

A summary of responses to Cheshire East Council's

Budget Engagement 2021 – 2025



Executive summary

Overall views on the budget

45% of respondents agreed the council spends money wisely, 32% disagreed.

Respondents were split on how next year's budget shortfall should be made up:

- 43% felt it should be made up through further money saving proposals.
- 38% felt though higher increases in council tax.
- 19% felt through increased prices for services.

Key feedback received

The key themes that respondents fed back on during the engagement included:

Open – Investment and savings proposals

Financial sustainability, Pay awards – Respondents were generally against incremental pay increases for staff, particularly those staff earning high wages, especially during the current crisis. They felt staff pay should be frozen.

Fair – Investment and savings proposals

Reduce Reliance, Complex & Care Provider – There was opposition to the freezing of fees from providers, see emails 4 & 5 in Appendix 1.

Reduce Reliance, PFI Subsidy – Respondents felt the PFI subsidy needs reducing, and that it was wrong to provide this subsidy whilst other services were being cut.

Best Start, Development and Partnership Service – There was opposition to the 50% cuts proposed for this service.

Green – Investment and savings proposals

Great Place, Gypsy / Traveller transit site – Respondents questioned this investment.

Environment, House building – Planning and development is another topic which respondents have strong opinion on, there were complaints made here about the amount of development the council is approving.

Environment, Carbon Neutral Planning – Respondents felt the 2025 Carbon Neutral target date was too soon, that the council would not be able to achieve this, and that spending on this should be limited until the current crisis is dealt with.

Transport, Car parking – There was opposition to the harmonisation of car parking charges across the borough.

Transport, Local bus services – There was opposition to further cuts to bus services in the borough.

General feedback

The Green Agenda – This is a very popular current issue, and one which divides opinion somewhat. Whilst some feel the council must do much more, and spend much more, on delivering the green agenda, others feel that spending on this issue should be delayed until the current covid crisis is dealt with.

Outsourcing and agency staff – Raised as an area of concern by respondents, and perceived as an area where taxpayer money is wasted. Respondents sought reassurance money was spent wisely here, and one member of staff suggested ways savings could be made in this area (see email 1 in Appendix 1).

HWRCs and Highways – These were the 2 issues most commented on that were not directly referenced in investment or savings proposals. Closure of HWRCs is a significant concern for respondents, and respondents always want to see investment in the roads as this is, and has been, one of their main concerns for many years.

Performance reporting – Respondents wanted the council to be more transparent about its spending, and to publish more, and clearer, information about how its budget is spent. They wanted breakdowns by directorate, location, and by key services, and wanted information presenting simply, using charts and videos.

Engagement success

An Engagement Hub

For the first time the council created an Engagement Hub to promote the budget consultation. The purpose of this was to make the consultation more engaging, and to increase the number of responses received.

The Engagement Hub incorporated a short video introducing the engagement, as well as other features such as surveys, story boards and a public comments board.

An increased response

The engagement received 313 responses in total, and had 93 video views, and while this is up from the 103 responses received last year, it is still a fairly limited response given there are over 380,000 people living in the borough.

Respondents fed back how they thought the council could improve the way it engages on the budget in future.

Conclusions

Overall views on the budget

It is positive to see that 45% of respondents agree the council spends money wisely, this gives the council a good foundation of trust to build upon.

Respondents were fairly split on how next year's budget shortfall should be made up – split between further money saving proposals, and between an increase in council tax.

While some can afford to pay increased council tax , it does seem clear that those who disagree council tax should be increased would be significantly affected by any increase if introduced, particularly during the covid-19 crisis.

Key feedback received

The actual feedback received on specific investments and savings was fairly limited, but this is provided in detail within the report. Respondents have highlighted key areas of concern, and we did also receive some lengthy and informed emails and comments which deserve attention and a response – NHS Cheshire CCG in particular submitted a detailed response on several of the proposals (see appendices 1 & 2).

Generally speaking, the issues respondents seemed to be most concerned with included:

- Social care services
- Car parking and highways
- HWRCs
- Local bus services
- Outsourcing and agency staff
- Planning and development
- Staff pay
- The green agenda

Respondents also called for more, and clearer, financial information to be made available, to help them understand how the council spends taxpayer money.

Engagement success

It is positive that the budget engagement this year achieved an increased response as compared to last year, with 313 responses in total.

That and the good interaction with the Engagement Hub has been positive to see, and alongside the feedback received on improving the engagement in future, gives the council a good engagement platform to build on.

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Report produced 11 January 2021 by Ben Buckley of the Research and Consultation Team, Cheshire East Council. Email RandC@cheshireeast.gov.uk for further information.

Introduction

Purpose of the Engagement

Between December 2020 and January 2021 Cheshire East residents and other stakeholders were invited to get involved in the council's budget engagement, which runs every year.

The budget engagement outlined council priorities, how it is investing to achieve them, and how it must change to live within its means over the next few years.

Results from the engagement will then inform the adoption of the council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, due [to be voted on at full Council on 17 February 2021](#).

Engagement methodology

For the first time the council created an "Engagement Hub" on the council website to help promote the budget engagement.

The "Engagement Hub" incorporated [a short video from the council Leader and Deputy Leader to introduce the engagement](#).

It also gave respondents a number of different ways of feeding back on the engagement, including through a survey, a storyboard, email, social media, or through a comments board on the Engagement Hub itself.

The engagement was also widely promoted, most notably though:

- [The council's Digital Influence Panel](#)
- [Media releases](#).

Number of responses

In total, there were 313 engagement responses, and 93 video views. Responses included:

- 216 survey completions
- 75 storyboard completions
- 14 Engagement Hub comments
- 8 direct emails.

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Budget Engagement 2021 - 2025

Introduction

Cheshire East Council provides more than 500 services for approximately 382,400 residents. From gritting roads to looking after vulnerable people, hundreds of council services are accessed every single day.

As your council, we have a responsibility to deliver cost effective services in a way that provides our residents with value for money and to ensure every penny is accounted for and spent wisely to deliver so many vital local services which support the needs of local people.

The following budget engagement explains how Cheshire East Council sets its budget, and shows what its spending plans for the next few years look like.

Watch the launch video below, or read a transcript of the video (PDF, 78KB).



View and feed back on this engagement

You can view and feed back either via:

- [Budget Engagement 2021 - 2025 survey \(opens new window\)](#)
- [Budget Engagement 2021 - 2025 storyboard \(opens new window\)](#)
- [Downloading a PDF version of the engagement survey \(PDF, 462KB\) \(opens new window\)](#)

Other ways to feed back on this budget engagement

- Email RandC@cheshireeast.gov.uk
- Write to Research and Consultation, Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach, CW11 1HZ
- Tweet @CheshireEast #CECBudget
- [Provide your comments below](#)

If you would like to receive these proposals in an alternative format, or submit your response in a different way, please call 0300 123 55 00 or email RandC@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Engagement timeline

- 2 December 2020 - Budget Engagement starts
- 8 January 2021 - Budget Engagement closes
- 17 February 2021 - Council to finalise the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2021 - 2025

Future involvement

If you enjoy taking part in council engagements, and would like to be kept informed about future ones, [join our Digital Influence Panel \(opens new window\)](#).

Your comments

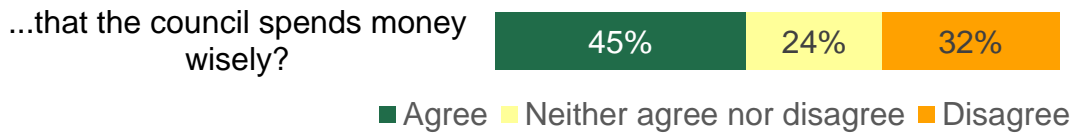
Add your comments about the Budget Engagement below.

Overall views on the budget 2021 – 2025

Spending money wisely

45% of respondents agreed the council spends money wisely, 32% disagreed.

To what extent do you agree or disagree...

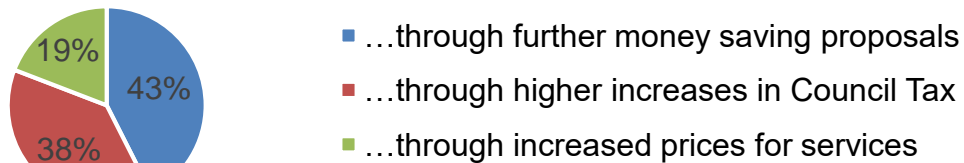


Number of responses = 276

Making up next year's budget shortfall

43% of respondents stated that they would prefer next year's budget shortfall to be made up through further money saving proposals, 38% said they would prefer higher increases in Council Tax, and 19% said through increased prices for services.

Generally speaking, would you prefer next year's budget shortfall to be made up...



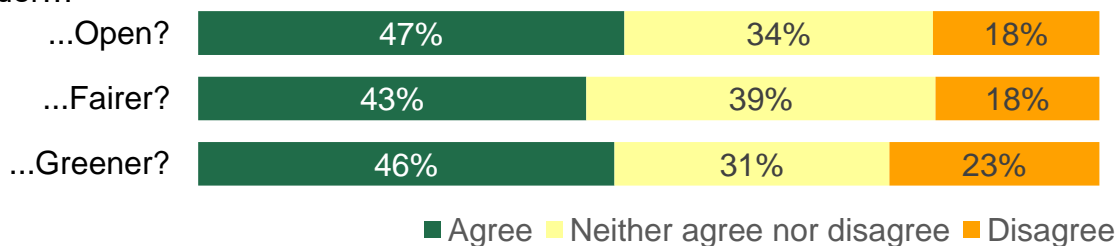
Number of responses = 261

Level of agreement with the proposed investment and savings

Respondents were generally in agreement with the proposed investments and savings under each of the Corporate Plan aims Open, Fairer and Greener.

On average 46% of respondents agreed with the investments and savings, 20% disagreed, and 34% neither agreed nor disagreed.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the investments and savings under...



Number of responses between 253 and 262

Managing the impacts of covid-19

54% of respondents agreed the council is managing the impacts of covid-19 effectively, 15% disagreed.

To what extent do you agree or disagree...



Number of responses = 271

General comments on the budget engagement

Throughout the engagement respondents made a number of general comments. These comments have been summarised below, with count totals given next to each comment and comment heading.

| The proposals | 6 |
|--|----------|
| The proposals look good. | 2 |
| More transparency is needed on how the list of proposals was chosen. | 2 |
| The proposals don't cater for a post-covid world. | 1 |
| More savings should have been proposed. | 1 |

| The Budget Engagement material | 35 |
|--|-----------|
| Lack of information to give an opinion – It is good that the council is trying to be open regarding its budget, but how is anyone meant to appraise this? Where is the detail? Two paragraphs to support nearly £7m of what? It is difficult to make any judgement in the absence of genuine evidence. Are the plans actual or are they concepts? The headings are so broad that it is not reasonable without detailed knowledge to take any firm view. What's the impact of proposals? There is no indication as to how the numbers quoted in the document are arrived at. It's all deliberately woolly, it must be clearer, and more specific, so people know what is being proposed. If you're going to bother consulting on this, make it clear, otherwise don't bother and save us all some time. | 23 |
| Lack of plain English is a barrier to giving an opinion – You've done this annoying thing where you've written in politics language, to be transparent write in lay-man terms and be more concise. There's lots of corporate jargon in the document which is warm and woolly management consultant waffle. How can anyone make a rational judgement of something so esoteric? Half of this is a mystery to me – what is pathfinder for example? 'Corporate Parenting' is an Orwellian piece of jargon. Anybody know what this means: "Therefore, growth is proposed to remove this income target from for the budget."? "Fairer" means absolutely nothing to the average citizen in the context of spending decisions. People just want to know how much is being spent on potholes, bins and social services compared to last year and how it compares to other LAs, otherwise it's just self-serving management speak. | 10 |
| Information is misinterpreted – Respondents were not clear about which figures in the tables were investments, and which were savings. | 2 |

| Council spending | 16 |
|--|-----------|
| Spend money wisely – Get a grip, stop investing, stop pleading poverty. Spend on key priorities such as roads and not vanity projects to appear virtuous. | 5 |
| Council tax rise – Strongly opposed to this, especially as the public will also be struggling with the pandemic. | 3 |
| Alternative funding – Seeking alternative funding can be harmful, some cuts could do long term harm. Efficiencies driven by cost saving activity are a false economy for the vulnerable individuals we support and the people of CE. | 3 |

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| The council must reduce staff – There are too many managers, and not enough front line workers. They always reduce front line services but manage to spend lots of money on themselves and their buildings. | 3 |
| Saving suggestions – Ask the Taxpayers Alliance to conduct a financial review and make saving suggestions. | 1 |
| Efficiency savings are preferred to the cutting of services. | 1 |

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| The Green agenda – For and against | 24 |
| The green agenda is very important, climate change is the biggest threat facing mankind. The council must do as much as it possibly can, it is afraid to make bold decisions on this agenda. Plant 1m trees, install solar panels on every council building and council house, push to get us a hydrogen fuel station here in CE, reduce car use, encourage greater public transport use, pollution is high and litter is everywhere. More focus is needed on improving the environment and reducing reliance on cars, and increasing electric car use. More charging points are needed, but no investment for these is identified in this document. | 17 |
| There is too much focus on the green agenda – In present times becoming greener is the last of my worries, deal with the present crisis and in better days plan for the future. Focus on core services, and not "tree hugging". It is easy to be green and a socialist when you have money, but at the moment we are much poorer due to covid, and therefore must delay green spending on initiatives. | 7 |

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| The People Directorate | 10 |
| People Directorate & Children's Services – It is good to see investment here, this needs protecting as a priority particularly as the population ages. Prioritising the vulnerable is vital, and the council must not reduce funding for Children's Services. The council does not really have a choice regarding spending in this area. However, there is always an overspend here which must be dealt with. | 10 |

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| General comments | 26 |
| Outsourcing – Outsourcing isn't necessarily cheaper or safe. I feel that a lot of money is wasted in contracting out services, I do not consider that (outsourcing) results in anything other than 'accounting' savings, in other words savings that appear in the books but, in the long run do not result in genuine economies. Would it not be wiser to bring some services back in house have things based centrally and allow all the collective knowledge skills and experience deal with the issues. | 4 |
| Agency staff and consultancy spend savings - See email 1 in Appendix 1. | 1 |
| Commissioned services – Commissioners need to really understand the people and services that they are commissioning services for, I feel at the moment there is a lack of understanding at times about how services are run or what people need. Most health and social care organisations struggle with the stand-off between commissioners and providers; we need to see more than simply moving money around within the same financial envelope. | 4 |
| Planning – There is too much development going on, which must stop. Why are you building car dependent housing estates away from urban areas, how does this fit with the green agenda? Money could be raised by increasing fees for planning applications and ensuring S106 contributions are paid in full. | 4 |

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| Levelling up – To make a place better by supporting the weak you level down. Supporting the strong moving forward will drag others up. | 2 |
| Fairer – Nothing is free and Fair will now cost so stick to helping those that can't help themselves. Everyone deserves fair treatment. | 2 |
| Middlewich always gets overlooked / is the poor relation. | 2 |
| Make use of the plethora of brain power available in CE, especially the large numbers of retired academics, clinicians, financiers and industrialists who live in the borough. | 1 |
| Service reviews – It will be hard for service users to hear some services are going to be reviewed again. | 1 |
| Red tape – There is too much. | 1 |
| Partnership working – Any new proposals must be well thought out and done in partnership. | 1 |
| Inward investment post covid-19 – See email 3 in Appendix 1. | 1 |
| Adult Social Care savings ideas – See email 3 in Appendix 1. | 1 |
| Health and wellbeing feedback – See email 6 in Appendix 1. | 1 |

| Service specific comments | 30 |
|---|-----------|
| HWRCs – Opposition to site closures. Closures will lead to increased fly tipping. Congleton HWRC - Replace it. Provision of a new recycling centre previously budgeted at £4m by CEC and approved in Feb 2020 must be reinstated. This is essential if we are to meet our carbon neutrality targets. | 10 |
| Highways – Invest in CE highways, roads and potholes repair. Don't patch, resurface. The roads around Cheshire East are disgraceful, not to mention the damage they are causing to people's cars. What long term (highways) investment strategy does the authority have? New bypasses are needed (Middlewich and Disley). Don't widen the A500. Clamp down on road safety issues. | 11 |
| New homes bonus phase 2 funding – This has disappeared and needs reinstating. | 2 |
| Libraries – Must be protected. | 1 |
| Rural issues – Invest in them. | 1 |
| Town centre regeneration – Town centres are ghost towns, lessons should be taken from the rebirth of places such as Altringham. Fast food outlets and late-night drinking are not solutions. | 1 |
| ICT access needed for vulnerable people e.g. in libraries. | 1 |
| Housing – Sheltered and affordable housing provision should be included in every new development. | 1 |
| Badger vaccination – Opposition to it. | 1 |
| Public transport – Must be improved. I cannot get a public transport between Crewe and Nantwich after I finish a shift at 8pm. As we should be trying to lower our carbon footprint and get people on public transport this needs to be addressed within your strategy. | 1 |

Open – Investments and savings comments

Throughout the engagement respondents made a number of comments about the Open investment and saving proposals. These comments have been summarised below, with count totals given next to each comment and comment heading.

| | |
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| Financial Sustainability – Investment | 10 |
| Pay awards – Stop incremental pay increases, there are lots included in proposals, while services are being squeezed. Public sector staff wages and pensions should be frozen until the council is back in the black, like private sector wages are frozen. The wages appear very generous, highly paid staff in particular should have a reduction – have pay cuts for a year for staff members earning more than 50k. Pay increases should be bottom up with smaller increases for those at director / Chief Exec level. | 10 |
| Commercial Opportunities – Investment | 3 |
| Orbitas – What savings are being made by Orbitas? The council is too secretive on this. | 1 |
| PROW – Could greater savings in the PROW department be achieved by delegating the function to Town and Parish councils? Also see email 2 in Appendix 1. | 2 |
| Workforce – Investment | 1 |
| ICT – Needs investing in. I have heard of colleagues having issues with ICT / their laptops, and they are forced to wait hours or even days for a solution, which is a loss in productivity. | 1 |
| Financial Sustainability – Saving | 10 |
| Corporate Services – There is no evidence this directorate provides value for money, no effort to drive up productivity here and it is always protected. | 1 |
| A restructure / job evaluation exercise was undertaken at enormous cost a few years ago, so we need another one? | 1 |
| Pensions – The current scheme is no longer affordable. | 1 |
| Payroll system – Millions must have been spent in the 5 years it's taken to change the software for payroll, and I'm not convinced it will be a better system. | 1 |
| Virtual meetings – After covid-19 virtual meetings should continue to reduce travel and expenses. | 1 |
| Continuing Healthcare Funding – The savings badged against Continuing Health Care (CHC) are savings to the Council, not to the health and social care system. When we are successful in getting agreement to CHC eligibility, the costs simply move to health (and vice versa). If we are serious about integration and working in partnership, this should not be an area where we badge savings. | 1 |
| Continuing Healthcare Funding – See comments in email 6 from NHS Cheshire CCG. Reviews of nursing home placements and complex care packages should be undertaken in conjunction with key CCG/health staff. We would not anticipate a significant financial saving to the Council in this area as it reflects current procedure. | 2 |

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| Grass cutting – It is a good idea to reduce grass cutting frequency as this is often just a tidying measure rather than having any other purpose. Of course, where it is needed for sight lines, this has to be taken into consideration. Routine maintenance such as gully emptying has had much reduced frequency in recent years and this has resulted in blocked grids, deep puddles where pedestrians are drenched by passing traffic, and risk of icy surfaces in winter. The current grid / gully clearing seems to only occur once every few years, when before it was several times a year. | 1 |
| CCTV – If savings are being made moving the CCTV to a wireless network, will the Town Councils funding the service be entitled to a rebate on the agreed service figures? | 1 |

| Workforce – Saving | 8 |
|---|----------|
| Whilst Covid19 has pushed us in to thinking about things differently and we have adopted different working practices, the potential savings from partnership and integration come from either the removal of senior posts which are duplicated in different organisations, or where the same function sits within different organisations (such as HR, Finance, Communications, etc) – savings should not and must not come from reductions in practitioners in either health or social care. | 1 |
| ICP and integrated commissioning – Is there any more detail behind these proposals to understand what the savings are and where the joint posts are likely to be? See comments in email 6 from NHS Cheshire CCG. | 1 |
| Council offices – Why is Westfields still open during the pandemic? Covid-19 has revolutionised the way work can be carried out remotely. The Council wherever possible should embrace these changes. | 2 |
| Reducing carbon emissions – Reduction in carbon emissions implies too much extra expenditure. This initiative should wait until the economy locally and nationally improves when the dubious benefits are more affordable. | 1 |
| Early Help Volunteer Model – A volunteer model for early start services e.g. those families not reaching early help threshold just will not work. Families need stability, commitment and professional knowledge and experience to ensure identification and provision of early intervention, before escalation of problems and a step up back into level 3 or higher. Even the most committed volunteers can offer only an amateur service, even if commissioned out to a charitable organisation. It is just not sustainable and will lead to poor performance from commissioned services. | 1 |
| Children's Centres – Please please don't make further cutbacks on children's centres - these services are absolutely vital, assist with early intervention and support in a whole host of areas for both children and parents, and therefore making savings across a variety of areas. Digital groups are certainly not an effective substitute when it comes to children's centres – real socialisation, discussing things in person, and providing play and learning opportunities and support can only be effectively delivered in person from the centres. And the fact that some of them are open full time makes support significantly more accessible. Broken Cross having limited opening was a great loss. Please continue to invest in all of our children's centres and the vital services they provide. | 1 |

Children's Centres – See comments in email 6 from NHS Cheshire CCG. What arrangements are in place for families who are digitally excluded? How will the child's voice be heard during virtual appointments and is it as easy to detect any safeguarding concerns if professionals are not seeing children face to face?

1

Fair – Investments and savings comments

Throughout the engagement respondents made a number of comments about the Fair investment and saving proposals. These comments have been summarised below, with count totals given next to each comment and comment heading.

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Reduce Reliance – Investment | 11 |
| Complex Care Provider – Opposition to freezing of fees from providers. See emails 4 & 5 in Appendix 1. | 2 |
| SL fees consultation 2021/22 – Is there a reason that there is no proposed uplift to the sleeping night rate, and what is the rationale for hourly rate for waking night support being lower than the day rate? | 1 |
| PFI Subsidy – I agree that PFI subsidy needs to be reviewed with a view to reduction and longer term removal. How many people benefit from this subsidy? How is this "fairer", PFI's are inefficient and are purely to provide profits to shareholders at the expense of their "customers". It is obscene to cut services to vulnerable people and provide subsidies to failing PFI projects. This money could be directed towards purchasing more disability equipment. What provision is there for young people to access training so that they could be involved in the production of meals in these venues and have a meaningful role in society? Which charities do you work in cooperation with on this? What is the extent of the subsidy towards restaurant facilities at PFI institutions. | 5 |
| Beechmere – What is the plan for Beechmere, why has it not been rebuilt? It is not clear yet when the extra care housing scheme in Crewe is to be re-built, and when the issues around this will be resolved. There is no indication on how this affects the overall council budget and what years the impact is planned to be resolved in the figures? | 3 |
| Safeguard Children – Investment | 2 |
| EHCP Care Plans – EHCP costs could be reduced if earlier interventions were more successful and more joined up with schools / council / CAMHS (and DWP if applicable) having more multi-agency consultations. | 1 |
| EHCP Care Plans – See comments in email 6 from NHS Cheshire CCG. How will the Council make use of the expertise at delivery level to drive forward early intervention and support to help reduce the number of EHCPs? | |
| SEND – Comments on the SEND proposal are positive, is there an awareness of the very slow response times for support? This needs to be greatly improved. | 1 |
| Corporate Parenting – Investment | 1 |
| 'Corporate Parenting' is an Orwellian piece of jargon. | 1 |
| Health Inequalities – Savings | 3 |
| Pathfinder – As a former trustee of a charity which provides services similar to Pathfinder, I am concerned that it will not continue, and am concerned it will be the most vulnerable in Cheshire East who will suffer. Hopefully, those who are "upskilled" for the role will have the experience, knowledge and time to provide | 1 |

| | |
|---|---|
| the former Pathfinder service, and the loss of those vulnerable people who use the service will be minimised. | |
| Pathfinder – See comments in email 6 from NHS Cheshire CCG. Disappointment at proposed reduction of budgets, and questions asked about “What impact will this have on the community sector if this contract is not renewed, particularly in light of the other proposal to reduce community sector spending?” | 1 |
| Mental Health Floating Services – See comments in email 6 from NHS Cheshire CCG. Will there be an impact on Crisis Beds and future transformation funding for the Cheshire East Crisis Café links? | 1 |

| | |
|---|----------|
| Reduce Reliance – Savings | 4 |
| Section 117 review – See comments in email 6 from NHS Cheshire CCG. How will the Council ensure that this review is also linked to the work that is being undertaken by the C&M Health and Care Partnership that is working to support those with personality disorders etc, who are significant users of S117 (so links up work to derive the maximum benefits for all)? | 1 |
| Section 117 review – More information on this is needed when available. | 1 |
| Contract Management Team – The team only "intends" to monitor providers? Look forward to seeing some progress here. | 1 |
| Cheshire Care Record – See comments in email 6 from NHS Cheshire CCG. What impact will this have on the Cheshire Care Record contract? | 1 |

| | |
|--|----------|
| Safeguard Children – Savings | 1 |
| Fostering – Agree with increasing fostering provision. | 1 |

| | |
|---|----------|
| Best Start – Savings | 4 |
| I work in Development and Partnerships Service (Children's) and I strongly feel that losing 50% would impact Children's Services in a huge way. Although we are part of Early Help and Prevention, we support teams and services across the whole of Children's Services. I don't think that other services would have the capacity to absorb the work we do, because I imagine their capacity is stretched enough. An example of the work we do is the coordination and support of inspections of children's services. The preparation this requires is lengthy and time-consuming. The inspection itself involves a lot of work and staff are often required to put in extra hours. I don't see how other services could be realistically expected to take this on, and this is just one example. | 2 |
| Best Start – See comments in email 6 from NHS Cheshire CCG. The 50% reduction in Best Start Services requires further explanation please. The document doesn't really give any detail on what this will mean e.g. 'The roles of the service would need to be absorbed by existing services'. Can existing services absorb this service effectively? How will that look? | 1 |
| Not sure what this service Best Start is – Is this Sure Start? | 1 |

| | |
|---|----------|
| Collaboration – Savings | 2 |
| Youth Justice Service – Why are you reducing funding by 10% for a single youth justice service? These are vital services. I do not approve of the proposal to | 2 |

reduce contribution to the Youth Justice system. Justice and courts have suffered greatly in recent years and any further reductions are to be deplored.

Green – Investments and savings comments

Throughout the engagement respondents made a number of comments about the Green investment and saving proposals. These comments have been summarised below, with count totals given next to each comment and comment heading.

| Great Place – Investment | | 12 |
|---|----|-----------|
| Gypsy / Traveller transit site – This should only be provided if this community pays Council Tax. The transit camps sites for the travelling community will become permanent sites, and so these people should be made to contribute towards their upkeep and running. Initial set up costs should be met by the LA, but ongoing costs should be met by the traveller community who use the transit site. Why must we spend money on traveller transit site, when there are homeless in our area? Delighted to see that Cheshire East is finally taking its responsibilities to the Gypsy and Traveller community seriously. | 11 | |
| Gypsy / Traveller transit site – See comments in email 6 from NHS Cheshire CCG. Is the CCG linked into this work? This group traditionally has poor health outcomes and difficulties accessing primary and secondary care services. | 1 | |
| Neighbourhoods – Investment | | 3 |
| Environment Enforcement – Environmental enforcement is seriously underfunded. This is supported and should go much further. Much more should be done to tackle littering, dumped rubbish, obstructive parking and Trading Standards issues. This is an area for increasing investment most of which could be offset from penalty charge income. I support the removal of the target for fixed penalty notices, the company you were using was disgraceful and inhumane. | 3 | |
| Environment – Investment | | 23 |
| House building – Opposition to house building / planning. House builders have destroyed the landscape with not particularly green housing. I am heartily sick of the council granting planning permissions in unsuitable places e.g. on fast disappearing green belt, just to receive additional council tax and monies from the housebuilders. If you are going to build new houses they should all have solar panels, LED lighting and alternative heating/ energy sources. The planning department makes me so angry – the infrastructure cannot support the rate shoddily built poky houses are springing up!!! Options for developing brownfield sites should always be explored first. The income, additional council tax, from these new developments doesn't appear to be included in budgets. There are too many houses being built, I don't think any further planning applications should be supported and then money could be saved in this area. | 8 | |
| HWRC – Surely increases in waste and refuse collection from new homes expenditure will be met with increased income from council tax on these properties therefore increasing the money coming into the council substantially and therefore not have to make cuts? I would like to see the council apply consistency with its Net Carbon targets – How is this aided by asking citizens to travel increased distances by cars and vans to dispose of refuse resulting from closure of sites? | 5 | |

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| Carbon Neutral planning – The Carbon Neutral date should be 2030, the council won't be carbon neutral by 2025. I do not agree with bringing forward the net carbon zero target date if there is additional cost to do so. General improvements will reduce our carbon footprint in due course. The spending projections do not appear to be consistent with the target for being carbon neutral by 2025? Planning is not working in CE, needs to be made bespoke for the borough e.g. reducing meat consumption is not the answer and gives out the completely wrong message especially as we have a strong rural economy in Cheshire. | 6 |
| LED illumination – Support this. Non-illuminated signs are great so long as there is an increased budget for keeping them clean, as when dirty they become invisible and a hazard. | 3 |
| Don't cut down trees for development. | 1 |

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| Great Place – Savings | 6 |
| Tatton Park – Exit it completely. Right to reduce subsidies, it must be self-sufficient. | 3 |
| Town and parish councils – Transfer more assets and services to them. Supportive of this – they can probably deliver better and more tailored services than the council can. They must be green too. | 3 |

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| Neighbourhoods – Savings | 1 |
| Housing Related Support Contracts – See comments in email 6 from NHS Cheshire CCG. How will this be undertaken? As it is being labelled as a 'cost saving' recommission, will a quality impact assessment be carried out, as the most vulnerable tenants are the ones who benefit from housing related support? If this service is reduced, how will these people be supported? | 1 |

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| Transport – Savings | 14 |
| Car parking charges – Parking charges need to be harmonised before this budget is approved, so-called consultation on this issue has been going on for more than 6 years. I do not agree with car park charges as it drives people to shop out of town. The introduction of car parking charges would result in the death of the town shops as a consequence. Car parking should not be seen as an income channel – it has a negative impact on town centres and will lead to loss of business rate income. If parking fees are passed for small towns, then have the first 2 hours free; otherwise the High Street will become empty. Parking in the borough is shocking. Transport includes a cost down, is this due to a predetermined expectation that car parking tax will be increased/widened? Car parking income could be used to subsidise bus fares, and car parking charges should be higher than local bus fares to encourage people to switch mode of transport. | 9 |
| Local bus services – Opposition to further cuts to bus services. The council does not spend enough on public transport and the council never seems to care about the people who have to use it. These are lifeline to many communities and is a false saving as the burden of accessing services falls on the individual or other providers. Town and Parish Councils should pay for services to remote areas if they want them. | 5 |

The budget information stakeholders need

Throughout the engagement respondents made a number of comments about what information they need to be able to judge how the council spends money. These comments have been summarised below, with count totals given next to each comment and comment heading.

| | |
|---|-----------|
| What is provided is fine | 3 |
| Performance reporting | 23 |
| Publish information so stakeholders can determine if money is being used effectively. People perceive the council to be wasteful, but that's more because people do not understand how it spends its money. Provide performance measures against targets, and time-based trends. Give comparisons of performance against other local authorities. Give honest appraisals of where mistakes were made in spending taxpayers' money, and how expenditure could have been better managed with the application of hindsight. Give cost / benefit analysis of individual projects. | 15 |
| Publish detailed management accounts / the full accounts | 7 |
| Publish detail on income sources | 1 |
| Publish financial breakdowns by directorate | 25 |
| People Directorate – More detail on spending in this directorate is required as 60% on social care seems a lot. How is adult and children's services audited, by whom, and where are the results published in an understandable way? Families should be proving more of their support financially. | 8 |
| Capital Projects – Publish breakdowns of the all capital projects, their costs and cost/benefit analysis e.g. for project such as the waste transfer centre. Project Management reporting is non-existent. | 6 |
| Corporate Services – This seems to be a catch all Directorate, it is hard to determine the wisdom of this spend here. Publish more details. | 5 |
| Publish financial breakdowns by location | 3 |
| Publish detail about the amount spent on each town, as some towns seem to pay a lot, but don't get a reciprocal amount spent on them. | 2 |
| There is a perception spending is centralised. | 1 |
| Publish financial breakdowns by day-to-day services | 7 |
| Lumping highways, waste, libraries and leisure together seems unfair as they are very different services and should be treated as such. | 3 |
| Split financial breakdowns by statutory services, and non-statutory services. Which services have to be paid for, which are optional? | 3 |
| There is a claim that the Council provides more than 500 services yet the budgets for these services are hidden and are not subject to any public scrutiny. | 1 |
| Publish financial breakdowns by the following day-to-day services | 18 |

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| Roads, highways, potholes. | 7 |
| Planning – How much income will be generated by all the new houses being built? How much does the council receive from developers? | 3 |
| Cycle lanes / street furniture – Contentious, many people dislike spending on these. | 2 |
| IT | 1 |
| Street cleaning | 1 |
| Drainage | 1 |
| Enforcement | 1 |
| Education - Schools | 1 |
| Fly tipping | 1 |

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| Publish financial breakdowns by the areas where the council is perceived to be wasteful | 35 |
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| Staff pay / pay rises – Especially for Senior Management. Public understanding of these costs needs to be improved. There are too many staff, pension costs, and redundancy payments. Salaries should not increase next year. Too many residents feel high salary of CEO etc are unjustified and unfairly (in my opinion) blame elected councillors for this. An anonymized list of settlements awarded to departing staff is needed, together with categorisation of the various headings under which these awards were given (early retirement, disciplinary). | 12 |
| Agency staff / Consultants / Contractors – How much is spent on these? Assurances are needed about the cost / benefit analyses for outsourcing. | 10 |
| Councillor expenses/perks. | 5 |
| The cost to have meetings – Particularly after covid-19. | 3 |
| Vanity projects / silly initiatives e.g. Pride events (spend money on services instead) | 2 |
| The Mayor / Limo | 1 |
| Non-routine expenditure over £100,000 | 1 |
| Restructures | 1 |

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| How financial information should be presented | 6 |
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|---|---|
| Videos / Presentations – More are needed to help explain where money is spent and how. | 2 |
| Consultation – More needed is needed so people understand council spending. There could be specific consultations on different financial areas to assess spending e.g. by Directorate or service. | 2 |
| Pie charts – More, simply presented information is needed e.g. in pie charts. | 2 |

Conclusions

Overall views on the budget

It is positive to see that 45% of respondents agree the council spends money wisely, this gives the council a good foundation of trust to build upon.

Respondents were fairly split on how next year's budget shortfall should be made up – split between further money saving proposals, and between an increase in council tax.

While some can afford to pay increased council tax, it does seem clear that those who disagree council tax should be increased would be significantly affected by any increase if introduced, particularly during the covid-19 crisis.

Key feedback received

The actual feedback received on specific investments and savings was fairly limited, but this is provided in detail within the report. Respondents have highlighted key areas of concern, and we did also receive some lengthy and informed emails and comments which deserve attention and a response (see appendices 1 & 2).

Generally speaking, the issues respondents seemed to be most concerned with included:

- Car parking
- Highways
- HWRCs
- Local bus services
- Outsourcing and agency staff
- Planning and development
- Staff pay
- The green agenda

Respondents also called for more, and clearer, financial information to be made available, to help them understand how the council spends taxpayer money.

Engagement success

It is positive that the budget engagement this year achieved an increased response as compared to last year, with 313 responses in total.

That and the good interaction with the Engagement Hub has been positive to see, and alongside the feedback received on improving the engagement in future, gives the council a good engagement platform to build on.

Appendix 1 – Lengthy written email responses

Throughout the engagement 7 lengthy written email responses were received as part of the feedback. These have been referred to in the above summaries of comments, but the full emails are included below for reference.

Email 1 – Agency staff and consultancy spend savings

I wonder if there is scope for savings in relation to our agency staff and consultancy spend. We spend approx. £9 million on agency staff per annum and up to £6 million staff per annum on consultancy (which can include individual limited people e.g. ICT contractors for example), so that is £15 million on 'additional resource' to our perm staffing budgets.

I appreciate that there is a need for both agency staff and consultancy to flex the organisation and to cover for peak periods etc however, we do tend to retain some of these workers over several years and I feel that if a proper review of jobs/roles was done, that perhaps savings could be made where structures could be adapted to include a full time perm role for example where they obviously need additional resource instead of paying agency fees and consultancy fees.

Again, I appreciate this isn't always going to benefit as it may be that we'd never be able to pay the worker as much if it was a full time role, so this in turn may make it difficult to get those skills and retain them but there must be some scope in looking to reduce our reliance of contingent labour?

Email 2 – Public Rights of Way (PROW)

We refer to the current Budget Engagement 2021-25 and wish to submit the following comments specifically related to the resources allocated to the PROW Unit. We write on behalf of the 450 members of East Cheshire Ramblers who use the local Rights of Way network frequently. The Group also reports faults on the network regularly to CEC. This is part of an annual survey of all 1295 paths in our area which is centred on Macclesfield and stretching from Poynton and Disley in the north to Wincle in the south.

We note from the CEC 'Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2020 to 2024' that the Revenue Budget for Public Rights of Way has been capped at the same level for all years. This fails to take into account the rise in the cost of services and supplies for this overstretched service and for further investment in their GIS software. In particular we wish to have timely feedback on the progress on the correction of faults which is not possible at the moment. We, therefore, fully support their bid for additional funds.

We are sure you are aware that the COVID pandemic has led to an unprecedented increase in the use of the public rights of way network in East Cheshire. Investment to ensure that the network is available for use by the public and by future generations of walkers is thus of great importance and we trust that the PROW bid for additional funds will be considered favourably.

Yours sincerely, Footpaths Committee, East Cheshire Ramblers.

Email 3 – Inward investment post covid-19 & Adult Social Care savings ideas

There are two issues I'd like to provide feedback on re the current Budget Consultation:

1) Reference Budget Consultation Report page 85 para 65:

Back in January 2020 there were 2,500 residents in Cheshire East on Universal Credit, there are now over 11,000. When furlough ends in April, forecasts point to a further increase. At the same time the number of business closures is significantly outweighing the number of business start-ups. Clearly the impact of the pandemic is the primary cause and there is a knock on effect re the reduction in revenue from Council tax and Business Rates. The sectors hardest hit include retail, travel, marketing and hospitality. There is a direct and important link between economic development/economic recovery and the health of the Council's spendable budget. It seems to me that a vital area of focus for the Council should be inward investment. We should be doing everything possible to attract new business (small, medium and large) to set up in Cheshire East rather than somewhere else. New business start-ups mean new jobs, more employment and increases of income to the Council re Business Rates and Council Tax. At the same time, higher employment increases community resilience and tends to reduce the dependence on services. As new businesses start up in sectors that will be resilient post pandemic, there will be more vacancies available for skilled and semi-skilled people. There is already some coordinated sub-regional work underway to ensure a sufficient volume and type of skills training is developed, to meet those needs and ensure those "step up" vacancies are filled effectively. In turn this then frees up more entry level positions. This is important as many of the people that the Council supports with complex needs tend to use entry level positions as a sound first starting point. The more people with complex needs (eg learning disabilities) that can be supported into work then the more independence of services is achieved and cost savings.

Bearing all this in mind it is surprising to see on page 85 (Para 65) of the Budget Consultation Report that the resource available to support inward Investment is to be reduced by £1.327m. My proposal here is that it is crucial to expand this vital area of work, not to deplete it.

2) Re Adult Social Care budget and examples of cost savings

The Budget Consultation Report does provide some detail re the types of Council services that bring about significant cost-savings. In addition the MTFs (table 13) details -

Engaging with voluntary, community and faith groups and local town and parish councils is essential to explore ways of transforming service delivery at a local level. It is (quite rightly) well-publicised re the beneficial effect of People Helping People and Connected Communities. Engaging proactively with communities to become more resilient and provide local support themselves is clearly good for communities and brings about significant and much needed cost-savings.

What is less well publicised is the even greater beneficial effect of supported employment. Supporting someone with complex needs into work as a positive alternative to more traditional and costly care services, is a vital area for further consideration. I think therefore, that it is important for budget proposals to recognise this area of work, re its capacity to bring about very significant and long lasting cost-savings at the same time as improving the life chances and independence of customers with more complex needs.

Email 4 – Complex Care Providers: Opposition to freezing of fees

Dear sir/madam

1st Enable are a CQC registered service which has invested and focused a large amount of its growth and future in Cheshire East in particular providing innovative

respite services, developed several significant housing schemes with funding partners and delivered complex care to many individuals that otherwise may have broken down and entered very expensive secure NHS and private services. Your very recent letter to 'freeze' fees on the 2018 complex framework rate for the third year running is disappointing.

I have attached my letter of response which will hopefully inform you of some of the key facts of why we believe this decision is poor and will cost you more in the mid to long term. I have also included our consultation from last year (which history shows appears to have been largely ignored).

Running Social Care into the ground will waste money, increase costs somewhere down the line and place massive pressure (and cost) onto the NHS but incredibly this is the effect central and local decisions are having currently at a time of national crisis.

Email 5 – Complex Care Providers: Opposition to freezing of fees

Dear Cheshire East Team,

Many thanks for your letter detailing the Budget Engagement for 2021-2025. It is very helpful to us to have received the Council's proposal well in advance of the commencement of 2021/22.

I can confirm we have submitted the survey today, as requested. However, the survey did not give us the option to fully detail our feedback, and thus, below, we would like the opportunity to put forward our feedback on the Council's Budget Engagement.

We note that an uplift is being proposed for the Council's standard rates but that for specialist placements, which by nature of their complexity and levels of input / support delivered, will exceed the standard rates, the proposal is for no uplift (0%). Cygnet's services are specialist and bespoke and thus sit outside of the standard rates.

We are cognisant of the challenges faced by the Council and the wider sector and are keen to work in partnership to address the inflationary cost pressures that we are experiencing as a Provider. However, your proposed uplift of 0% for 2021/22 is unacceptable. If this proposal is ratified, 2021/22 will be the third year that no inflationary uplift to the fees has been provided. Over that time support worker costs, representing 65% of the total care costs you commission, driven by NLW and other legislative costs will have risen by over 15%. These are cost we have already absorbed. This erosion of funding seriously jeopardises the quality and safety of care that you require and we wish to provide. We are therefore unable to accept your proposal for this year. A minimum of 4.6% is required in order to continue to provide these services to the quality and experience levels.

Cheshire East Council is a Host Local Authority to a number of Cygnet services and the Council also accesses out of area Cygnet services. Our close joint working is something that we very much appreciate and we look forward to continued joint working with the Council in 2021/22 and beyond. Thank you for your understanding of why an uplift for 2021/22 is vital for our services, and we cannot accept a 0% uplift proposal.

Email 6 – NHS Cheshire CCG feedback

Thank you for your email of 4th December 2020 inviting us to share your budget consultation with our colleagues and to provide feedback.

The summary attached is the feedback from the consultation circulated to our programme leads within our Strategy and Partnerships directorate. As you would expect the primary focus has been on the health and wellbeing elements, budgets associated with these and the impact on services for vulnerable people.

Please let me know if there is anything further to follow up. As well as some specific comments our response asks a number of questions. It would be good to see the final consultation document so we can share how these were responded to. (Colleagues have particularly asked for this feedback).

Feedback summary:

NHS Cheshire CCG – Strategy & Partnerships Directorate
 Programme Area Comments/Feedback on the Cheshire East Council Pre-Budget Consultation for 2021 to 2025.

Strong Start Programme – General Comments/Feedback:

3. Spending within resources: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the council spends money wisely?

It is reassuring to see that collaboration and a review of shared services between CWAC and CEC is highlighted, together with the development of the ICP, which is also highlighted to increase efficiencies in delivery of care to communities. Savings in estates has also been highlighted, which is positive in some respects, in particular a reduction in overall carbon emissions.

4b. Fairer - Investment and Saving Proposals: Do you have any comments to make on the investments and savings under Fairer?

The Council plans to decommission the pathfinder service and instead upskill other frontline staff to undertake this role. This function is really important and we would hope plans are in place to make sure that there is a robust alternative e.g. the Directory of Services being kept up to date, training to frontline staff being fully embedded. There could also be potential to include frontline health staff, GP receptionists etc. and to add in signposting to self-care advice.

Cutting prevention budgets and stating this function will transfer to a community led initiative is reliant on securing the right people within a community to lead it. Prevention has a core thread in the 10 year plan, so it is disappointing these budgets are being reduced, when it's an important area that can make a great difference to the lives of our local residents.

The 50% reduction in Best Start Services requires further explanation please. The document doesn't really give any detail on what this will mean e.g. 'The roles of the service would need to be absorbed by existing services'. Can existing services absorb this service effectively? How will that look?

The Council plan to undertake a review of nursing home placements and complex care packages to identify people eligible for CHC requires specific CHC feedback and involvement, as does the review of section 117 aftercare. Such reviews should be undertaken in conjunction with key CCG/health staff.

In relation to the proposal to develop a transit site for the traveller community, is the CCG linked into this work? This group traditionally has poor health outcomes and difficulties accessing primary and secondary care services.

Opportunities have been identified to change how children's and family centres operate, offering more services virtually and digitally. What arrangements are in place for families who are digitally excluded? If not considered, this could potentially increase health inequalities. Also what activities will still be delivered face to face? During lockdown, many mums in the Babies in Lockdown Report reported feeling isolated and anxious and it's, therefore, really important to continue some sessions face to face and pick up on concerns which may not come across on platforms such as MS Teams. Events could place a stronger emphasis on meeting new mums and encouraging mums to create their own informal support networks. Also, how will the child's voice be heard during virtual appointments and is it as easy to detect any safeguarding concerns if professionals are not seeing children face to face?

Reduce Reliance

In relation to the proposal to undertake a full review and reassessment of all the Local Authority's section 117 aftercare arrangements under the Mental Health Act (1983), we have noted that this will be done in consultation with NHS colleagues. How will the Council ensure that this review is also linked to the work that is being undertaken by the C&M Health and Care Partnership that is working to support those with personality disorders etc, who are significant users of S117 (so links up work to derive the maximum benefits for all)?

The number of new Education, Health and Care Plan requests continues to increase significantly above the national rate. Previous investment in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Service

should enable the service to deliver on new needs assessment requests, but further investment is essential to enable the service to fulfil the statutory requirements for ongoing annual reviews. How will the Council make use of the expertise at delivery level to drive forward early intervention and support to help reduce the number of EHCPs?

4c. Greener - Investment and Saving Proposals: Do you have any comments to make on the investments and savings under Greener?

Savings through the recommissioning of Housing Related Support contracts – how will this be undertaken? As it is being labelled as a 'cost saving' recommission, will a quality impact assessment be carried out, as the most vulnerable tenants are the ones who benefit from housing related support? If this service is reduced, how will these people be supported?

Mental Health and LD Programme – General Comments/Feedback:

- Mental Health Floating Support Service funding seems to be moving over to the Public Health ring-fenced budget and will be relying on subsidy from elsewhere within the Council. Will there be an impact on Crisis Beds and future transformation funding for the Cheshire East Crisis Café links?
- Section 117 Review suggests NHS colleagues will be kept fully informed of this process, requiring links with the CHC Team.
- From recent experiences in dealing with patient experience and complaints, those in the most vulnerable groups namely, those with an LD/MH problem and/or autism diagnoses (in particular the 16-19 age group), appear to be suffering significantly from the impact COVID-19 has had on service provision and availability. Whilst budgets need to be reviewed as part of the pandemic recovery, we would urge the

Council to consider and fully consult with service users and their families when making decisions about future expenditure and prioritise budgets based on need.

- We welcome the investment in People Services, especially the targeting of money at people who have the most complex care needs and younger adults who are living longer with complex care needs. We hope that this includes people with Mental Health Learning Disabilities and Autism. We also hope that the investment in services for children in education includes children and young people who are in the transition age groups.

Living Well for Longer Programme - General Comments/Feedback:

NHS Cheshire CCG welcomes the focus on “Greener” as one of the three priority areas for investment and saving proposals and that although reduced the council is able to maintain a level of investment in this critical area of addressing climate change and achieving a carbon neutral position. We look forward to continuing to work with the Council on aligning our Green Plans.

We note that there is no link to the growing role of the Cheshire East Integrated Care Partnership and the opportunities that this can bring for reduced duplication and increased efficiency in the planning and delivery of services for health and wellbeing.

4a. Open Investment and Saving Proposals, Financial Sustainability, Savings

A CHC response would be preferable in this area. However, from a LWFL perspective, we note the intention to work with NHS colleagues to undertake reviews of nursing home placements and complex care packages to identify those people who have a primary health need and are, therefore, eligible for Continuing Healthcare Funding. As it is normal procedure to assess a person’s needs in a holistic way, we would see this continuing to ensure that the right care is provided at the right time for each person and that this is funded appropriately depending on their needs. We would not anticipate a significant financial saving to the Council in this area as it reflects current procedure.

4b. Fairer – Investment and Saving Proposals, Reduce Reliance, Investment

We understand the rising demand generally and in particular the older population requiring much more complex care and appreciate that the Council is prioritising investment in the fee uplift for Accommodation with Care and Complex Care Providers for the most vulnerable older people and advocacy services. Both of these areas involve joint working with the CCG and wider health services and we welcome the opportunity to continue to strengthen our joint commissioning.

We would expect the investment in the delivery of domiciliary care to address some of the challenges that we have in providing care in a timely way for those that need it, especially when it requires more than 1 carer and in rural areas. As Council colleagues are aware, this is significantly impacting on both people’s ability to be discharged from hospital and to avoid hospital admission, when not required. We understand that the issues are multi-factorial and therefore is not just about increasing investment. However, ensuring that the services are adequately resourced financially is a key part of providers being able to recruit and deliver the right skills and capacity to meet the population need at key points in their care journey.

Savings

We welcome the focus of the Community Team on low level and prevention and mobilising the local community and wish to acknowledge the valuable support that the Team provide. As we are jointly increasing our priority and attention to improving population health, we would not wish to see the impact of the Team reduced due to any reconfiguring, or financial savings.

We note the inclusion of integration internally within the Council between the Community Team and Commissioning, but that there is no reference to the opportunities for the Joint Commissioning pilot between the NHS and the Council.

The adoption of a more personalised and flexible approach to the day opportunities that enable citizens to play a valued role in their community and to live as independently as they choose is appreciated. We would expect that this approach is strengthened alongside the greater use of Direct Payments and that vulnerable people are given the support they need to make choices that will support their health and wellbeing.

We appreciate the increased monitoring of providers performance to improve the quality of the service actually delivered by looking at the start time of the call, call duration and continuity of carers. We would expect this to include a focus on the outcomes of the care for a person as time alone is not an indicator of the quality, personalisation and impact of the care provided to vulnerable people. The carer may be the only person that a service user has contact with from one day to another and when social isolation is increasing exponentially due to COVID-19 and reduced mobility, especially for older people, it is imperative that we focus on the experience for citizens not just the time taken for the delivery of basic daily tasks.

We value the partnership between the NHS and Cheshire East Council in the development and delivery of the Cheshire Care Record. We hope that, as stated, the reduced the amount invested will not impact on its continued development and usage to support the right care being provided at the right time for vulnerable people.

New Models of Care Programme - General Comments/Feedback:

4a.: Open Investment and Savings Proposal

Financial Sustainability:

This section makes reference to reducing base budgets for Community Grants and signpost to alternative sources, for example crowd funding

As we are trying to increase money being spent in this area as they offer good value for money - it would be useful to know how much it is anticipated that this will be reduced by.

4a.: Open Investment and Savings Proposal

Workforce: This section refers to opportunities in new ways of working including the development of the ICP and integrated commissioning.

Aligning services across Early Help and role of volunteers to support prevention programmes.

Is there any more detail behind these proposals to understand what the savings are and where the joint posts are likely to be?

As we work to support the development of the VCFSE Sector Grants Programme for the ICP, we can support delivery as we shift focus of delivery towards Place Priorities. This may support the early intervention and prevention theme through Strong Start as a highlighted priority.

4b. Fairer Investment and Savings Proposals

Health Inequalities:

Proposal to not extend the Pathfinder Contract.

What impact will this have on the community sector if this contract is not renewed, particularly in light of the other proposal to reduce community sector spending?

4b. Fairer Investment and Savings Proposals

Reduce Reliance: Proposal to reduce the budget for Cheshire Care Record required to maintain its usage.

What impact will this have on the Cheshire Care Record contract?

4b. Fairer Investment and Savings Proposals

Best Start: Proposal to reduce the Development and Partnerships Services by 50% as the service is not statutory. Suggestion this will be absorbed by existing services which may impact on the ability to carry out service development and transformation. How will this impact on NHS Services as well as the joint developments as the ICP role expands?

Appendix 2 – Engagement Hub public comments

The following comments were publicly posted on the Engagement Hub during the consultation period:

10 December 2020 at 6:19PM, Amy Piper wrote

We need a bypass. We always get over looked. With ansa and the motorway links middlewich is very often gridlock and the narrow roads to the a54 cannot take much more. Also the amount of houses that keep being built it's ridiculous the amount of extra traffic that has come through with no where for it to go. Before long the slip round to middlewich from the m6 will be backed up. Maybe then we will get what we need.

12 December 2020 at 7:55PM, Nigel Young wrote

Please don't spend money widening/dualing the A500. As I've said before you'll only create a 2 car wide queue rather than a one car wide queue. The problem is traffic flow around the roundabout at J16. Spending on Crewe bus station should also be kept to a minimum too.

15 December 2020 at 7:23AM, Simon Brownbill wrote

Over 2,000 residents have signed a petition asking for a bypass for Disley. This needs action now, not in several years time. Also our local police are telling us there are road safety issues in the area yet your highways department say there isn't? Finally we border both Greater Manchester and Derbyshire and for residents in Disley it is self evident our highways are under invested in compared to neighbours. Disley needs a highways review urgently.

15 December 2020 at 11:58AM, Barbara Francis wrote

If there were better train and bus links, then all of this road widening and bypassing wouldn't be needed. How does all of this spending on roads fit in with the environmental plan?

21 December 2020 at 8:50PM, V Altunel wrote

Will you try and spend some money on doing the roads, not patching but resurfacing. The roads around Cheshire East are disgraceful, not to mention the damage they are causing to people's cars. I work in the community, and I'm fed up of constantly have to spend money repairing my car, I don't earn big money and could do with not spending on repairs.

24 December 2020 at 1:54PM, Amy Parrish wrote

Replacing Congleton tip and resurfacing the roads!

28 December 2020 at 11:10PM, Jeanette Thayre wrote

As someone who works in the social care sector I find it unbelievable that I can not get a public transport between Crewe and Nantwich after I finish a shift at 8pm. Considering Nantwich and Crewe are the same constituency the public transport links between them are appalling! This needs to be sorted. As we should be trying

to lower our carbon footprint and get people on public transport this needs to be addressed within your strategy.

02 January 2021 at 5:43PM, Jessie Tomlinson wrote

Once again middlewich becomes the poor relation. I am objecting to the considered closing of our tip ..in the long term I do not think this will save money as fly tilling will increase ..not only will this mar the country side but will come at great cost.

06 January 2021 at 9:55AM, Lynn Lavelle wrote

Re: SL fees consultation 2021/22, Is there a reason that there is no proposed uplift to the sleeping night rate, and what is the rationale for hourly rate for waking night support being lower than the day rate?

07 January 2021 at 8:07AM, Derek Ainsworth wrote

I would like to strongly object to any cuts to the highways service, they do a sterling job with the disgraceful amount of existing funding. Long term sustainable investment into highway condition improvements are required across the borough. What long term investment strategy does the authority have????

07 January 2021 at 4:43PM, J Patterson wrote

Theres a lot of information and its not easy to know exactly what is what. Information needs setting out more clearly.

08 January 2021 at 12:22PM, David McGifford - Chief Officer Congleton Town Council wrote

1. Need to ensure that the £4 million allocation for the Congleton waste disposal site replacement is retained within the budget. 2. The promised new homes bonus phase 2 funding has disappeared - this needs to be re introduced as we and many other towns have been working towards schemes to access this.

08 January 2021 at 12:37PM, Councillor Robert Douglas wrote

Cheshire East Council MUST keep its commitment approved and budgeted for by its full Council in February 2020 of providing the new purpose recycling site at Congleton as part of its commitment to be carbon neutral by 2025. New homes bonus phase 2 funding must be re introduced

08 January 2021 at 1:34PM, Cllr Suzy Firkin wrote

Provision of a new recycling centre previously budgeted at £4m by CEC and approved in Feb 2020 must be reinstated. This is essential if we are to meet our carbon neutrality targets.

08 January 2021 at 4:20PM, Ann Banks, Sandbach Town Clerk on behalf of the Town Mayor wrote

CHESHIRE EAST BUDGET REVIEW

CEC states that spending is under significant pressure, due to the direct impact of reduced Central Government grant funding and with increasing demands against public services being felt over the last few years. Sandbach Town Council has a realistic understanding of these pressures, however is concerned that this a short

and badly timed consultation regarding our fiscal relationship is of little benefit, due to the very limited opportunity to reply in any depth.

This response has been prepared by the Town Mayor on behalf of the Council.

28. Electric Vehicle Car Pool Scheme (Revenue and Capital Investment).

29. Crewe Town Centre Civic Heat Network (Revenue Savings and Capital Investment) This proposed project is to deliver a local heat and power network to Crewe Town Centre.

There has been NO investment in the power network for Sandbach Town Centre, despite a large increase in population of 7,000+ since last census. The Town Centre cannot support the installation of vehicular charging stations, in line with Cheshire East's own 'Green' commitment, due to the lack of infrastructure and investment.

Loss of new homes bonus scheme to the sum of £1 million pounds.

This should be reinstated. It is a small sum against the total proposed CEC budget, but could provide a great deal of local benefits.

We note all the improvements to Highways and Town Centres within Cheshire East but are unable to see any long term strategic plans for Sandbach, a town struggling with the impact of the increased housing, which was permitted to fulfil the requirements of the NPPF and Local Plan. Sandbach's inner relief road is starting to resemble Rood Hill in Congleton, a road that is now being relieved of the weight of traffic flow through a full bypass of the town, something that Middlewich will also benefit from in the future. Both of these new bypass roads will add considerable traffic and will negatively impact the roads within Sandbach, causing further traffic congestion and pollution within this residential market town.

The increased provision for school places and social care is understood, as the pressures that create the demand for these services are beyond the simple implication of fiscal constraints are due to the continued rise of our local population and the population of the country as a whole.

