

Appendix 1

Cheshire East Rural Action Plan

Cheshire East Rural Action Plan

Introduction

As part of delivering its Corporate Plan outcomes, the Council has undertaken to build a strong and resilient rural economy with strong, supportive rural places and communities. The Rural Action Plan builds upon previous work by the Council to support its Rural area, identifying actions for the three year period 2019/20 -2021/22. It is intended that this plan will provide a framework that supports consideration of policy and strategic direction for the rural area, positioning the Council to be able to respond to changes at national and local level.

Background and context

Cheshire East is defined by the Rural Services Network SPARSE classification as a council considered 'predominantly rural', while the Defra Rural Classification for the Borough is 'urban with significant rural'. Whatever the definition, the rural aspect of Cheshire East is significant in terms of population, economic impact and its contribution to the borough's Quality of Place. It helps to define the character of the place, but brings with it both the constraints and opportunities that are peculiar to rural areas.

The quality of its natural environment and excellent location, combined with factors such as high educational attainment and employment opportunities, ensure that Cheshire East is a place offering a high quality of life to its residents and is an attractive place to do business; a place where people want to live, work and visit. Cheshire East was traditionally, and remains in many places, a rural area, with agriculture (particularly dairy) and land-based industries, a network of generally prosperous villages and mid-sized market towns serving as important service and functional centres. Alongside their roles as retail, commercial, educational and leisure focal points, these places historically developed specialisms, including extractive industries, chemicals and silk.

During the decade to 2010 rural areas achieved higher rates of growth in numbers of businesses and jobs than any other category in England. Stewardship of the rural environment is central to achieving this balance between economic growth and environmental and societal wellbeing. Rural economies have demonstrated their potential to provide more growth and employment if given appropriate stimuli and support from national and local business leaders or policy makers.

In general, although rural areas can have lower unemployment than urban areas, rural wages can often be lower, especially those in agriculture and tourism where their seasonal nature can affect earnings. When combined in areas – predominantly rural – with higher house and fuel prices, the result can in some cases lead to instability of income levels or even pockets of deprivation. One of the priorities can therefore be to seek to increase employment opportunities, reduce seasonality and champion the creation of better-paid wages in certain sectors.

English rural areas contributed £211 billion to the UK economy in 2010. It is not surprising that key sectors are focussed on the land and landscape: agriculture, tourism, forestry and renewable energy. However, only 16% of rural businesses are involved in agriculture, forestry or fishing. Creative and digital industries also account for a significant proportion of businesses. Other areas of potential growth include renewable energy generation; advanced manufacturing and engineering; logistics; food and drink manufacturing, agri-tech and bio-renewables; financial & professional services and healthcare technology.

The economy in rural areas plays an important role in Cheshire East. The rural area boasts a diverse industry base. As well as traditional large scale dairy and land-based enterprises, there are significant tourism businesses, creative & digital industries, distribution, and technology businesses as just some examples. Traditional land based businesses, the wider countryside, its rural tourism assets and events form an important part of the 'Cheshire' brand.

There is a significant value in the area's natural capital and character, and the contribution of farming and land management should not be underestimated or forgotten. It is after all what underpins our rural character, environment and communities, contributing to 'quality of place', which is accepted as an economic attribute, supporting locational decisions and investment in the area. It has been argued that those places with strong 'quality of place' attributes can stand out from their competitors and therefore stand a better chance of landing new investment and skilled workers. An 'emotional connection' to a place can become as important as more rational, number-driven determinants, particularly for knowledge workers. Cheshire East's rural character offers these attributes.

The agri-food sector in Cheshire East is well developed and diverse. This sector comprises of a range of companies from large scale food manufacturers and animal feed businesses, to dairy operators, salad producers and small scale operations (including traditional cheese producers, farm shops, breweries and distilleries). Cheshire East's food and drink sector is recognised by Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) being identified through the Northern Independent Economic Review as having growth potential for Cheshire and Warrington. Like the visitor economy, agri-food is an important sector in Cheshire East's economy based in rural areas. Although representing a relatively small portion of the district's economic output (in terms of GVA), they both employ a high number of people and are important to the character of the area

The Council has a direct involvement in agricultural land through the Cheshire Farms Service, which was created to manage the agricultural estates of both Cheshire West and Chester Council and Cheshire East Council on their formation as unitary authorities in 2009. Cheshire East Council retains an Estate of approximately 5,000 acres with a range of entry level farm types and sizes, providing opportunities to suitably qualified persons to enter agriculture.

Land management industries are important to Cheshire but the economy in rural areas reaches far beyond this in terms of jobs, enterprises and output. The rural areas are now home to a wide range of non-land based businesses that appreciate the rural setting, including professional services and digital/creative. The 'Science Corridor' in Cheshire East has many businesses based in rural locations with particular strengths in advanced scientific analysis and research, pharmaceuticals R&D, energy and radio-astronautics and astronomy. Alongside strategic employment sites based in a rural setting such as Alderley Park, Radbroke Hall, Waters(Wilmslow) and Jodrell Bank, the rural area supports a diverse economy of SMEs and micro-businesses. Beyond the strategic sites, agri-food and the visitor economy remain the most visibly significant rural-based sectors, but with the development of high-speed broadband coverage, professional, knowledge based, creative and digital businesses are also important. Self-employment in the rural area (at 14.2%) is higher than in urban areas and higher than the national average.

Furthermore, Cheshire East's Visitor Economy (currently worth circa £921million, supporting over 11,000 fte jobs) is forecast to grow with potential to reach £1bn by 2020. The rural offer (and its related heritage) is a very important component of our visitor economy and there are opportunities to improve destination management, increase the availability of quality accommodation, develop business tourism and exploit specialist sector based experiences (including filming and events) to allow the sector's contribution to increase and maintain a competitive position.

However, the rural economy does not sit in isolation from other factors: Planning, affordable housing, public transport, access to health facilities, education, older people's services, fuel poverty, viable local services, character/quality of environment and community engagement are all part of an associated matrix. Key areas for consideration in respect to the rural economy are:

- **Planning:** Positive planning allows rural communities to adapt and thrive. This must offer policies that reflect local circumstances and provide a workable planning system, which both engages and gains the trust of rural communities. The use of neighbourhood plans and supplementary planning guidance may be appropriate tools in some circumstances.
- **Quality/character of environment:** quality of place can be a significant factor in locational decisions to live, work or invest, providing an 'emotional connection' and it is essential to visitor economy success. Prosperous places are supported by their inherent environmental, cultural or heritage characteristics.
- **Affordable Housing:** Rural communities need to be places where people from a range of age groups and backgrounds can live. Housing affordability is therefore a key concern with a need for affordable homes to meet the needs of rural communities, the economy in rural areas and address the issue of key workers. This needs to be addressed within the context of compliance with adopted planning policies.

- **Public transport:** Suitable public transport links are important to helping small businesses access markets or making it practical for employees to seek work in rural communities. Transport can also bring customers and tourists to local rural businesses such as shops, hotels and B&Bs. National research shows that 42% of households in rural areas had a regular bus service close-by compared to 96% of urban households.
- **Tackling fuel poverty:** Rural areas have a high proportion of households in fuel poverty, with many off the mains gas network or living in solid wall homes.
- **Viable village services:** Local services such as village shops, pubs and post offices are at the heart of functioning communities, as well as offering a lifeline to many vulnerable residents. Investment in local services not only benefits communities but also employee recruitment and new business development.
- **Schools:** Small and rural schools are important in functioning rural communities.
- **Broadband and mobile connectivity:** Rural businesses and communities need to share in the opportunities available with fast broadband services.
- **Road Network:** There is a strong interdependence between rural and urban economies. Urban centres are often major markets for rural based businesses and many rural residents work in local urban areas. Therefore, in order to realise the true potential of the rural economy, connectivity needs to be reduced as a barrier to trade and economic growth between urban and rural areas. The added benefit of good transport services is that it will attract visitors and their spending power to rural economies.

Developing a Rural Action Plan

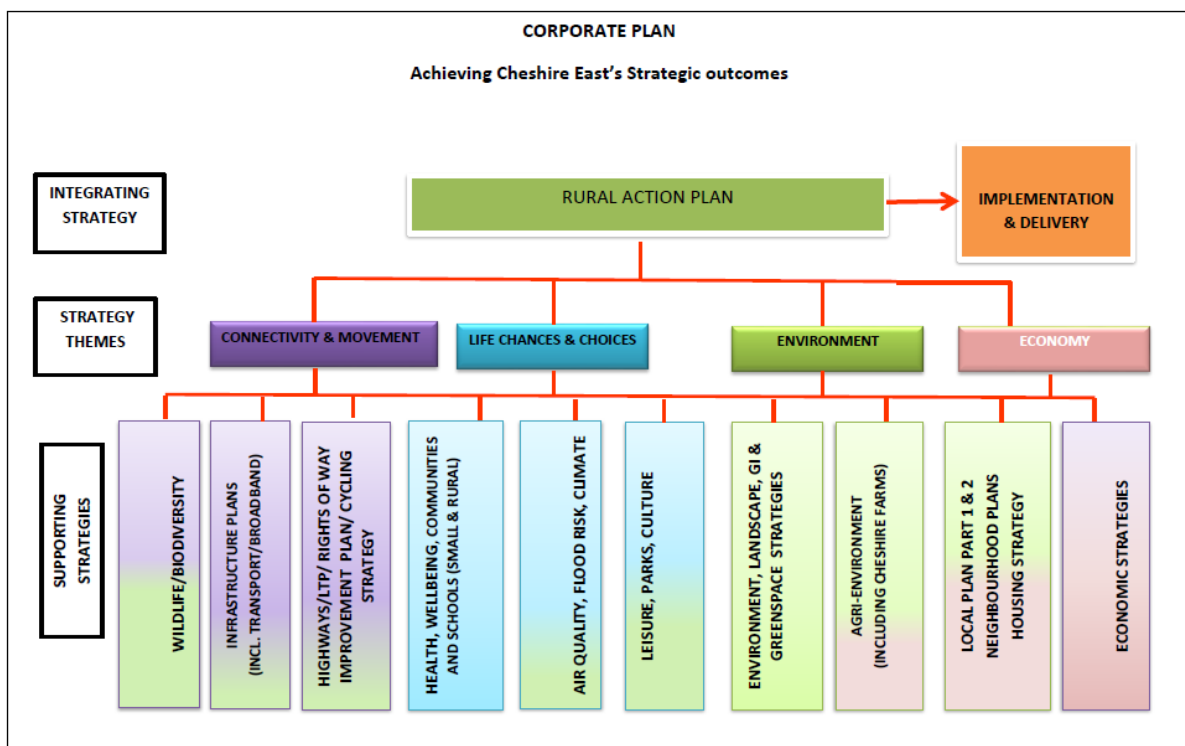
Just fewer than 180,000 people, half of the Cheshire East population, live in rural communities including the rural towns. Therefore, there is a need to ensure that delivery of our corporate outcomes meets the needs of rural communities. The rural area is also part of Cheshire East's 'quality of place', contributing to economic well-being by offering characteristics that are part of the area's distinctiveness. Studies have shown how quality of place influences locational decisions with innovators and entrepreneurs attracted to creative, cultural and beautiful places.

A draft Rural Strategy Action Plan was produced in 2014 following review and consultation, but was not formally approved. This was superseded by the 'Where Rural Communities Matter' document in early 2015 which outlined a number of key actions. After reviewing the success of this approach there is a need for a new rural action plan to ensure there is one clear delivery plan with agreed timelines and accountability. This will ensure that Rural Strategy will link to other key strategies and outcomes rather than being separate from them.

Building on this approach, Cheshire East Council's rural action plan is set in the context of how existing strategies deliver on the rural agenda and at the same time,

helping to identify those gaps that need to be addressed in the future. There is also a need to consider the role of the rural agenda in informing the Council's Economic Strategy and to look at future funding arrangements in the round, including the Shared Prosperity Fund and any changes to arrangements for agriculture and the environment. Both national and local Environment Strategies are also of significance in influencing the rural agenda. While future national funding arrangements are currently unclear, it is possible that they may reflect a broader understanding of those aspects that shape the character and nature of the rural area and will be of significance in how the rural action plan is delivered.

In the meantime, a number of Council strategies and plans that relate to the rural principles or priorities have been identified and their contribution audited against four themes of connectivity, life chances and choices, environment and economy. It is hoped that this framework will guide consideration of policy and strategic direction. The diagram below illustrates how a framework provides a cross-cutting approach to considering and integrating actions from a range of relevant strategies and plans, providing the basis for developing a Rural action plan. It is not intended to replace or take precedence over these strategies, but rather to allow consideration of how these may impact on the rural area or rural affairs.



The overall aim of the plan is to help inform strategic choices as part of meeting the Council's strategic outcomes and identify priorities regarding the rural area. This is based on the Council's existing strategies and plans along with their related evidence base. It does not replace those strategies and plans, but rather provides a rural focus on them to help decision makers ensure that the rural community, economy and environment are understood and to help to co-ordinate actions. This is part of an ongoing process that needs to be able to adapt to reflect changes.

‘Where Rural communities matter’

Appendix 1 provides an update of actions and progress since ‘Where rural communities matter’ was published in 2015.

Some of the key points so far include:

- ✓ Successful bids for LEADER funding And Rural Growth Funding, which to date has led to a £868,481.27 investment in rural projects with a total value of £2,173,676.33 overall in just under a 3 year period
- ✓ Continued growth in the Visitor economy and a strategic focus on a distinctive rural tourism offer.
- ✓ Successful development of a Food Enterprise Zone at Reaseheath College through a Local development Order.
- ✓ 31.7% of premises can receive ultrafast broadband – above 100Mbps, and 94.3% of premises receive superfast broadband – above 30Mbps
- ✓ Support for resident-led Neighbourhood Plans, with 18 Plans having now been ‘made’ including 11 in primarily rural parishes.
- ✓ Local Plan strategy adopted
- ✓ Landscape partnership project developed with National Trust in the northern part of the Borough.
- ✓ Regular Town and Parish Council Conferences and engagement with ChALC.
- ✓ Rights of Way Improvement Plan adopted.
- ✓ Local Transport Plan & Cycling Strategy in place.
- ✓ Connected Communities e-newsletter, circulated to over 4000 email addresses every 2 months, shares stories and promotes activities and events.
- ✓ ‘Healthy walks’ projects for areas around Crewe, Congleton and Knutsford.
- ✓ The Participatory Budgeting initiative in 2016 – enabled community groups to bid for funding for innovative local projects. Over 70 local groups and organisations across the Cheshire East area obtained an overall total of £370,000 for projects that addressed health inequalities

STRATEGIC ACTIONS 2018/19 – 2021/22

This action plan provides a cross-cutting approach, reflecting the plans and strategies of the Council and the work of partners in delivery. It is aimed at anyone interested in the wellbeing of rural Cheshire East, helping to inform decision makers and policy makers from public, private or voluntary sectors, community groups, wider stakeholders and individuals. The plan is intended to be a flexible resource that reflects the Council’s aspirations and enables people and groups to be engaged.

Since ‘Where Rural communities matter’ was published, the Council has continued to engage in further research, scoping and consultation. A working group representing services across the Council has drawn on this experience and identified a number of key priorities and suggested actions across a number of strategic priority issues:

Rural Connectivity

Rural Economy

Rural Communities: life chances and choices

Rural Environment

No.	Priority Issues (not necessarily in priority order)	Rural Connectivity	Rural Economy	Rural Community	Rural Environment
1.	Digital Connectivity: Broadband and Mobile	✓	✓	✓	
2.	Access for residents, businesses and visitors	✓	✓	✓	
3.	Rural Housing		✓	✓	✓
4.	Strong, supportive rural places and communities		✓	✓	
5.	Neighbourhood planning	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.	Planning for a green and sustainable place		✓	✓	✓
7.	Visitor & Cultural Economy	✓	✓	✓	
8.	Rural Based Businesses	✓	✓	✓	

Rural Action plan 2018/19 – 2021/22

1.	Digital Connectivity: Broadband and Mobile		
	Indicative performance indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of premises having access to superfast broadband 		
	Key actions	Primary responsibilities	Timescale
1.1	Deliver the Digital 2020: Digital support programme to support businesses to maximise the benefits of enhanced digital infrastructure	CEC Growth & Enterprise	Up to spring 2020
1.2	Promote access to rural connectivity schemes. Manage the award of vouchers	CEC Growth & Enterprise	2018 - 21
1.3	Contribute to delivery of a sub-regional digital strategy (including creative & digital sector business)	CEC Growth & Enterprise, Rural & Cultural Economy/ LEP	2019 -21

2.	Access for residents, business and visitors		
	Indicative performance indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of households within 400m of a bus stop served by a scheduled bus service Maintain Public Rights of Way so that at least 80% of the network is classed as 'easy to use' Secure and deliver new and improved public access routes where funding opportunities arise, including through development proposals, where possible, to improve access for residents, business and visitors 		
	Key actions	Primary responsibilities	Timescale
2.1	Adoption of the new Local Transport Plan (LTP) which considers all areas of the borough and includes a local area profile	CEC Strategic Infrastructure and Highways	2019
2.2	Development of Town Plans for each key service centre and principal towns, which will also encompass the surrounding rural areas	CEC Strategic Infrastructure and Highways	2019-23
2.3	Development of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) for Wilmslow, Congleton and Macclesfield that look at the towns and surrounding areas.	CEC Strategic Infrastructure and Highways	2019
2.4	Review of Little Bus service to ensure the service works efficiently for the borough as a whole including rural areas	CEC Strategic Infrastructure and Highways	2019

2.5	Deliver the Rights of Way Improvement Plan: 2011-2026 through 4 yearly implementation plans. The current plan expires in 2019. Delivery of a plan after 2019 will be in line with the Local Transport Plan and related strategies (such as Green Infrastructure, Cycling Strategy and Local Plan).	Public Rights of Way/CEC Strategic Infrastructure and Highways	2019-26
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3.	Rural Housing		
	Indicative performance indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the provision of affordable homes on rural exceptions sites by 10% by 2021 		
	Key actions	Primary responsibilities	Timescale
3.1	Exploring opportunities to provide affordable housing to enable local residents to remain living within their communities by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contacting and working with rural communities who have identified a need for affordable housing within their Neighbourhood plans. Update our Rural Housing Enabling Guide. Continue to explore opportunities to develop rural exception sites. Explore opportunities for Community Led Housing Projects 	CEC Strategic Housing & Spatial Planning. Parish Councils.	2018–20 2019 2018-21 2019-20
3.2	Put in place up-to-date planning policy and guidance to support the provision of rural housing, including for essential rural workers, primarily through the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document	CEC Spatial Planning	2020-21

4.	Strong, supportive rural places and communities		
	Indicative performance indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor through the Public Health Commissioned services scorecard Annual review of the ‘tartan’ rug which will provide an overview of health and wellbeing in all wards including rural. Monitor through uptake of the commissions to support resilience and independence eg carers hub, early help framework, emotionally healthy child and young people programme and CVS contracts. 		
	Key actions	CEC Primary responsibilities	Timescale

		and other contributors	
4.1	Support local communities to identify assets that are important to them, and promote the Register of Assets of Community Value as a means of recognising their value and potential for sale to community groups	CEC Communities, Legal, & Assets; Parish Councils; VCFS	2019-21
4.2	Improve health and wellbeing in the Borough by building on the distinctive strengths and characteristics of the towns and villages within Cheshire East, by encouraging and supporting Town Partnerships to help meet these outcomes.	CEC Communities Team & Public Health Team, Town Partnerships, Parish Councils, VCFS	2019-21
4.3	Develop and support rural neighbourhood partnerships, which bring local people together to address the needs of the community and work collaboratively to improve their shared offer.	CEC Communities Team, Parish Councils, VCF Sector Groups, Police, Health, CFRS,	2019-21
4.4	Create a place that supports health and wellbeing for everyone in Cheshire East, e.g. by increasing the number of people who use outdoor space for exercise/health reasons	CEC Public Health, CCG's, NHS, CEC, Police, CFRS, Healthwatch, VCFS,	2019-21
4.5	Improving the mental health and wellbeing of people, by assessing the levels of loneliness and social isolation in rural areas across the borough	CEC Public Health, CCG's, NHS, CEC, Police, CFRS, Healthwatch, VCFS	2019-21
4.6	Enable more people to Live Well for Longer through collaborative health and wellbeing campaigns that involve rural places	CEC Public Health, CCG's, NHS, CEC, Police, CFRS, Healthwatch, VCFS	2019-21
4.7	To progress the structured dialogue with rural schools to ensure that the opportunities and benefits of collaborative working are fully promoted and utilised.	CEC Education /Schools	2019
4.8	To work collaboratively with the Regional Schools Commissioner and Diocese to ensure that identified rural schools receive appropriate levels of support and challenge which leads to improved outcomes for learners.	CEC Education / Regional Schools Commissioner/ Diocese	2019

5.	Neighbourhood planning		
	Indicative performance indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of resident-led Neighbourhood Plans 'made' in primarily rural parishes 		
	Key actions	CEC Primary responsibilities and other contributors	Timescale
5.1	Continue to support local councils in putting in place Neighbourhood Development Plans that help shape their areas and enhance quality of life in rural communities.	CEC Spatial Planning	2019-21
5.2	Support communities to review their adopted plans to ensure they continue to align with and inform the boroughs wider rural strategy, ensuring new opportunities are captured.	CEC Spatial Planning	2019-21

6.	Planning for a green and sustainable place		
	Indicative performance indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green Infrastructure plan in place Detailed planning policies in place to protect and enhance the quality of rural environment Environment Strategy in place 		
	Key actions	CEC Primary responsibilities and other contributors	Timescale
6.1	Produce an evidence-based plan that identifies and guides the approach to local Green Infrastructure (GI) needs and opportunities in Cheshire East	CEC Growth & Enterprise, Rural & Cultural Economy , Spatial Planning /LNP/NT/NE/other partners	2019
6.2	Conserve the Countryside Management estate and Tatton Park's natural features and biodiversity for present and future generations	CEC Rural & Cultural Economy	2019-21
6.3	Seek continuous improvement in standards of estate management, maintenance, husbandry, good environmental practice and stewardship of the Council's farm estate whilst providing opportunities to suitably qualified persons to enter agriculture	CEC Growth & Enterprise , Cheshire Farms Shared service	2019 -22
6.4	Further, detailed planning policies to be put in place to protect and enhance the quality of rural environment (landscape, heritage and biodiversity) through the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document	CEC Spatial Planning	2020-21

6.5	Neighbourhood plans help to identify locally distinct habitats and landscapes which should be subject to specific protection and/or policies that positively manage the impact of local land use decisions and, where possible, farming practices in particular.	CEC Spatial Planning	2019-21
6.6	Prepare a Minerals and Waste Local Plan to ensure the proper planning and management of the Borough's natural resources	CEC Spatial Planning	2020-21
6.7	Review and amend supplementary planning guidance to ensure that the design and appearance of rural areas is maintained. This could include further guidance on the Best & Most Versatile agricultural land, landscape character, green infrastructure and biodiversity.	CEC Spatial Planning	2021-22
6.8	Prepare an Environment Strategy that will provide the Council with a framework to help protect and enhance the environment and improve residents' quality of life, related to the natural and built environment of the borough and addressing transport, energy & carbon, waste and minerals.	CEC Place Directorate	2019

7.0	Visitor & Cultural Economy		
	Indicative performance indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cheshire East visitor economy worth £1bn by 2020 Number/value of rural tourism projects funded through LEADER & Rural Growth Fund programme Completion of the 'Twin trails' Tourism Growth project 		
	Key actions	CEC Primary responsibilities and other contributors	Timescale
7.1	Visitor Economy Strategy 2016-20 includes a focus on developing a distinctive rural tourism offer supported by website and social media activity	CEC Rural & Cultural Economy, Marketing Cheshire	2019-20
7.2	Visitor Economy Forum and Cultural Forum support the delivery of visitor economy strategy and Cultural framework with cross-sector groups	CEC Rural & Cultural Economy, Marketing Cheshire, other partners	2019-20
7.3	Residents Festival - Cheshire East	CEC Rural &	2019-20

	attractions engaged with providing free tickets as promotional incentives.	Cultural Economy, Marketing Cheshire	
7.4	Manage Discover England and other strategic funding projects relevant to rural business such as Gardens & Gourmet, Cultural destinations and Brilliant science.	CEC Rural & Cultural Economy, Marketing Cheshire	2019
7.5	Manage and monitor rural tourism projects funded through LEADER & Rural Growth Fund programme	CEC Rural & Cultural Economy /CWaC/LEP	2019-20
7.6	Delivery of twin trails Tourism Growth project (Sandstone and Gritstone trails)	CEC Rural & Cultural Economy, CWaC	2019
7.7	Continued delivery of Rural Touring Network to support cultural priorities as part of Cultural framework.	CEC Rural & Cultural Economy, CWaC	2019-21
7.8	Seek further opportunities to support economic benefit to rural areas from events as part of Strategic Events Framework	CEC Rural & Cultural Economy	2019-21
7.9	Seek further opportunities to develop and support rural tourism and cultural/creative businesses including through sector deals	CEC Rural & Cultural Economy	2019-21
7.10	Liaison and collaborative working with Peak district to identify tourism and other opportunities of joint interest	CEC Rural & Cultural Economy /PDNP/Visit Peak District	2019-21
7.11	Put in place up-to-date planning policy to maintain and enhance the visitor economy in the rural area through the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document	CEC Spatial Planning	2021-21

8.	Rural Based Businesses		
	Indicative performance indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of rural businesses engaged • Number/value of rural tourism projects funded through LEADER & Rural Growth Fund programme 		
	Key actions	CEC Primary responsibilities and other contributors	Timescale
8.1	Engagement programme to understand the challenges and opportunities of the rural business community	CEC Growth & Enterprise, Rural & Cultural Economy	2018-21

8.2	Deliver programmes to provide points of contact for rural businesses to maximise government support and finance available.	CEC Growth & Enterprise, Rural & Cultural Economy/LEP	2018-21
8.3	Manage and monitor rural business projects funded through LEADER & Rural Growth Fund programme	CEC Growth & Enterprise, Rural & Cultural Economy /CWaC/LEP	2019-20
8.4	Collate and interpret evidence and intelligence on market failure and growth opportunities to inform strategy development	CEC Growth & Enterprise, Rural & Cultural Economy	2018-21
8.5	Identify existing and future skills needs of rural businesses and engaging education and skills providers to develop provision to address these needs	CEC Growth & Enterprise	2018-21
8.6	Raising the profile of the economy in Cheshire East's rural areas and related career opportunities for residents and young people	CEC Growth & Enterprise	2018–21
8.7	Positive planning policy framework to support a prosperous rural economy including sustainable rural tourism to be reinforced through the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document	CEC Spatial Planning	2020-21

Appendix 1 'Where Rural communities matter': update on actions since 2015

What we pledged	What we have done so far... (2016 update)	Review/Update (December 2018)
A strong and resilient rural economy		
Pro-actively seek funding sources	Successful bid for LEADER funding. Officers sit on and actively contribute to EU LEADER funding meetings, European Structural and Investment Fund Sub-Group and other rural funding opportunities via the LEP Rural Strategy Board. Support for 'discover England' funding bids to support the rural tourism offer. Cohesion of EAFRD programme across C&W	Successful bid for a LEADER funding programme (2015-2020). Officers sit on and actively contribute to EU LEADER funding meetings, European Structural and Investment Fund Sub-Group and other rural funding opportunities via the LEP Rural Strategy Board including EAFRD programme across C&W. Support for 'Discover England' funding bids to support the rural tourism offer.
Promote our visitor economy	Visitor Economy Strategy refreshed for 2016-20 including a focus on developing a distinctive rural tourism offer. Rural Strategy briefing paper produced Organised and promoted rural businesses and economy with key groups such as NFU	Visitor Economy Strategy refreshed for 2016-20 including a focus on developing a distinctive rural tourism offer. Rural Action Plan being developed taking account of the Visitor economy Strategy. Promoted rural businesses opportunities and visitor economy, including Funding opportunities such as LEADER.
Encourage new jobs and businesses	Rural Enterprise Manager appointed in 2015 who works with rural enterprises providing direct business support in accessing and securing sector specific grant funding, accessing wider business support products and referrals to specialist services. Developing and maintaining relationships with key rural advocates and stakeholders. Rural Enterprise engagement programme underway with 59 rural businesses supported	Cheshire East Council successfully delivers a Rural Business Support Programme with its arms-length 'Skills and Growth' company. The programme provides direct business support in accessing and securing sector specific grant funding, accessing wider business support products and referrals to specialist services including key Council services. Developing and maintaining relationships with key rural advocates and stakeholders
Support rural micro and small businesses	Providing opportunities through LEADER funding and business engagement.	The Rural Business Support programme provides practical support, developing a tailored package of support from first enquiry through to final investment

		<p>decision and delivery. It offers a single point of contact to access Local Authority Services such as planning and regulatory services, creating and developing a business growth plan, connecting rural businesses into established networks and professional organisations and providing advice and guidance on rural grant funding opportunities and financial incentives across the region.</p> <p>A number of case studies have been developed to demonstrate the diversity of businesses in rural areas in addition to the land-based sector and to highlight the success of those businesses and the support received.</p> <p>Deliver events highlighting specialised businesses support products aimed at rural businesses.</p>
<p>Ensure that rural economies are embedded in plans for economic development.</p>	<p>Work streams include broadband connectivity, Food enterprise, visitor economy development, support for major employers in rural locations, development of strategies to support the creative & digital sector Rural proofing policy added to cabinet papers</p>	<p>At a local level related work streams include broadband connectivity, Food enterprise, visitor economy development, and support for major employers in rural locations, and development of strategies to support the creative & digital sector.</p> <p>Rural proofing policy is added to cabinet papers.</p> <p>The Skills and Growth Company facilitated a meeting with Cheshire East's key rural stakeholders which included representatives from the National Farmers Union, Country Land Association, National Trust, Reaseheath College and representatives from some of our prominent rural business community, Helers Cheese and Mornflake. The meeting focused on the needs and opportunities relating to Cheshire East, in the wider context of securing the best deal for UK</p>

		<p>agriculture and the economy in the rural areas. A letter signed by all attendees was sent to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.</p> <p>CEC working group set up in 2018 to work on Cheshire East Rural Action Plan</p> <p>At a sub-regional level CEC continues to feed in to development of the C&W Local Industrial Strategy and Quality of Place Strategy.</p> <p>At a national level the Council has been proactive in responding to call for evidence for the LGA's Post-Brexit England Commission and the Governments consultation Health and Harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment in a Green Brexit. This was informed by a meeting with Cheshire East's key rural stakeholders in the wider context of securing the best deal for UK agriculture and the economy in the rural areas. A letter signed by all attendees was sent to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.</p>
Support agricultural-sector productivity	<p>Ensured that we have representation on regional strategic groups</p> <p>Developed strong working relationships with specialist land based college – Reaseheath – specifically looking at Agri-tech and innovation of farming practices</p>	<p>Developed strong working relationships with specialist land based college – Reaseheath – looking at Agri-tech, innovation of farming practices and Local Industrial Strategy (eg The Council's Skills and Growth Company has a partnership event in the pipeline with Reaseheath College ensuring that businesses in rural locations are represented as a sector within the emerging Local industrial strategy).</p>
Encourage growth and innovation of businesses	<p>Ensure these sectors are highlighted within the LEADER Local Development Strategy 2015-2020</p>	<p>These sectors were highlighted within the LEADER Local Development Strategy 2015-2020The LEADER</p>

in dairy production, food enterprise, green infrastructure, equine and tourism		Programme is currently oversubscribed with a number of farm productivity and tourism projects already approved and delivered.
Develop pathfinder projects through support for a food and farming local development order and food enterprise zone (FEZ)	Worked closely with Reaseheath College to develop and launch FEZ Supported the development of Rural hub concept called Cheshire Fresh	Worked closely with Reaseheath College to develop and launch FEZ through a Local Development Order
Increased broadband and mobile phone connectivity		
Seek additional funding to expand 'fibre to the premise' technology	Current position across Cheshire East (Aug 2016) is that 28% of premises can receive ultrafast broadband – above 100Mbps, and 91% of premises receive superfast broadband – above 24Mbps. Additional fibre to the premise roll-out is being provided including rural areas, and Connecting Cheshire are actively driving adoption of the technology where available. A further funding bid has been submitted to provide additional broadband investment via a Digital 2020 programme and approval is expected during autumn 2016, this will also include additional business support elements.	Current position, Cheshire East (Oct 2018) 31.7% of premises can receive ultrafast broadband – above 100Mbps, and 94.3% of premises receive superfast broadband – above 30Mbps. The Connecting Cheshire Partnership is actively seeking new funding streams to expand 'fibre to the premise' technology. .
Expand public Wi-Fi opportunities, such as in libraries and community hubs	Wi-Fi in libraries being rolled out and new digital platform being developed. 'Wi-Bee' to enable IT classes has been implemented.	All of our libraries now provide free unlimited wi-fi access to library members. In addition, Digital literacy and Informal Learning remain a priority for the service. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have installed free Wi-Fi in all our libraries enabling residents to use their own devices to access the internet and download resources. • We have extended our range of e-resources to include e-books, e-zines and have subscribed to a greater range of online information sources. • With the help of our volunteer ICT Buddies we

		<p>offer Get Online and IT Basic sessions at all sites.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We continue to inspire children through our Coding Clubs and our involvement in the SHIFT programme funded by Arts Council England, run jointly by Cultural Economy and Libraries teams to deliver a wide range of digital creativity events. • We also run Work Clubs on a weekly basis in a number of our libraries, providing access to online resources and 1:1 support to those looking for work.
Delivery Fibre through the planning system		<p>Engagement with developers and house builders to encourage them to include provision for ICT infrastructure in new developments.</p> <p>To encourage private developers to include provision in new developments Cheshire East Council has included a condition in the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy. The condition requires developers to ‘work with appropriate providers to deliver the necessary physical infrastructure to accommodate information and digital communications (ICT) networks as an integral part of all appropriate new developments.’</p> <p>Government has announced an intention to make it a requirement for developers to include the necessary enabling infrastructure in all new build housing units in the future.</p>
Support small and medium-sized businesses to exploit the benefits of faster broadband	A successful Superfast Business Programme was run during 2013 – 5 which supported over 900 SMEs across Cheshire. Two additional Women in Broadband programmes were also run to support female entrepreneurs, and a third round of support is expected to	On behalf of the Connecting Cheshire Partnership the Council’s Skills and Growth Company is delivering Digital 2020: Digital Support Programme. The Digital 2020 Programme is part funded by the European Regional Development Fund under Priority Axis 2:

and digital technology	be bid for in late 2016.	<p>Enhancing Access to, and Use and Quality of, Information and Communications Technology.</p> <p>The Digital 2020: Digital Support Programme is designed to help businesses maximise digital technology. The programme is demand led and targets those enterprises which have the greatest capability to reap productivity benefits. This support will be delivered through an initial diagnostic and a series of intensive, bespoke, demand led master classes and one to one coaching.</p> <p>It is envisaged that the programme will support approx. 120 businesses in the region by Spring 2020. In addition, the Skills and Growth Company refers businesses to relevant seminars on Industry 4.0 and digital marketing delivered by other providers.</p>
Work with mobile phone operators to lobby for increased 4G coverage in rural areas	Although outside the scope of the Connecting Cheshire programme, engagement with mobile providers has been undertaken to help drive greater coverage. Government has committed to ensuring 98% of homes/businesses have access to 4G services outside by 2018	<p>Mobile coverage has significantly improved over recent years, with 87% of UK landmass having a 4G signal from at least one operator (compared to 78% in 2017). However, coverage in rural areas remains a challenge. The Council's Skills and Growth Company has had regular dialogue with large corporate telecom providers such as Virgin Media, Vodafone and BT/Openreach regarding their plans for further roll-out of fibre and 4G across rural areas and ongoing challenges of commercial viability of rural connectivity and challenging digital exclusion.</p> <p>In addition, there has been regular dialogue with smaller providers such as Vispa, ITS, Internet Central offering wireless broadband services. As appropriate</p>

		the team have helped providers engage with communities and implement community schemes. The Council's Skills and Growth Company promote government voucher schemes such as the Gigiabit and Better Broadband Schemes for those premises receiving the lowest speeds or outside current roll-out.
Work with the Government to accelerate deployment of 5G and next generation coverage in rural areas		<p>The Connecting Cheshire Partnership lobby policy makers within Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to ensure continued support for rural connectivity funding and emerging technology such as 5G utilising existing relationships with local MP's.</p> <p>This includes support for full-fibre networks and public Wi-Fi where appropriate, and 'narrowband' to support the rollout of the Internet of Things (IoT) and smart technologies in rural areas.</p>
Address digital exclusion	<p>Developed 'Digital Champions' scheme and implemented I-Tea and Chat schemes in a range of community settings via a pilot Digital Inclusion Co-ordinator role with shared funding from Connecting Cheshire, CEC's Digital Strategy Team and Adult Social Care.</p> <p><i>Digital inclusion strategy being developed</i></p>	<p>The Council's Skills and Growth Company engages with local colleges and apprenticeship providers to highlight the importance of the digital inclusion agenda.</p> <p>The Council's Skills and Growth Company is working with the LEP to develop an expression of interest for DCMS funding for a Local Digital Skills Partnership for the sub region.</p> <p>Through the employer led digital and creative group WEAVE, CEC has created an evidence base of the digital skills challenges facing both local businesses and residents, which has supported the LEPs activities.</p>
Focused planning for a green and sustainable place		
Put our residents first and secure sustainable	4 neighbourhood Plans have now been 'made' including 3 in rural parishes. Plans in other rural parishes such as	18 neighbourhood plans have now been 'made' including 8 in rural Parishes. Plans in other rural

development: delivering what we need and want, rather than what developers want	Marston are now nearing completion. This helps ensure decisions match local aspirations.	parishes such as Calveley, Acton, Eaton and Moston are now nearing completion. This helps ensure decisions match local aspirations.
Make planning in Cheshire East an exemplar, ensuring that decisions are sustainable		Local Plan Strategy adopted in June 2017 and work has advanced significantly on the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document with a first draft published for consultation across September and October 2018. Examination on the Community Infrastructure Levy is now complete with adoption of this charging schedule anticipated in the first quarter of 2019. Housing Monitoring Update soon to be published which confirms the authority's strong position on housing land and good progress being made on Minerals and Waste DPD, Crewe Area Action plan and a series of Supplementary Planning Documents all of which contribute to establishing a joined up planning framework through which sustainable planning decisions can be made
Set up a design panel of architects, designers and residents to review the design aspect of new developments		Not instigated – however such a panel was formed to feed into the development of the Cheshire East Design Guide which underpins decision making on design issues.
Implement a food and farming local development order for food enterprise	Food Enterprise Zone plans launched at Reaseheath College	Food Enterprise Zone project completed 2017, launched at Reaseheath College with Local development Order
Improve the pre-application advice we give to prospective developers		The updated and refreshed planning framework being introduced via the Local Plan and it's associated documents improves our ability to give clearer pre-application advice

<p>Set out tougher requirements that applicants have to meet when they submit a planning application</p>	<p>Progress with the Cheshire East Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans ensures that planning applications need to address a wider range of policy considerations.</p>	<p>Progress with the Cheshire East Local Plan, its associated part two document (the SADPD), the Cheshire East Design Guide and Neighbourhood Plans ensures that planning applications need to address a wider range of detailed policy considerations. Neighbourhood plans in particular have allowed communities to take up the opportunity of setting out their own priorities to be considered when determining planning applications</p>
<p>Develop environmental guidance to ensure a more robust analysis of issues such as design, landscape biodiversity, heritage, etc</p>	<p>In July the Council completed a study into Best & Most Versatile Agricultural land. This provides detailed analysis of the threats / opportunities facing soil fertility and food production. Landscape partnership project developed with National Trust to develop evidence base to inform future management and policy in northern part of the borough linked to 'quality of place'.</p>	<p>Cheshire East Design Guide adopted May 2017 to drive up the design quality of new residential development schemes. Landscape Character Assessment completed in 2018. Review of Local Landscape Designations completed in 2018. Ecological Network Mapping carried out across the whole Borough in 2017 in line with national planning policy. A Green Infrastructure Assessment undertaken as a baseline for developing a Green Infrastructure Plan.</p>
<p>Strong, supportive rural places and communities – helping people live better for longer</p>		<p>Review/update</p>
<p>Develop rural community hubs and provide local services within local communities</p>	<p>Ongoing development of rural community networks in places such as Wrenbury, Worleston and Poynton that utilise local assets such as people and skills, and enable groups to provide vital social, educational and recreational activities in local venues.</p>	<p>Connected Communities Centres have now been established in Audlem, Congleton, Poynton and Knutsford, with more to be launched in other rural towns within the next few months. The centres aim to deliver services tailored for their community, such as coffee mornings, computer classes and line dancing, or</p>

		sharing a problem and support for stroke sufferers. Every centre has a computer tablet connected to our Live Well community information website so residents can easily find information, advice, activities and services in the area.
Develop collaborative working with town and parish councils	Held regular Town and Parish Council Conferences, have regular engagement with ChALC, helped support the development of Town Partnerships to enhance work of town councils, attend parish council meetings to share information and build relationships with ward and local councillors	<p>Work closely with ChALC to support CEC engagement with Town and Parish Councils, and with ChALC co-ordinate joint T&PC Conferences twice a year.</p> <p>Provide grant support to Town and Community Partnerships which are independent groups, established and led by the local community. They vary to meet local needs, but their overall purpose is to improve the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of their area. Town and Community Partnerships are active in: Wilmslow, Poynton, Middlewich, Sandbach, Congleton, Holmes Chapel, Alsager, and Nantwich.</p> <p>Regular meetings held with individual town and parish councils in 2017 and 2018 to inform the preparation of the First Draft Site Allocations and Development Policies Document</p>
Transfer assets locally, where it makes sense	Over 40 assets have been transferred to date and a process being developed to help facilitate a more streamlined approach	53 assets have been transferred to date and CEC approved an Asset Transfer Framework in July 2016 to provide a consistent and transparent process for all asset transfer applications received. The process includes a 'Scoring Matrix' to prioritise each 'Expression of Interest'.
Support resident-led Neighbourhood Plans	Dedicated Planning Officer leading on supporting interested parishes	Dedicated neighbourhood planning team in place to support communities to prepare plans. Of the 18 plans made so far, 11 are in primarily Rural parishes.

<p>Help retain local facilities like pubs, post offices, village halls and access to cultural activity</p>	<p>Actively work with communities to support them, have a clear Community Right to Bid process to enable communities to nominate assets important to them, vibrant Rural Touring Arts programme</p>	<p>Community Development Officers actively work with rural groups and communities to support their development.</p> <p>A clear Community Right to Bid process enables communities to nominate assets, such as pubs, that are important to them. To date 19 assets have been listed including public houses, allotment sites, a country park and a chapel.</p> <p>The number of rural promoter venues on the Rural Touring Scheme in Cheshire East has been maintained delivering a vibrant Rural Touring Arts programme.</p>
<p>Help to create a sense of community</p>	<p>Local Engagement Officer support provided to help communities to bring about social change and improve the quality of life in their local area through empowerment and active participation. Cheshire Community Action is funded to provide Community Agents and support specific engagement work with our more isolated rural communities.</p>	<p>Community Development Officers have established 17 Neighbourhood Partnerships across Cheshire East, mainly in areas of deprivation. Partnerships are made up of a range of organisations relevant to the area and generally will include (but are not limited to) Police, children's centre, schools, faith sector, local community groups, Youth Service, local area co-ordinators, Youth Offending Team, local councillors, health organisations, residents, businesses. Out of these there are partnerships established that cover more rural areas such as Alsager and Radway, Bollin, Congleton and Bromley Farm, Dane Valley, Poynton Area</p>
<p>Keep Cheshire East a safe place to live</p>	<p>Safer Cheshire East Partnership meetings. Community Wardens able to address issues of littering, fly tipping and dog nuisance</p>	<p>Safer Cheshire East Partnership (SCEP) brings partners together to provide strategic leadership to reduce crime, protect our communities from crime and help people to feel safer. SCEP takes a 'Resident First' approach, working with communities to identify and</p>

		<p>address local issues.</p> <p>The Community Warden Service addresses public concerns in relation to Crime and Disorder and tackles issues in relation to Anti-Social Behaviour such as littering, fly tipping and dog nuisance. This is achieved by working in partnership with the local community and other agencies to provide a safer environment in which to live work and visit.</p>
Encourage respect for rural communities		A Portfolio Holder with a specific responsibility for “Rural Affairs”. Ongoing development of the Rural Action Plan
Keep our green spaces and open countryside well maintained, conserved and accessible	<p>Countryside Ranger services, Rights of Way and Tatton Park deliver services to keep our green spaces and open countryside well maintained, conserved and accessible. Rights of way improvement plan adopted. Supporting LEP study into ‘Quality of place’.</p>	<p>Green Space Strategy updated in 2018.</p> <p>Open Space Survey update completed in 2018.</p>
Help people to find ways to do things that will improve their wellbeing	<p>Everybody Sport and Leisure and Public Health Team delivering a range of activities. Review of Health and Wellbeing Strategy in 2016. ‘Healthy walks’ projects for areas around Crewe, Congleton and Knutsford. Participatory Budgeting initiative in Autumn 2016 – enables community groups to bid for funding for innovative local projects that will address health inequalities, with local communities deciding themselves which should receive a grant</p>	<p>Public Health Team, Communities team and Everybody Sport and Recreation delivering a range of initiatives and activities such as Self Care, Know Your Numbers and One You Cheshire East.</p> <p>The Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-21 identifies an outcome for creating a place that supports health and wellbeing in Cheshire. There is significant demand on services, high costs to the system and local demographic pressures which continue to put pressure on the Cheshire East health and care system. There is a new vision for place-based health and people must be empowered to take greater control over their own lives, to influence personalised services and to take greater responsibility for their health outcomes. Every</p>

		<p>community in Cheshire East is different and local solutions will reflect the local challenges.</p> <p>The Participatory Budgeting initiative in 2016/17 resulted in over 70 local projects from across the borough receiving funding for activities to help address health inequalities.</p>
Promote the achievements of our rural communities	PACE e- newsletter, circulated to over 2000 email addresses every 2 months, shares stories and promotes activities and events.	Connected Communities e-newsletter, circulated to approximately 1,300 email addresses every 2 months, shares stories and promotes activities and events.
Good access for residents, businesses and visitors		
Make sure public transport routes needed by our rural communities are supported	Local Transport Plan – Strategy 2011-2026	<p>In addition to the Council undertaking a supported bus review in 2017, which retained public transport coverage to approximately 98% of Cheshire East households including a number of rural communities, a review of Little Bus is currently being undertaken. The review seeks to ensure that Little Bus works efficiently for the whole borough, including rural areas.</p> <p>The Council is currently updating its LTP which is due to be adopted in 2019. The borough-wide strategy covers rural areas, and includes a 'Rural Area Profile' detailing the challenges that rural areas face.</p> <p>The Council is also planning on developing a series of Town Plans for the principal towns and key service centres within Cheshire East. These will look at the surrounding areas including rural areas so that every location across the borough is covered.</p>
Encourage community transport schemes	Grant funding provided to enable schemes to be developed e.g. Poynton Community Bus and Cheshire Community Action	The Council has supported community transport. In 2016, 6 vehicles were gifted to community transport schemes across the borough. The Council will

		continue to seek opportunities for further funding to support community transport schemes. .
<p>Work with rural community groups and parish councils to identify danger hotspots on country roads</p>	<p>Route Management Reviews on key A roads carried out.</p> <p>Work with key stakeholders, including Cheshire Constabulary and Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service (CFRS), to address road safety across the borough. These include the Cheshire East Road Safety officers meeting and Exec Board. Cheshire Road Safety Group, Safer Cheshire East Partnership etc.,</p> <p>The Council delivers is Road Safety Education through CFRS. As part of this, CFRS go into the Borough's primary and secondary schools annually to deliver road safety education to Key Stage 2 and 4 pupils.</p> <p>The Highway Service has been working with Network Rail (NR) to improve or install vehicle restraint measures where NR has identified a high risk of vehicles leaving the carriageway and landing on railway lines. This programme has been running for several years and will be completed in 2019.</p>	<p>Delivery of annual road safety works LTP programme focused on addressing worst cluster sites for road traffic injury collision sites.</p> <p>CEC Highways run annual programme of bi-annual local Area Highway Group meetings. These raise issue of local concern and help to develop and determine the annual LTP programme of local Area Highway Group schemes.</p> <p>The annual programmes are approved and published via the Council's website. The Highway Service attend meetings, on request, to discuss specific issues that are of concern to Parish & Town Councils.</p> <p>A new 4 year Road Safety Education agreement with Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service is being implemented by the Highway Service in 2019.</p> <p>The Council Highway Service has been successful with all three of its bids to the Department for Transport (DfT) for Safer Roads funding. The two that serve rural communities are the A536 Congleton to Macclesfield and the A537 Buxton Road, Macclesfield to County boundary. The DfT has allocated funding for these commencing 2020-21.</p> <p>The Council completed a vehicle restraint barrier scheme on the A54 between Bosley and the A537 Buxton Road in November 2018. Installing a 300m</p>

		long reinforced concreted deck slab, cantilevering over the down slope and providing support for the vehicle restraint system within the Peak District National Park.
Continue to deliver improvements on the public rights of way network	Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2011-2026 The ROWIP for Cheshire East has been developed through consultation with members of the public, user groups and parish and town councils. The document covers the period 2011-2026. This strategy is integrated into the Local Transport Plan in recognition of walking and cycling as means of travel. Cheshire East Local Access Forum works to balance the desire for greater public access to the countryside with the needs of landowners and land managers and to ensure the natural environment is not damaged as a result. It also gives advice to planners of major housing and transport developments about protecting existing public rights of way and incorporating the needs of walkers, cyclists, horse riders etc	The Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2011-26 is being delivered through 4 yearly implementation plans. The current plan expires in 2019. Delivery of a plan after 2019 will be in line with the Local Transport Plan and related strategies (such as Green Infrastructure, Cycling Strategy and Local Plan). The Local Access Forum has evolved in to The Cheshire East Countryside Access Forum which continues to work to balance the desire for greater public access to the countryside with the needs of landowners and land managers and to ensure the natural environment is not damaged as a result.
With partners, continue to seek investment in rural active travel routes, such as canal towpaths, through development opportunities	Local Transport Plan, Cycling Strategy	Local Transport Plan, Cycling Strategy; development of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) for Congleton, Macclesfield and Wilmslow with technical support from DfT; Local Growth funding via the LEP for Connect 2 northern extension in Crewe and cycling packages in Wilmslow
Work with communities to bring speed limits down around schools to 30mph	Substantial investment in 20 mph scheme for all schools across Cheshire East – Phase 1 to complete in March 2016	Substantial investment in 20 mph scheme for all CEC schools across the Borough – Phase 1 was completed in March 2016. This phase included Stapley Broad Lane Primary School located on Broad Lane, within a rural area of Nantwich and three Middlewich schools, Park Road Primary, St Mary’s Catholic Primary and Middlewich High School.

		<p>Phase 2 was completed in March 2017 and included Cledford Primary school located on Long Lane South, in a residential area of Middlewich and Bridgemere Primary school located on Hunsterston Road in a rural area of Nantwich.</p> <p>Finally, Phase 3 was completed in March 2018. Schools in this phase included Tytherington High School located on Manchester Road, in an urban suburb of Macclesfield and Pebble Brook Primary School located on Balmoral Avenue, in a densely residential area of Crewe.</p> <p>Sustainable Modes of Travel to Schools (SMOTS) strategy developed and adopted July 2018. SMOTS includes a Safer Routes to School programme, to provide capital funding to implement measures identified by School Travel Plans.</p> <p>A monitoring exercise is currently under way covering these schools.</p>
Introduce more '20 is Plenty' areas	See above	The introduction of the Councils Speed Management Strategy in September 2016 provides a robust framework for speed limit evaluation and implementation. The Strategy provides specific guidance on 20mph areas to ensure there is a consistent and transparent approach to the application of this lower speed limit.
Effectively-targeted funding		
Aim for 97% of our schools to be rated 'good' or 'outstanding'	1. As of December 2016, the overall position for Ofsted Inspections for Cheshire east Schools showed that 25.2% were outstanding and 65.8% were judged good – creating	1. As of December 2018, the overall position for Ofsted Inspections for Cheshire east Schools showed that 25.2% were outstanding and 63.2% were judged good

<p>this year – up from 93.6% in 2014.</p>	<p>an overall position of 91% of schools in the top two gradings</p> <p>2. The challenge of striving for an improved percentage over considerable lengths of time (2014-16) is that there are regular changes to the Ofsted framework which results in an increased focus on schools where there is increased vulnerability especially in terms of data. This means that the likelihood of some schools dropping into requires improvement from good is increased.</p> <p>3. Over this time period, significant changes have taken place to national attainment and progress measures which show that the ability to compare trends over time is statistically invalid. Therefore, Ofsted Inspections will be looking at different performance data between 2014 and 2016 which will impact on overall gradings.</p> <p>4. Therefore, the position at this point is that the local authority continues to perform strongly in terms of Ofsted outcomes and works with all schools to ensure they are fully prepared for an inspection.</p> <p>5. During this time period (2014 – 16) the Local Authority has been proactive in providing CPD sessions to brief schools on Ofsted Inspection frameworks as well as targeting schools through a ‘Getting to Good’ programme. This involves direct liaison with Ofsted HMI Inspections in supporting schools to be fully prepared for an inspection.</p>	<p>– creating an overall position of 88.4% of schools in the top two gradings.</p> <p>2. Again, this slight change in the percentages reflects the national drive to target inspections in schools which are at or below the floor standards or which are referred to as ‘coasting’ schools. This trend is happening nationally and therefore this slight reduction in the overall position is not specific to Cheshire East.</p> <p>3. A further and significant factor which needs to be carefully considered here is that as of Dec. 2018, 50% of our schools are now academies. This makes the role of school improvement and the ability to closely monitor performance more challenging as the accountability for outcomes is shared between the Local Authority and the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC). The LA has strong liaison with the RSC to provide both support and challenge to academy schools where outcomes are considered vulnerable.</p> <p>4. The Local Authority has been proactive in strengthening its categorisation of schools and increasing its use of sector leads who are now seen as the key driver for school improvement. Recently distributed letters to schools included both strengths and alerts to schools where there were areas for improvement which were seen to be needed.</p> <p>5. The Local Authority has been successful in securing considerable national funding to lead a school improvement programme targeting 20 CE schools where there are increased levels of vulnerability from Ofsted Inspection. This programme is progressing well and it’s targeted at improving outcomes for</p>
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		disadvantaged learners and in maths.
Promote shared procurement of services and federation working between our rural schools	<p>1. The increasing move towards academisation and the previous national directive that all schools should move to become an academy (later rescinded) has minimised the option of federation between small and rural schools. Some rural schools have already made the move to become an academy and are successfully working in multi-academy trusts involving structured governance and leadership arrangements.</p> <p>2. Certain rural schools are Diocesan schools and the requirements for such schools to work within a structured Diocesan solution adds additional factors to be considered in any change in formal structural solutions.</p> <p>3. The Local Authority has been proactive in holding events for schools to consider the implications of federation and academisation. The position of the Authority is not one to promote any structural solutions but to allow proper and detailed dialogue within local communities to seek solutions which are the best for individual schools.</p> <p>4. The Local Authority continues to recognise the importance of rural schools in terms of discussions and decisions taken regarding school funding arrangements as overseen through the schools forum.</p>	<p>1. The Local Authority has held events in 2018 to consider the needs of existing maintained schools and how best to support such schools going forward.</p> <p>2. Draft discussion documents on rural schools and maintained schools have been prepared with briefing events planned with school leaders and governors for the spring term to progress this agenda.</p> <p>3. Where leadership in rural schools has become an issue – often due to funding challenges, collaborative working has been encouraged to promote an executive leadership model across certain groups of schools. This has happened in MATs but also where there is a need in maintained schools.</p> <p>4. Where appropriate, federations are still being considered as a sustainable solution.</p> <p>5. Consultation is currently taking place through schools forum on how best to support all schools through national funding parameters.</p>
Listen and work with our rural residents and businesses to design and deliver services		Neighbourhood Partnerships set their local priorities and implement activities to address issues. Early Help Framework developed and co-production approach to commissioning of services implemented, will take into account the needs of service users.
Ensure the challenges of rural service delivery are fully specified and	Contributed to 2015 Defra/DCLG consultation regarding the costs of delivering rural services	Contributed to 2015 Defra/DCLG consultation regarding the costs of delivering rural services

scoped out		
Ensure the Council's commissioning plans address the differing requirements of rural populations	Review of commissioning taking place in 2016 will enable a rural focus	Early Help Framework developed and co-production approach to commissioning of services implemented. New Homes Bonus implementation in late 2018/early 2019 enables 7 areas covering Cheshire East to set their high level priorities and invite funding applications from a range of sources.
'Rural proofing' in decision making		
Ensure we put rural interests at the heart of decision making.	A Portfolio Holder with a specific responsibility for "Rural Affairs" Cheshire East standard report template contains a set heading: "Rural Community Implications". This requires authors to carefully consider the implications of formal Cabinet decisions for rural communities.	A Portfolio Holder with a specific responsibility for "Rural Affairs" Cheshire East Decision Report template contains a set heading: "Rural Community Implications". This requires authors to carefully consider the implications of formal Cabinet decisions for rural communities
Hold annual 'rural proofing' workshops – to review processes, raise awareness and train staff		Rural Strategy Workshops for Portfolio Holders and key strategic officers established by the Portfolio Holder with Lead for Rural Affairs. These workshops raise awareness of rural matters and have ensured that a consistent approach was taken to review how our existing strategies deliver on the rural agenda, and to identify those gaps that need to be addressed in future strategies and plans
Use our connections to engage with key independent rural experts to critically review policy	Membership of LEP Rural Strategy Board, linked to LEADER Local Action Group, regular dialogue with ChALC	CEC has membership of LEP Rural Strategy Board, is linked to the LEADER Local Action Group, and is in regular dialogue with ChALC
Develop an online forum for discussion of rural issues and ideas		No resource available to implement this measure
Take the lead from the		2018 Rural Action Planning exercise will identify any

<p>Defra independent rural proofing implementation review – and aim to mainstream rural evidence in all our policies and programmes</p>		<p>evidence in existing CEC Strategies, Policies and Programmes</p>
<p>Use the evidence from ‘rural proofing’ to continue to lobby central Government for a fair deal for rural communities</p>	<p>Cheshire East Council is a member of the Rural Services Network</p>	<p>Cheshire East Council is a member of the Rural Services Network</p>