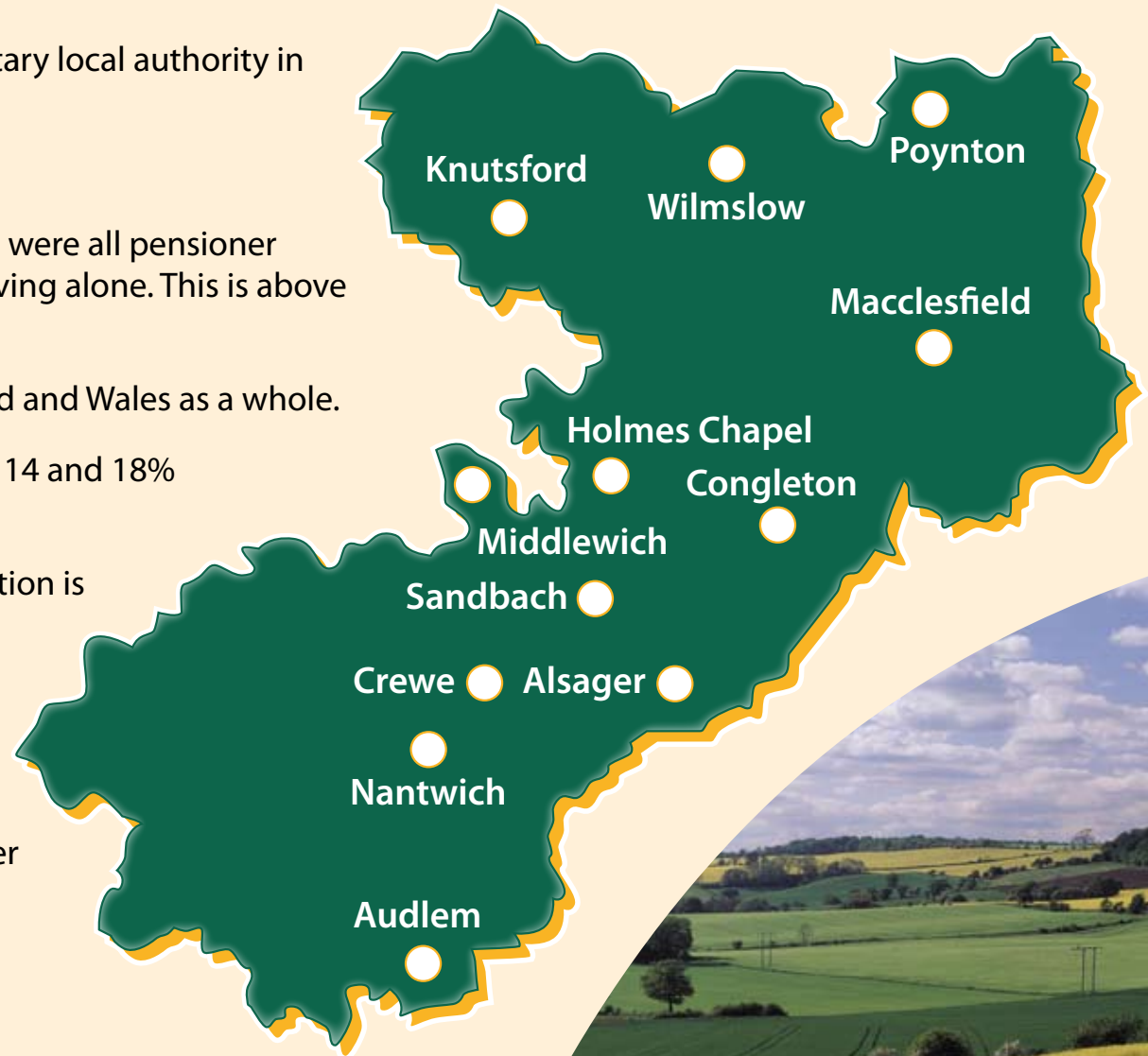
- **Integrity** - be open, honest and fair, expecting the same of others
- **Recognition** - value all views, efforts and achievements
- **Excellence** - strive to improve all that we do

These core values will underpin everything we do by defining how the Council will achieve its **ASPIRATIONS**.



Cheshire East in Context

- Population of 360,700; the third largest unitary local authority in the North West.
- Area of 116,638 hectares.
- 147,144 households (in 2001), 25% of these were all pensioner households in which 57% of people were living alone. This is above the national average.
- Slightly older age structure than for England and Wales as a whole.
- 5% of population is under 5, 12% aged 5 to 14 and 18% aged 65 or over.
- Economic output (GVA) per head of population is above the national average.
- High performing schools, with results above the national average.
- Projected that by 2026 there will be 5% fewer children than in 2006, those 85 or over will double between 2006 and 2026.



The Corporate Plan in the Community Context



Cheshire East's Corporate Plan fits into a strategic planning framework for the whole community, which is influenced by what our local communities want and need and by national factors. The Council supports the local partnership's Sustainable Community Strategy for the whole area and as part of this we have developed a Local Area Agreement with our partners, which includes specific targets for improvement.

This Corporate Plan feeds into these targeted community outcomes but focuses specifically on what we as a Council will do to deliver these and what we will do to improve our services and get better outcomes for local residents, businesses and visitors.

Other local organisations, such as the Police and the Primary Care Trust have their own specific Corporate Plans and in addition many local organisations work together with the Council to develop joint strategies and improvement plans, for example, the Children and Young People's Plan.

Set in this wider context the Corporate Plan keeps a tight focus on what Cheshire East will deliver for local people.

The Challenges

Generally speaking, people in Cheshire East enjoy a good quality of life and a high standard of living but there is another side to this picture with important challenges to be addressed.

Some people in the borough are not doing so well. There are still 14 Lower Level Super Output Areas¹ in Cheshire East that rank within the 20% most deprived in England, according to the Government's measure of deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007); 6% of Cheshire East's population live in these 14 areas. They are concentrated in north and west Crewe, east Congleton, east and south Macclesfield and north Wilmslow. Some individual residents and families across the Borough have complex needs that will create challenges for the Authority.

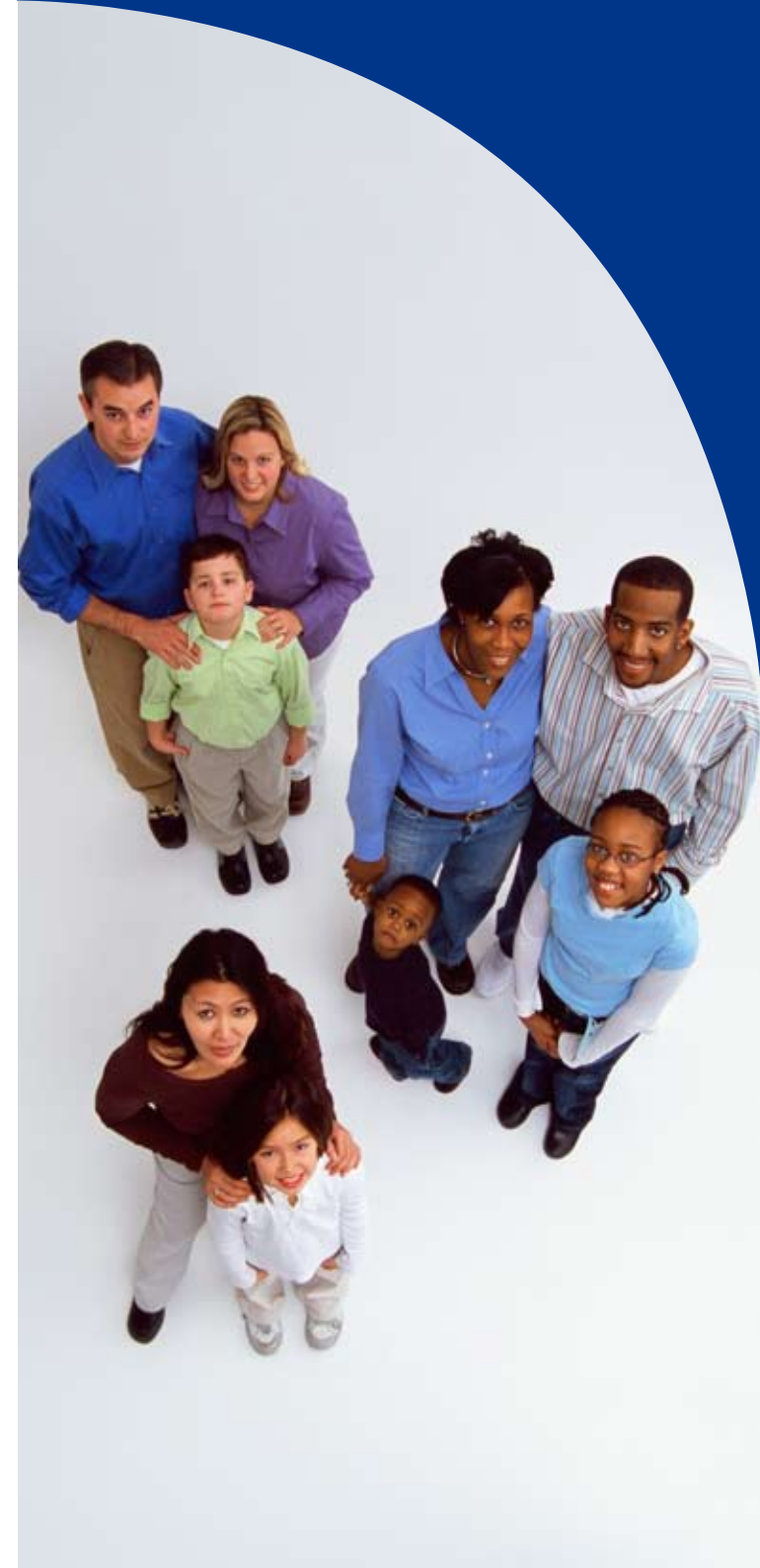
Disadvantage is strongly correlated with health problems, e.g. high mortality rates, higher rates of mental illness, respiratory and circulatory diseases. The Cheshire East Primary Care Trust Strategic Needs Assessment draws attention to risk factors contributing to ill health such as tobacco use, physical inactivity, excessive alcohol consumption, poor diet with secondary factors such as hypertension and being very overweight. Also identified is fuel poverty, most likely to be a problem for older people, people with disabilities, households with dependent children or someone who is unemployed, and for members of black, minority and ethnic groups. Fuel poverty becomes an increasing challenge as the price of fuel increases, as it has over recent years.

Over the coming year Cheshire East will face a number of challenges brought about by the national economic downturn. We have already seen unemployment rates increase, with over 4,000 people across the Borough now claiming Job Seekers Allowance. We are acutely aware that some sectors of the economy, such as financial services, those related to housing and building and the automotive and transport sectors are more vulnerable and face greater challenges than others.

Whilst levels of crime are low across the Borough there is an understandable expectation from the public that they are driven down still further. Fear of crime and of anti social behaviour are very real concerns for many people across Cheshire East.

This Corporate Plan will help the Council address these many and varied challenges.

¹ Super Output Areas (SOAs) are a geography designed area for the collection and publication of small area statistics. SOAs give an improved basis for comparison across the country because the units are more similar in size of population than, for example, electoral wards. They are also intended to be stable, enabling the improved comparison and monitoring of policy over time.



Building for the Future

This is an interim Plan; a new Corporate Plan will be developed in the summer of 2009 once the Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement have been reviewed and agreed. We will develop the Corporate Plan into a three-year rolling plan, spanning the period 2010 - 2013. This will enable us to align the plan with the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The MTFS will span the same period of time as the Corporate Plan, providing the funding for the Council to deliver its stated objectives. The objectives and priorities within the Corporate Plan will drive the MTFS and the two plans will then be developed in tandem.

This Corporate Plan will set out the Council's top priorities, bringing together our responsibilities around the Community Strategy, the Local Area Agreement, key regional and national priorities and our aim to deliver excellent services to the people and communities of Cheshire East.

We will refresh and update the Corporate Plan each year to ensure that new priorities and objectives are incorporated to enable the Council to respond to emerging issues and community views. We will develop, in parallel, a detailed Annual Performance Plan to show how well the Council performed against its key measures of success and how improvements for the future will be prioritised and targeted.

We will engage with staff to raise awareness of the priorities and to gather thoughts on outcomes and actions, including how services will contribute towards the achievement of the priorities. Key stakeholders, including partners, will also be consulted.

Future plans will be strongly based on a detailed understanding of different areas and communities in the Borough and their different needs. Further mapping will take place to show how the Council's priorities take account of local and national priorities to create Strong and Prosperous Communities and fit with the emerging Comprehensive Area Assessment requirements.

Departmental and Service Plans will be expected to detail how the Corporate Plan will be delivered.



Developing our vision... our Objectives and Priorities

The Council's vision is to:

Work together to improve community life

To achieve this vision the Council has set the following objectives and priorities to guide service delivery:

We will enable all children and young people to fulfil their potential by:

- Promoting their safety, care and stability
- Improving their educational attainment

We will improve the wellbeing, health and care of people by:

- Encouraging healthier lifestyles
- Increasing for older and disabled people their choices and their control over the resources made available to them.

We will ensure that people in local communities have a greater say about how resources are targeted in their area by:

- Devolving service provision, decision making and where appropriate budgets to create greater local choice

We will work with others to make all of our communities safer places to live, work and play by:

- Reducing crime and the fear of crime by targeting anti-social behaviour and drug and alcohol abuse
- Improving both traffic flow and road safety

We will enable people to have a good quality of life irrespective of where they live or their social or economic background by:

- Improving service provision to rural areas
- Facilitating appropriate transport for the public and service users

We will shape and maintain strong and prosperous neighbourhoods in which our residents are skilled and economically active, where businesses want to invest and where people want to visit by:

- Supporting the local economy and tourism to increase prosperity
- Improving roads and highways
- Where practical reducing the impact of the recession on both businesses and individuals

We will provide an attractive and sustainable environment which communities can be proud of by:

- Reinforcing the distinctive characteristics of our towns, villages and rural areas.
- Managing waste
- Tackling climate change

Building a New Council

Cheshire East is a brand new Council and it is essential that it "hits the ground running" and continues to provide services that residents and communities have been used to. In doing so it must be responsive to changing needs and increasing demands, with a view to improving value for money. This will be a priority for the Council.

When brought together the vision, objectives and priorities constitute the Council's Corporate Plan.

Children and Young People

The prospects for children and young people in Cheshire East are good; the majority enjoy a good quality of life and academic attainment continues to be higher than the national average. However, there are some children and young people for whom the future is less bright. Therefore, it is our intention to deliver education and learning, youth services and assessment, care, support and protection for all children and young people, regardless of who they are or where they live.

Our services will be integrated with other public sector agencies, through the Children's Trust, we will work to tackle issues such as child poverty, teenage pregnancies, obesity and children exposed to domestic abuse. We will also ensure that children in care are given the best possible life chances and ensure that the individual needs of vulnerable children and their families are assessed and acted upon to enable all people to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being.

The Council's objectives and priorities for Children and Young People are that:

We will enable all children and young people to fulfil their potential by:

- Promoting their safety, care and stability
- Improving their educational attainment

These will contribute to the Cheshire East Sustainable Community Strategy objectives of:

- Addressing the priority services for children and young people.
- Tackling the adverse impact of alcohol on children and young people.

We will measure our success against key indicators in the National Indicators Set - please refer to the Cheshire East Council Annual Performance Plan for detailed information on all Performance Indicators.



Adult Health and Well-being

People in Cheshire East, in general terms, have a good quality of life and enjoy where they live, as evidenced by the 2008 Community Survey. Similarly, the majority of people describe their health as good and smoking rates and life expectancy are also better than the national average. Despite this, however, there are a number of challenges for the Council and our partners in maintaining a high level of adult health and well-being across all communities. For example, there are important differences between current male life expectancy between local towns, ranging from 75.4 years in Middleswich to 80.7 years in Poynton. Similar differences can also be seen in levels of alcohol consumption which is a key area of focus, particularly in relation to criminal incidents.

In addition, recent figures show that the number of people aged over 85 will double between 2006 and 2026, increasing the demands for support for vulnerable people. These trends will therefore not only put pressure on the caring services but will also impact on the labour market. It is vital, therefore, to focus our work on increasing independence, reducing hospital and institutional care, improving housing for older people, tackling fuel poverty and empowering all people to have a greater influence on decisions that affect them.

The Council's objectives and priorities for Adult Health and Well-being are that:

We will improve the wellbeing, health and care of people by:

- Encouraging healthier lifestyles
- Increasing for older and disabled people their choices and their control over the resources made available to them.

These will contribute to the Cheshire East Sustainable Community Strategy objectives of:

- Addressing the key issues surrounding our ageing population
- Tackling the adverse impact of alcohol on adults and older people

We will measure our success against key indicators in the National Indicators Set - please refer to the Cheshire East Council Annual Performance Plan for detailed information on all Performance Indicators.





Stronger Communities

We want to give local people and local communities more influence and power to improve their lives and create stronger communities by strengthening the relationships between ourselves, our partners and local people. We also want to promote and reinforce community cohesion through local leadership, greater resident participation in decisions and an enhanced role for community groups. It is therefore important to engage all citizens, particularly those who are hardest to reach, in influencing the decisions that will affect them and provide more opportunity to get directly involved in managing and shaping how local services are delivered.

Through closer partnership working and a fuller understanding of our communities needs and aspirations we want to build strong, confident and prosperous communities where people of different backgrounds get on well and build a positive future together.

The Council's objectives and priorities for Stronger Communities are that:

We will ensure that people in local communities have a greater say about how resources are targeted in their area by

- Devolving service provision, decision making and where appropriate budgets to create greater local choice

These will contribute to the Cheshire East Sustainable Community Strategy objectives of:

- Reducing inequalities between the most disadvantaged and successful areas of Cheshire East (also a priority within the theme of Tackling exclusion and promoting equality)

We will measure our success against key indicators in the National Indicators Set - please refer to the Cheshire East Council Annual Performance Plan for detailed information on all Performance Indicators.

Safer Communities

Cheshire East is a relatively safe place to live with recorded crime levels well below the national average. However, it is still a top concern for our residents, which is why we want to work closely with the Police, Fire and other partners in reducing anti-social behaviour, arson, drunk and rowdy behaviour and the number of young offenders.

We will also focus effort on reducing re-offending as a relatively small number of repeat offenders are responsible for a significant proportion of the crimes committed. This is also closely linked to the work of Cheshire's Drugs and Alcohol Action Team in reducing drug related crime. In addition, we want to increase the number of criminal justice outcomes for offenders and reduce the incidence of domestic abuse.

It is vital to ensure that there is a continued reduction on the number of killed and seriously injured children and adults on our roads and we will target those roads with particularly high incidence. In doing this, we also want to increase public awareness and educate people about the contributing factors that cause road traffic collisions.

The Council's objectives and priorities for Safer Communities are that:

We will work with others to make all of our communities safer places to live, work and play by:

- Reducing crime and the fear of crime by targeting anti-social behaviour and drug and alcohol abuse
- Improving both traffic flow and road safety

These will contribute to the Cheshire East Sustainable Community Strategy objectives of:

- Reducing anti-social behaviour, arson and criminal damage
 - Reduce re-offending
 - Improving road safety

We will measure our success against key indicators in the National Indicators Set - please refer to the Cheshire East Council Annual Performance Plan for detailed information on all Performance Indicators.

Tackling Exclusion and Promoting Equality

This is a key theme running through all that we do. Together with our partners, we want to ensure that all people have the same equality of opportunity, quality of life and can influence what happens within their communities. Whilst most residents in Cheshire East enjoy a good standard of life, there are a number of areas that are more deprived, particularly concentrated in north and west Crewe, east Congleton, east and south Macclesfield and north Wilmslow. In these areas, there are generally higher rates of illness and mortality rates and lower levels of educational attainment and employment.

We want to decrease the gap between the most deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of Cheshire East in all areas particularly health, housing, education and the local economy.

In addition, the recent influx of economic migrants from Eastern Europe highlights the need to work together to build cohesion and ensure that all people, regardless of background, can directly influence, manage and benefit from decisions that affect them.

We want to make improvements to the public transport network. This will also help ensure that no-one is disadvantaged by where they live and is intended to give everyone access to the services they need and the lifestyle they choose.

The Council's objectives and priorities for Tackling Exclusion and Promoting Equality are that:

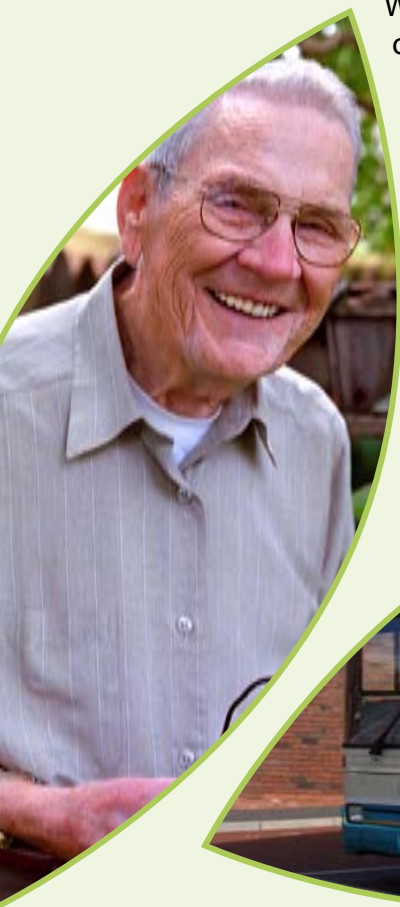
We will enable people to have a good quality of life irrespective of where they live or their social or economic background by:

- Improving service provision to rural areas
- Facilitating appropriate transport for the public and service users

These will contribute to the Cheshire East Sustainable Community Strategy objectives of:

- Reducing inequalities between the most disadvantages and successful areas of Cheshire East

We will measure our success against key indicators in the National Indicators Set - please refer to the Cheshire East Council Annual Performance Plan for detailed information on all Performance Indicators.



The Local Economy

Cheshire East has a strong local economy, but it is not one that is immune from the national economic recession. During the twelve months to November 2008, the number of Job Seeker Allowance (JSA) claimants across Cheshire East rose by 54.1%; the national increase over the same time period was 34.4%. In November 2008 there were 4,300 JSA claimants, compared to only 2,800 a year before. These figures mask important neighbourhood differences. Cheshire East contains 85 former District Council Wards: 24 of these (spanning all parts of the Borough) saw their claimant count rise by 100% or more in the year to November 2008. These figures are a form of proxy for taking a snapshot of the changing health of the area.

The current economic downturn poses a much greater risk to some industries than others; those sectors particularly at risk are:

- Financial services.
- Housing, construction and businesses that supply household appliances, furniture and other durable goods.
- Automotive and transport related industries.

It is estimated that the Borough has over 20,000 people employed in these sectors.

Economic output (GVA) per head is higher than the national average. The demographic profile of the area also highlights an ageing population in the 45 to 65 age group, meaning that there will be a significant number reaching retirement age in the near future.

Reducing worklessness and improving skills is a key challenge and targeting resources into this area means that we can promote lifelong learning, increase the number of qualified adults and decrease the number of people out of work, particularly in the neighbourhoods identified as priorities for improvement.

Affordable and appropriate housing is also a key issue in improving the quality of life for our residents, providing everyone with the opportunity of a decent home. This means providing a wide choice of housing to meet the needs of the whole community in terms of tenures and price ranges. It is recognised that this is a particular challenge at a time of difficulty for the housing market.

We also want to ensure that we generate and strengthen inward investment, tourism and regeneration as key aspects of economic and social well-being of local people and their environment.

The Council's objectives and priorities for the Local Economy are that:

We will shape and maintain strong and prosperous neighbourhoods in which our residents are skilled and economically active, where businesses want to invest and where people want to visit by:

- Supporting the local economy and tourism to increase prosperity
- Improving roads and highways
- Where practical reducing the impact of the recession on both businesses and individuals

These will contribute to the Cheshire East Sustainable Community Strategy objectives of:

- Improving access to, and availability of affordable and appropriate housing.
- Reducing worklessness and improving skills.
- Maintaining an efficient transport network.
- Improving business and enterprise.

We will measure our success against key indicators in the National Indicators Set - please refer to the Cheshire East Council Annual Performance Plan for detailed information on all Performance Indicators.

Environmental Sustainability

It is vital to ensure that, together, we improve the environment for the future whilst using our present resources efficiently to make sure that we all have a good standard of living today. Climate change, for example, will affect us all and current studies indicate that, by 2080, it is possible that the North West will experience an average increase in temperature of 4 or 5 degrees centigrade, have 40% - 60% less rain in the summer and 15% - 30% more rain in the winter. In addition, consideration needs to be given to the rising levels of carbon dioxide in the way we design and deliver services, including our transport infrastructure and the development of new homes.

Waste management and recycling is also a key focus as waste levels in Cheshire East are high when compared with other local council areas. We will deliver year on year decreases in the amount of waste sent to landfill coupled with increases in the amount of waste recycled and composted. This will help to ensure our comparative position improves and will enable us to meet strict Government targets. We also want to ensure that our public realm is clean, green and contributes to the overall sustainability of the area so that it can be enjoyed by all who work, visit and play in Cheshire East both now and in the future.

The Council's objective and priorities for Environmental Sustainability are that:

We will provide an attractive and sustainable environment which communities can be proud of by:

- Reinforcing the distinctive characteristics of our towns, villages and rural areas
- Managing waste
- Tackling climate change

These will contribute to the Cheshire East Sustainable Community Strategy objectives of:

- Achieving sustainable management of waste resources
- Responding to the challenge of climate change
- Improving environmental cleanliness

We will measure our success against key indicators in the National Indicators Set - please refer to the Cheshire East Council Annual Performance Plan for detailed information on all Performance Indicator.



Building the Council

To support these priorities we will build a council that is responsive to changing needs and delivers value for money:

We will...

- Put customers first
- Provide value for money
- Enhance partnership working
- Develop our workforce
- Be locally responsive

How will we achieve these?

- ***We will deliver*** cost-effective and high quality services and put our customers first in the way we design and deliver everything we do
- ***We will maintain*** strong relationships with all of our partners, develop and support our staff, manage our resources and support our Elected Members effectively to deliver better outcomes and ensure a commitment to continuous improvement

and:

- ***We will ensure*** continuity of service from the four constituent predecessor Authorities
- ***We will build*** the Cheshire East Council into a flagship authority fit for the 21st century

We will measure our success against key indicators in the National Indicators Set - please refer to the Cheshire East Council Annual Performance Plan for detailed information on all Performance Indicators.





Overall performance management of the Council and Partners

The Corporate Plan is central to the performance management of the Council.

Departmental and Service Plans will all be developed to deliver the targets set against the priorities in this Corporate Plan and other service areas delivered by the Council either on its own or in partnership. Performance will be monitored on a regular basis by managers and Cabinet Members to make sure that it is on track and to ensure that where it isn't action is taken to bring things back into line. The Council and its partners will be required to submit regular performance National Indicator Set data returns to central Government.

Overall the Cheshire East's Partnership performance against the National Indicator Set will provide the focus for the new Comprehensive Area Assessment. This means that we will be assessed against all of the Government-set National Indicators and the targets we set within our jointly-agreed Local Area Agreement.

The computerised Excelsis performance management systems will be used to record performance against LAA indicators where our partners are the lead organisation.

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This information is available in other formats on request