



Cheshire East Council

Corporate Plan

2016-2020

www.cheshireeast.gov.uk

You can give feedback on the activities of the Council and its plans by speaking to your local Councillor – visit **Find Your Local Councillor** on the Cheshire East Council website for contact details.

You can also send comments to the email address below – responses will be reported to Cabinet Members and Council. When submitting a response or comment, please also include your name, organisation (if applicable) and contact details.

If you have any comments or queries please e-mail:
shapingourservices@cheshireeast.gov.uk



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Date of approval: 25 February 2016

Foreword

Cheshire East is a fabulous place to live, work and visit and we want to work with all regional and local partners to make it even better and sustain that success into the future for our residents.

As a place we have a fantastic mix of rural and urban environments. However the most important element of Cheshire East is its people and we will strive to make sure we have a Council that serves its diverse community well and delivers value for money.

We want to see Cheshire East Council build a national reputation for customer services and partnership working and for our Chief Executive to build a programme that delivers that and makes sure as an organisation we put residents first at all times.

The Council will work towards this 4 Year Plan (2016 to 2020) that focuses on:

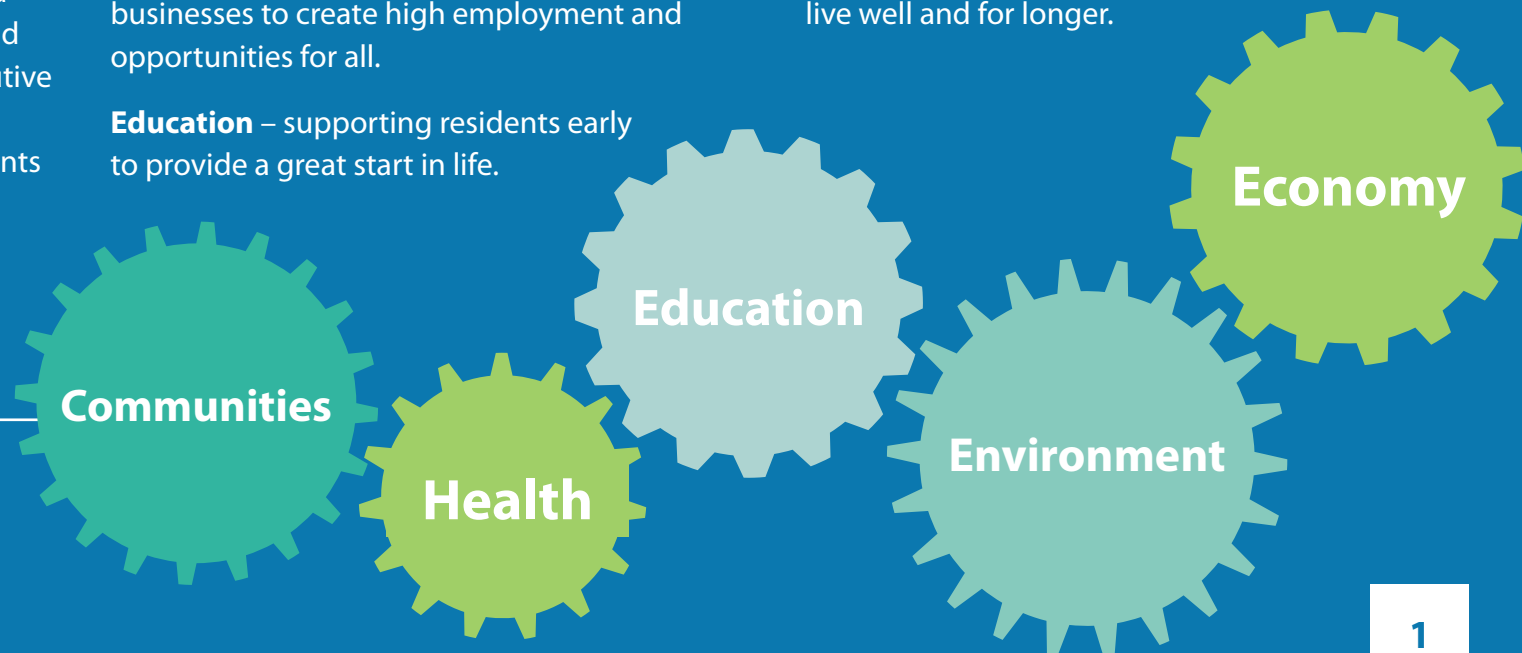
Communities – helping residents to help themselves and each other. Supporting volunteering and minimising antisocial behaviour.

Economy – encouraging and supporting businesses to create high employment and opportunities for all.

Education – supporting residents early to provide a great start in life.

Environment – helping energy saving initiatives and making sure our green spaces make Cheshire East a great place to live.

Health – safeguarding the vulnerable and providing appropriate care that helps people live well and for longer.



Cabinet

Cheshire East Council

Putting Residents **First**

Putting Residents First is about really listening and understanding what residents and businesses need and responding appropriately to provide the best possible **Service**.

- This requires **Flexibility**, which means us all adapting quickly to changing circumstances and learning together from our experiences.
- **Innovation** is about us being creative in our thinking and the way we approach our work and challenging convention where this is no longer appropriate.
- Taking personal **Responsibility** is at the heart of our values in delivering what we promise, and ensuring efficient use of resources, whether this is our people, funding, processes, information or technology.
- In addition to all of the above the Council will put residents first by getting things right first time. Right First Time means achieving value for money by eliminating waste and meeting appropriate customer demands in a professional and timely way. When the Council sets out **Service** Standards they will be achieved.
- Bringing this together is **Teamwork**, respecting and working well with others to collectively achieve the best outcomes for residents and communities.





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1 Achieving Outcomes

Cheshire East Council is responsible for providing more than 500 local public services across an area of over 1,100km² for over 370,000 residents. Gross annual expenditure exceeds £700m, which is funded from a combination of local taxes, national taxes (in the form of government grants) and payments direct from service users and other organisations.

In its simplest form Cheshire East Council wants to work with local and regional partners to deliver for its residents economic prosperity and public sector transformation to deliver value for money. Cheshire East wants to ensure access to economic prosperity for all its residents so that they can pay for housing, leisure, transport and other life events and not be dependent on public sector services but be part of a thriving and supportive community.

Cheshire East wants to deliver public transformation across a range of public, private and third sector partners as it recognises that working together with other agencies like health, police, fire, probation and many others, will help deliver better and more responsive services to residents. The Council regularly reviews how local services can best meet

the needs of residents in Cheshire East. Through its Corporate Plan the Council aims to help local people to be healthy and enjoy living in Cheshire East. The Council will work to create wealth from its approach to education, employment, housing and transport. The approach will lead to mental wellbeing, safe communities and overall economic prosperity.

During the summer of 2015 the Council's Cabinet Members re-considered the outcomes contained within the Three-Year Plan (2013-16). The review concluded that the outcomes in that plan continue to be hugely relevant to the way the Council can meet the needs of local residents and businesses. The five resident outcomes have therefore been maintained for the Corporate Plan 2016 to 2020.

But the review also recognised how priorities change over time and how the Council must therefore be flexible in its approach to providing services.

The Corporate Plan 2016-2020 sets out five clear residents based outcomes, underpinned by a sixth outcome based on a responsible and efficient way of working. The Council will demonstrate achievement of its outcomes through focused and clear priorities and relevant performance indicators. All staff will be expected to be able to draw a "golden thread" from everything they do on a daily basis for residents and how this connects with these six clear outcomes and our organisational values linked to being resident first. A summary of our performance management arrangements and the "golden thread" are set out on page 6.

6
Outcomes

1
Golden Thread

The Best Fit

The overall structure of public sector services will adapt to improve public value, and the Council is at the forefront of such change. As a Commissioning organisation the Council recognises that it does not have a set ideology on how best to deliver services and instead will adopt the “best fit” on whatever mechanism is right to achieve its 6 outcomes – this “best fit” approach is set out on page 7 and the Council’s approach to commissioning on page 8. The Council runs companies, enters into partnerships, takes on new burdens or devolves services to ensure the most appropriate service is provided at the right cost.

Underlying its approach is a commitment from the Council to transparency and good governance. Decisions of the Council will continue to be evidence based and subject to appropriate challenge, but free from unnecessary bureaucracy.

Public value will be achieved alongside public trust and the Council will continue to openly report progress and publish information that allows any interested party to see how the Council works within external and internal controls. The Cheshire East group of businesses will continue to be open to scrutiny and open for business.

Cheshire East Council has a reputation for being a low cost, high performing Council and the Corporate Plan 2016-2020 provides a further commitment to maintain that reputation.

The Executive
Cheshire East Council



Cheshire East Corporate Plan 2016-2020

The Corporate Plan consists of **six outcomes** that demonstrate how Cheshire East Council will put the residents of Cheshire East first in the way that services are provided. Outcome numbers 1-5 focus on **activities directly affecting residents and local businesses**. Outcome number 6 focuses on **maximising value for money** in the way the Council operates.



The 'Best Fit' approach

The ultimate commissioners of services are the **Cheshire East Council Cabinet members**.

Executive Directors, Directors and Heads of Service work to establish the most appropriate provider of services that will achieve the outcomes of the Corporate Plan.



Cheshire East Commissioning Cycle

The most appropriate service providers are commissioned to provide services in the most effective way through a constant cycle that involves senior leadership, service providers and actual service users.



2 Maintaining Financial Stability

Self Reliance – funding local services with local resources

To maintain value for money the Council demonstrates how local services will continue to be affordable.

The need to reduce the demands on central government funding means the Council will aim to fund all local expenditure from local sources of income by 2020. This means Council services will be self reliant and only paid for from Council Tax payments, Business Rates and direct charges for services.

The Council has taken bold steps to significantly limit the burden on local taxpayers since becoming an all purpose Council in 2009.

Achieving self reliance will be supported by creating economic growth in a way that efficiently spreads the cost of services.

We have outlined a clear set of financial measures and forecasts that show how the Council will remain financially strong in future. These measures focus on Local Taxation, Capital Investment and Reserves.



Local Taxation

Council Tax

- **Growing the domestic tax base** – each new home brings additional Council Tax revenue, New Homes Bonus and, in the medium term, a Community Infrastructure Levy. But homes also bring additional costs, such as education, waste collection and highways. The Council will ensure that any subsidised services are carefully examined to achieve maximum value from any Council Tax payment.
- **Increasing employment opportunities**
– Economic growth will result in fewer people relying on welfare benefits from the Council and release funding for further improvements.
- **Maintaining strong collection rates**
– this ensures fairness to all and helps the Council maximise local income for local use.
- **A responsible approach to changing Council Tax levels** – it will be important to manage Council Tax levels in response to the removal of reliance on government grant.

Business Rates

- **Promoting Economic Growth** – business growth will result in additional income being retained for local investment. This supports the Council's approach to invest in economic growth through unlocking development land and supporting inward investment.
- **Working with Partners** – the Council will maximise the benefit of the business rates retention scheme by working with partners in the region.



Capital Investment

- The impact of financing capital expenditure will be restricted to ensure value for money is maintained. An annual cap on capital financing costs will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains appropriate in light of the expected return on the overall investment.
- The Council's strategic Capital Programme will continue to put emphasis on infrastructure which will generate local economic growth; investment in new service delivery models and improvements in the Council's asset base.
- The Capital Programme will reflect the Council's ambition, to pursue additional external funding, private sector investment and maximise receipts from asset development and sales.
- Borrowing will be appropriate based on the lifetime benefits of a scheme. All investments will be subject to strong control arrangements and analysis of risk.

3 Workforce Planning

Workforce priorities

The Corporate Plan links the work of staff and teams at Cheshire East Council to the longer term Sustainable Community Strategy.



Key workforce priorities are:

- **Resident led and customer focused** – our workforce will need to continue to be resident led and focused on providing the very best customer service.
- **Outcome focused and high performing** – we will need to be focused on outcomes and less on processes but continuously reviewing and improving our performance to be the best that we can be.
- **Well led and managed** – those with responsibility for directing and supporting the work of others will need to deploy a wider range of skills underpinned by fairness, equality and diversity to ensure that the workforce can address the challenges that the Council faces.
- **Engaged, motivated and resilient** – we will need to ensure that our workforce are fully engaged and motivated to contribute their ideas and views about the best way to deliver the Council's objectives. We will need them to be more resilient to deal with lots of change and fewer resources but remain focused on delivery.
- **Professionally skilled and competent but working across boundaries** – we will continue to need highly skilled and competent professionals who operate safe practice and risk awareness but we will need them to work more effectively across internal and external boundaries as the structure and form of public service changes.
- **Flexible, adaptable and innovative** – our workforce will need to be flexible and adaptable to deal with a rapidly changing environment as well as finding innovative ways to organise and deliver services for our residents.
- **Working in a safe, healthy and supportive environment** – which enables the workforce to contribute effectively, reach their potential and maximise attendance.

Headcount analysis and trend

Between April 2009 and September 2015, the Cheshire East Council employee headcount has reduced by 42%, (equivalent to a 41% reduction in full time equivalent employees). This is mainly attributable to the restructuring of services and the TUPE transfer of staff to alternative service delivery vehicles.

Measuring success

Measuring the effectiveness of the workforce priorities will be tracked through the scrutiny of key performance indicators such as:

- Employee engagement index
- Employee turnover
- Sickness absence
- Ratio of agency workers to employed staff
- Number of staff with performance development plans and performance ratings

Staff Reductions

Any change proposal with an impact on staffing numbers will be shared and consulted on with the relevant staff at the appropriate time.

4 Corporate Plan: Protecting Against Risk and Supporting Investment

- The Council's consideration and response to threats, and its ability and capacity to recognise and seize new opportunities, underpin its successful performance.
- Cheshire East's strong taxbase and greater independence provides financial stability and offers some 'local protection' from the impact of national economic fluctuations. In this context, it is also important to note that compared to neighbouring local authorities, total spending per head of population is below average. Given this national and local context its overall financial risk profile should continue to reduce.
- The Council's management framework is used to help it respond to changes. This strengthens the effectiveness of its overall governance, and provides a mechanism to ensure effective decision making. The internal control system allows the Council to respond appropriately to risks. This increases the likelihood of the Council achieving its strategic priorities and outcomes.
- Supporting the Council's budget with adequate reserves is a key element to creating financial resilience.
- The Council will be flexible in its approach to holding or transferring money from general and earmarked reserves to protect Council Tax payers against year-on-year fluctuations in expenditure.
- The Council will continue to be flexible about investing revenue funding in maintaining sustainable services and reflecting changes to the risks facing the Council. Budget reporting will include revised Reserves strategies to provide further detail on estimated balances and the application of reserves in the medium term.
- The Council will use reporting processes to monitor the achievement against budget that is so important to managing financial risks.
- The Council manages high-level risks through a Corporate Risk Register. This process is underpinned by a risk management framework that operates on strategic, operational and project levels. Risk registers will be maintained within Team Plans. Emerging risks are escalated to senior members and/or officers as appropriate and in line with the potential impact of the risk.



Feedback



Be involved in decision making in Cheshire East...

If you would like to be involved in consultations undertaken by Cheshire East Council, you can do so by registering for updates on the Consultation pages or joining the Digital Influence Panel. Please **click on the light bulb** to join.

If you would like to view the results of previous consultations undertaken by Cheshire East Council, please **click on the Putting Residents First logo**.