

## **Economy & Growth Committee**

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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	12 July 2022
<b>Report Title:</b>	2021/2022 Annual Performance Review – Growth and Enterprise
<b>Report of:</b>	Peter Skates Director of Growth & Enterprise
<b>Report Reference No:</b>	EG/16/22-23
<b>Ward(s) Affected:</b>	All Wards

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### **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1. The purpose of the report is to provide the Committee with a review of the performance of the Growth & Enterprise department for 2021-22 working to the priorities and actions within the Council's Corporate Plan 2021-25.

### **2. Executive Summary**

- 2.1. This report gives an update on performance across Growth & Enterprise department for the year 2021-22.

### **3. Recommendations**

- 3.1. That the Committee note the performance of the department.

### **4. Reasons for Recommendations**

- 4.1. The Economy & Growth Committee is responsible for reviewing and scrutinising the performance of the Growth & Enterprise department.

### **5. Other Options Considered**

- 5.1. Not applicable.

### **6. Background**

- 6.1. Growth & Enterprise is responsible for delivering Housing and Economic Development which are vital elements of developing the 'sense of place'. We also seek to enhance the contribution of our Countryside, and

participation with cultural, rural and visitor economies. Recognising the importance of our environment, heritage, culture and visitor offer to the Cheshire East's character. All of our aims and objectives are advanced through working with local and national partners.

- 6.2.** Management of our property portfolio and property disposal programme, ensures best use and value of the Council's assets while contributing to the strategic aims of the Council, and the Corporate Plan.
- 6.3.** The Impact of Covid19 placed additional challenges and pressures on recovering our Towns and Business network, the Growth & Enterprise Department has been heavily involved in supporting these networks over the past year, and also going forward will be progressing Growth Strategies, Recovery Plans and Actions.
- 6.4.** The Cheshire East's vision to be open, fairer, and greener is set out in the Council's Corporate Plan 2021-25, with three broad aims to be an open and enabling organisation; a council which empowers and cares about people, and a thriving and sustainable place. The Growth & Enterprise department contributes to a number of the priorities under the aim of a thriving and sustainable place:
  - A great place for people to live, work and visit
  - Welcoming, safe and clean neighbourhoods
  - Thriving urban and Rural economies with opportunities for all
  - To be carbon neutral by 2025

## 7. Housing

Corporate Plan 2021-25: Key priorities	
A great place for people to live, work and visit	<p>Enable access to well designed, affordable and safe homes for all our residents</p> <p>To reduce the number of long-term empty dwellings</p> <p>To make best use of our surplus buildings and assets to support the borough and our partners</p>
Welcoming, safe and clean neighbourhoods	<p>Crime and anti-social activity and anti-social behaviour to be reduced</p> <p>Victims of crime and exploitation to be supported effectively by the council and partners through collaboration</p>
Thriving urban and rural economies with opportunities for all	Thriving and active rural communities
To be carbon neutral by 2025	To have delivered the milestones in becoming a carbon neutral council

Key Performance Indicators	2021/22 Outturn	Mid-year (20/21)	Mid-year (21/22)	Target 2021/22
Home adaptations for older and/or disabled residents	362	214	199	500
Increase the supply of new affordable housing	640	207	306	355
Maintain the number of long-term empty homes in Cheshire East to less than 1%	0.95%	End of year target	End of year target	<1%
Increase number of preventative and relief actions taken in order to reduce levels of homelessness in Cheshire East	1117	492	480	1000
Households helped to achieve affordable warmth	691	30	288	500
Households are helped to improve their living conditions	386	87	145	200

- 7.1.** Housing staff have continued to work hard to provide effective, customer focused frontline services to ensure that our residents were prevented from becoming homeless or were relieved from homelessness. This also included developing our services for rough sleepers having successfully secured another round of Rough Sleeping Initiative funding. In addition, staff have progressed on a further RSI bid proposal, which would enable us to secure 3 years funding to develop a multi-disciplinary team to support rough sleepers with complex needs. The Department of Levelling up, Housing and Communities will shortly be announcing the outcome of the bids.
- 7.2.** In 2021/22 we continued to experience issues with contractors and supply chains for materials, which impacted on our ability to undertake adaptation works as quickly as we would have liked. The team however undertook the required procurement to secure a new framework contractor and have worked to try and manage customer expectations.
- 7.3.** Improving the energy efficiency of our homes and reducing fuel poverty continued to be a priority within the team and the Housing Standards Team successfully secured £4,853,676 of Government funding to improve the energy efficiency of homes. Having been successful with our Registered Housing Providers in securing Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, we are now working with them again to look at phase 2 funding.
- 7.4.** Ensuring we continue to increase the number of affordable homes across the authority is a priority set out within both the Corporate Plan, Local Plan and Housing Strategy. Following the establishment of the Council's Housing Development Framework, suitable land assets have now been identified and during 2021/22 we started to progress phase one of the mini competitions,

which will enable us to specify our requirements for the sites and select an organisation to take them forward to develop.

- 7.5.** Providing a safe place to stay for the transient Gypsy and Traveller community and dealing effectively with unauthorised encampments, recognising the impact on our settled communities continues to be a priority, and we have moved a step closer with the approval of a planning application for the development of a Gypsy and Traveller Transit site.
- 7.6.** The formulation of a Homelessness strategy which also sets out how the Council will assist Government to eradicate rough sleeping is a statutory requirement and in September 2021 the Economy and Growth Committee approved the revised Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy. The strategy was developed following a period of review and consultation.
- 7.7.** We continue to support good landlords and avoid unnecessary regulation for those landlords who provide safe, well maintained homes, by demonstrating through our actions that poor standards of property management and letting out substandard accommodation will not be tolerated. On 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021 our revised Housing Enforcement Policy was presented to the Economy and Growth Committee and approved. In addition, the Growth and Economy Committee approved the Council's Unlawful Eviction Policy.
- 7.8.** In October 2021 we saw the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, which introduced new duties on local authorities to ensure victims of domestic abuse are able to move into social housing from a refuge or other form of temporary accommodation and to ensure that Cheshire East's Allocations Policy took account of these new requirements, it was updated and approved. In addition, 2 officers were seconded into specialist roles within the Domestic Abuse service to enhance the services offered.
- 7.9.** In 2021 the Government called on local authorities to assist them to accommodate Afghan refugees. In partnership with our Registered Housing Providers we welcomed five families into Cheshire East.

**8. Estates**

Corporate Plan 2021-25: Key priorities	
<p>A financially sustainable council which has increased levels of reserves</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Facilities Management team implement a series of projects and measures to reduce the running cost of the CEC estate</li> <li>• The Property Services and Farms teams have a Disposal Programme that aims to deliver capital receipts for the Council.</li> <li>• The Property Services and Farms teams manage leases on behalf of the Council and has an annual income target that offsets some costs of the service.</li> <li>• The Estates Service completes the implementation and development of its asset management system (Concerto) and corresponding service delivery process adjustments</li> <li>• The Estates Service successfully implements a new asset management plan</li> </ul>

To make best use of our surplus buildings and assets to support the borough and our partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the community asset transfer policy and provide a clear framework to support effective transfer and further explore 'shared' use with our partners of town centre assets</li> <li>Deliver Disposal Programme, support other Council initiatives, for example Housing Development Framework.</li> </ul>
To have delivered the milestones in becoming a carbon neutral council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver actions in the Cheshire East Council Carbon Action Plan</li> <li>Support where appropriate the Introduction of green vehicles across the fleet (including waste and highways)</li> <li>Reduce use of Gas by decarbonising sources of heating for our buildings</li> <li>Promote carbon neutrality and carbon zero development across Cheshire East, providing information, advice and guidance for householders and businesses to reduce their carbon use</li> </ul>

Key Performance Indicators	2021/22 Outturn	As at 01 Jun 22 (22/23)	Target 2022/23
Capital receipts across assets and farms disposals	£1,300,000	£273,500	£1,000,000

**8.1.** The UK's property and construction markets continue to be impacted by the effects of the global Covid 19 Pandemic, EU Exit, the invasion of Ukraine and other global factors. This has practical implications including general inflation, significant spikes in energy costs and in the construction sector, challenges around cost and supply of workforce and materials. During the previous 2021/22 financial year the service has dealt with these issues and also dealt with the direct consequences of the pandemic on the delivery of day-to-day activity and also enabled other services to deliver remotely or out of the Council's land and property assets. The Estates team has been able to progress its work despite these issues.

**8.2.** The service has delivered business as usual during the pandemic whilst supporting other services in response to Covid 19, particularly providing covid safe office environments. This is the activity that the service is most proud of, the considerable effort that has been invested by all levels of staff to help maintain operational capability in our offices is worthy of note. In particular are our receptionists, cleaners and Building Support Officers have been a continuous presence through the pandemic. The service's post and print team have also helped to maintain effectiveness of staff who have been working remotely, whilst continuing to deliver their services from the office. The Estates service has been engaged in the vaccination and business grant activities along with a wide range of other pandemic related activity.

- 8.3.** Now the UK is in recovery from the pandemic the service has provided support for colleagues and services to understand future models of working, for example the provision of pilots of differing types of office accommodation. It has also gradually eased the restrictions in the office environment to match the Councils current requirements and has taken other steps to facilitate new ways of working, for example providing hybrid meeting capability in the Council's office space.
- 8.4.** The service has been heavily involved in the delivery of the Council's policy to deliver a carbon neutral Council by 2025. It has been successful in obtaining £6.7m of decarbonisation grants, which has delivered air source heat pumps, Photovoltaic Panels, LED lighting and insulation to a number of buildings, with Macclesfield Town Hall, Sandbach and Alsager Leisure Centres being examples of assets that have benefited. The Council has also been active in tree planting and the service has assisted this by identifying and making land available for this activity. It has developed the standard that will be required to be met when delivering construction projects in the future.
- 8.5.** The Estates Service has a Capital programme of construction projects valued at £80m underway on the Council's assets. In year £22m of projects have been completed and handed over to end users including eight school expansion projects and the refurbishment of Nantwich Leisure Centre. Ongoing work includes remediation, refurbishment, construction and regeneration projects.
- 8.6.** The Council has a target of £4m over 4 years set out in the MTFs and has achieved £1.3m in the last Financial Year. Good progress has also been made in the current year against these targets. It must be noted that these are minimum targets and disposal is predicated on a best effort basis to maximise capital receipts. Although Cheshire East has a robust Capital Programme, given the economic headwind in the economy and in particular in the Property and Construction sectors this is a prudent approach. The service also is active in different ways to dispose of assets. The Council has also adopted a Housing Delivery Framework, which disposes of assets for housing. The service has supported the development and implementation of this policy.
- 8.7.** In year, the Committee has considered and approved the Community Asset Transfer Framework and the service is currently implementing the use of this policy progressing live cases through the Framework.
- 8.8.** The Council manages a portfolio of land and property that it leases to third parties. There have been impacts arising from the pandemic and lockdowns with some tenants, but the Estates service has ensured, where possible, that issues are carefully managed, with appropriate advice and direction to support given.

- 8.9.** The service is successfully implementing a new property information system. Its successful implementation is a key achievement for the service in 2021 and 2022. The service has also enabled its contractor Equans to access the system generating efficiencies in the handling of data and improve real time reporting. Further work is ongoing to develop the system to improve the way the service deals with enquiries and develop appropriate workflows to manage more effective management of cases.
- 8.10.** The service was, due to the pandemic, delayed in developing a Corporate Asset Management Plan, however a policy principles report has been considered by the Committee and following this a draft Corporate Asset Management Plan has been developed for consultation with a proposal to present this to Committee in Autumn 2022. Further policy activity will follow on from the adoption of the plan.
- 8.11.** The service continues to deliver statutory compliance which is a critical activity to the Council and underpins all its other activity. It continues to be key to engage a wide range of stakeholders and have the appropriate attention for example through the Corporate Health and Safety forum and relevant upward reporting. The Facilities Management Team ensure the Council meet its statutory requirements, not only within our buildings, both other assets that the Council has a responsibility for.

## **9. Rural & Cultural Economy**

- 9.1.** The Rural and Cultural Economy Service seeks to grow the contribution of countryside, cultural and visitor economy assets or opportunities to the Cheshire East economy helping it to be a thriving and sustainable place. The Service recognises the importance of our environment, heritage, culture and visitor offer to the area's character, economy, quality of place and wellbeing.
- 9.2.** The Public Rights of Way (PROW) team has once again delivered a very high standard of service to the public despite the high demands and some capacity issues. The Public Rights of Way Sub-Committee has oversight of this statutory service.

Key Performance Indicators	2020/21 Outturn	Mid-year (20/21)	Mid-year (21/22)	Target 2021/22
Ease of use of Public Rights of Way network (Due to effect of Covid, a proxy source of data has been used which calls upon a greater percentage survey than the previous method although not random in geography across the borough)	93%	n/a	n/a	80%
Audience figures for Lyceum Theatre (N.B. Theatre did not reopen until September 2021)	39,881	0	0	130,000
Tatton Park visitor numbers	615,000	410,000	420,000	700,000
Tatton Park net budget	£633,371	£743,914	£849,781	£849,781
Value of the Visitor economy (annual retrospective STEAM measure)	2020 £548m (reduced from £994m in 2019 due to impact of pandemic and lockdowns)	n/a	n/a	Annual figure due Sept 2022
% Carbon emissions being offset by the Council	32.9%	n/a	n/a	38%

- 9.3.** This service continued during the challenging period of the Covid-19 pandemic when usage of the network increased as a result of the lockdowns. Lockdowns highlighted the vital importance of the network for our communities' physical and mental wellbeing, and in doing so, the necessary of resources to maintain the asset, contribute to active travel and provide the benefits of wider access to the rural area and countryside.
- 9.4.** In 2021/22 the team responded to more than 350 new issue reports about path furniture, signposting, surface and bridges, replacing and repairing where necessary and resolving 365 issues; progressed path diversion cases; processed claims for routes; and responded to enquiries from landowners and users in order to protect and maintain the network for all. Capacity is stretched across the work of the team, including on the legal orders work, where work progresses through waiting lists, dealing with 19 new diversion application requests (compared to 13 in the previous year), 6 new Definitive Map Modification Order claims received compared to 4 in same period last year, 356 planning application responses compared to 349 in the last year, and 178 searches undertaken compared to 116 for the same period last year, in addition to other functions and enquiries.
- 9.5.** The team has also completed the preservation and digitisation of historic records, secured a continuation of grant for gates to replace stiles project secured from Peak and Northern Footpaths Society and delivered of path improvement projects across the network with local partners and volunteers.
- 9.6.** The Countryside Ranger Service is responsible for Cheshire East Councils Country Parks, Nature Reserves and Linear Trails, which together attract over 1,000,000 visits each year.

- 9.7.** In 2021/22, the Ranger Service retained its Green Flag awards at Teggs Nose Country Park and Brereton Heath Local Nature Reserve, and the Britain in Bloom “Gold Award” for our nature conservation work on Lindow Common SSSI. The Service planted over 2000 trees and completed a rewetting of peat project on Lindow Common, the latter supported by Natural England.
- 9.8.** The Countryside Ranger Service works closely with the PROW team to improve access to the wider countryside, and the teams are often work. The Service was supported by volunteers who provided 1028 days’ worth of time to help maintain the country parks and trails.
- 9.9.** The Visitor Economy team supports an important sector for Cheshire East that until the pandemic would have been worth more than £1bn to the local economy in 2020. As anticipated and reported to Committee in September 2021, the value of visitor economy reduced in 2020 as a result of the pandemic, the lockdowns and impact of associated regulations. The economic value reduced to £548m in 2020 from £994m in 2019 (STEAM data) while direct employment also fell from over 11,000 to around 5000 in the same year. The data is always retrospective and so the figures for 2021 will not be available until later this year.
- 9.10.** The Visitor Economy team has worked with Marketing Cheshire and others to develop a series of promotional campaigns to position Cheshire as a Family Destination with the strapline ‘Our Family Welcomes Your Family’ based around the premise of families reconnecting post Covid. Again, with Marketing Cheshire the team is supporting a ‘Destination Cheshire’ network of non-Chester based tourism businesses and attractions. This ensures communication of best-practice, coordination of marketing activity, peer support and provides an ability to consult businesses directly on strategy going forward.
- 9.11.** While sales of event tickets have been impacted by the pandemic due to a move to on-line booking, requests for visitor information and sales of local products or gifts in the visitor information centre are close to pre-pandemic levels as town centre footfall increases and people are looking to explore their locality.
- 9.12.** Post-Covid, hospitality businesses have had real issues around recruitment, to the point where this is hampering their ability to trade in a way that ensures their survival. The Visitor Economy team have been working in partnership with DWP & Springboard (National Hospitality Training Agency) to develop a bespoke approach to the significant issues of recruitment, retention, and skills since 2021. This aims at providing local people with career opportunities and local businesses with employees to cover their vacancies. The project offers targeted support and the opportunity to have a week’s long training course into hospitality, along with 1-1’s and CV/Interview assessments. At the end of it they are offered a work placement and a

guaranteed job interview. The project is fully funded and in partnership with Job Centre Plus & Springboard.

- 9.13.** Ahead of developing a new Visitor Economy Strategy in 2022, a Tourism Recovery Plan was approved by the Economic and Growth Committee on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2021 to support sector recovery to the benefit of the wider economy.
- 9.14.** Plans for the History Centre in Crewe continue to progress as part of the larger Archives project. A successful National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) mid-point review in December 2021 has provided the green light to continue developing the scheme proposals and to submit a stage 2 funding bid later in 2022. The current development stage of the project includes building design to RIBA stage 3, activity planning, interpretation, business planning, consultation, and engagement.
- 9.15.** Ly2 has received planning consent in Lyceum Square, Crewe. Working collaboratively with Economic Development colleagues, the Cultural Economy Team are currently working on the art elements of the project with designs for an art carpet, murals, stage and facades completed.
- 9.16.** Proposals for 'Powerhouse' in Crewe (a new commercial music venue and creative skills development hub) have been accepted by Crewe Town Board and DCLG for the next stage of Towns Fund business case process. The new facility is planned to be sited immediately adjacent to and to complement Ly2, the Market Hall and the Lyceum Theatre. Work has continued at pace and is supported by Economic Development, RIBA3 having been completed and full business case being submitted in June 2022.
- 9.17.** Other work commissioned under the Council's Cultural Framework includes a project that received funding through the Welcome Back fund to allow for street pianos, and light boxes for both Macclesfield and Crewe Town Centres. The MAKO programme of digital and creative engagement for young people is another commissioned programme that continues to deliver in Crewe. It has successfully engaged with over 154 vulnerable young people in 2021/22, with programmes continuing in 2022.
- 9.18.** The Cultural Economy Team with support from the Economic Development service commissioned a mural of one of Macclesfield's finest musicians now has pride of place in the town centre, which was completed in March 2022. The mural of Ian Curtis, the iconic frontman of Joy Division, is a fully funded Cheshire East Council project and has been painted by well-known street artist 'Akse'. It adorns a building on Mill Street, just across from the bus station. As well as attracting a lot of attention in the town itself, it generated TV coverage and a huge amount of positive social media for Macclesfield and Cheshire East.
- 9.19.** The service has provided valuable advice and support to the events sector to help recovery following COVID, including the launch of a new, on-line events booking system.

- 9.20.** Tatton Park, which received ‘Green flag’ and ‘Green Heritage site’ awards once again, continues to be an important environmental and community resource as a driver of the local visitor economy. The Tatton Park recovery plan is being delivered, taking account of the impacts of the pandemic. Visitor numbers to the Park, Garden and Farm attractions were buoyant following the removal of Government restrictions at the end of June 2021. Some areas of activity, such as corporate hire, education visits and group visits are recovering slowly, but weddings and filming days were higher than pre-pandemic.
- 9.21.** Events are an important area of activity, which have started again since June 2021. Despite the loss of a few events from the calendar, Tatton has been able to host much of its usual programme, including the RHS Flower show which welcomed 65,000 visitors in July 2021. Among the events and activities run directly by Tatton itself, a series of ‘Percy the Park keeper’ trails and events were particularly popular with the families. This was recognised by the Marketing Cheshire Tourism award for Tatton’s marketing campaign for ‘Percy the Park Keeper’.
- 9.22.** Tatton Park has launched new education programmes that diversify the educational opportunities available to visitors and futureproof for the new ways in which people hope to engage with learning venues following the pandemic. This was funded through a successful bid to the Arts Council Cultural Recovery Fund. The programme includes a range of new on-site experiences, outreach workshops and opportunities for digital learning. In August 2021, it was confirmed that Tatton Park received its ninth consecutive Sandford Award for Excellence in Heritage Education.
- 9.23.** At its meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2021, the Economy and Growth Committee approved a process to review the plan and prepare a new Rural Action Plan for the period 2022 -25.
- 9.24.** The service is also leading the Natural Capital workstream (including nature-based offsetting) as part of the Council’s Carbon Action Plan. As well as developing a sub-regional Natural Capital Plan, the programme of tree planting and peatland restoration has continued as part of its Carbon Action Plan commitments to help be carbon neutral by 2025. Since 2019, 22 hectares of trees have planted and one peatland near Gawsworth restored. The programme has been developed in partnership with Mersey Forest and in collaboration with Cheshire Wildlife Trust. It includes new planting in parks and open spaces, in school grounds, at Tatton Park and in Countryside areas such Borrow Pitt Meadows and Riverside Park. The largest tree planting site of 7ha has been at Leighton Grange near Crewe (equivalent to around 10 football pitches) working with the Mersey Forest team and volunteers from the Green Task Force, a charity that uses nature-based therapy to help veterans struggling with their mental health into work.
- 9.25.** The project team is working in partnership with Mersey Forest and Cheshire Wildlife Trust to improve tree planting and biodiversity on other land in the

borough. It is also contributing to the development of a sub-regional Local Nature Recovery strategy, a mandatory requirement of the Environment act that will build on the Natural Capital Assessment and Investment Plan for Cheshire and Warrington completed earlier in 2021. Member of the team are also developing a catchment-wide approach to the Bollin Valley with a range of partners (including a pilot Environmental Investment Readiness project), developing proposals to improve the Crewe Valley Brook corridor and is supporting the Local Nature Partnership.

## 10. Economic Development

Corporate Plan 2021-25: Key priorities	
Priority: Thriving urban and rural economies with opportunities for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of a strategic regeneration plan for Crewe</li> <li>• Delivery of a strategic regeneration plan for Macclesfield</li> <li>• Successful town centres in our other key towns</li> <li>• Maximise the commercial and regeneration opportunities associated with HS2 for the whole borough</li> <li>• Thriving and active rural communities</li> </ul>
Priority: To be carbon neutral by 2025	To have delivered the milestones in becoming a carbon neutral council

Key Performance Indicators	2020/21 Outturn	Year end (21/22)	Target 2021/22																																												
Delivery of capital programmes and projects on time and to budget	New measure	100% • Crewe Market Hall • Castle St, Macclesfield	100%																																												
Town Centre Footfall	Total footfall during 2021-22 across all 11 centres has increased by 4% to 7.80m  <table border="1"> <tr><td>Crewe</td><td>increase of</td><td>36%</td><td>to 1.136m</td></tr> <tr><td>Macclesfield</td><td>increase of</td><td>4%</td><td>to 1.371m</td></tr> <tr><td>Alsager</td><td>increase of</td><td>9%</td><td>to 0.395m</td></tr> <tr><td>Congleton</td><td>decrease of</td><td>13%</td><td>to 0.804m</td></tr> <tr><td>Handforth</td><td>no change</td><td>0%</td><td>to 0.385m</td></tr> <tr><td>Knutsford</td><td>decrease of</td><td>5%</td><td>to 0.771m</td></tr> <tr><td>Middlewich</td><td>decrease of</td><td>5%</td><td>to 0.347m</td></tr> <tr><td>Nantwich</td><td>increase of</td><td>26%</td><td>to 0.582m</td></tr> <tr><td>Poynton</td><td>decrease of</td><td>16%</td><td>to 0.410m</td></tr> <tr><td>Sandbach</td><td>decrease of</td><td>9%</td><td>to 0.599m</td></tr> <tr><td>Wilmslow</td><td>decrease of</td><td>7%</td><td>to 1.000m</td></tr> </table>		Crewe	increase of	36%	to 1.136m	Macclesfield	increase of	4%	to 1.371m	Alsager	increase of	9%	to 0.395m	Congleton	decrease of	13%	to 0.804m	Handforth	no change	0%	to 0.385m	Knutsford	decrease of	5%	to 0.771m	Middlewich	decrease of	5%	to 0.347m	Nantwich	increase of	26%	to 0.582m	Poynton	decrease of	16%	to 0.410m	Sandbach	decrease of	9%	to 0.599m	Wilmslow	decrease of	7%	to 1.000m	10% increase on 20/21 figures
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Deliver Business Growth Support	Distributing Additional Restrictions Grant	All funding in rounds 1 and 2 allocated and distributed in accordance to the Council's Policy	100%																																												

10.1. The Economic Development service comprises three main teams the Regeneration and Development team, the Business Support team and the

Projects team – focused on carbon reduction/energy and digital connectivity – all three have been incredibly busy this financial year.

**10.2.** The Corporate Plan specifically identifies activity in Crewe and Macclesfield as the borough's largest towns as key objectives, and both are at exciting stages of development having established regeneration frameworks and significant funding streams secured. Our focus also seeks to create enhancement and vitality in all our Market Towns and key service centres. The Regeneration and Development team deliver this activity.

**10.3.** Crewe regeneration activity this financial year is summarised below:-

10.3.1. It has obtained two significant awards of Funding from the government: Future High Streets Fund (£14.1m), and Town Investment Fund (£22.9m) to revitalise the Town Centre.

10.3.2. Ten projects under the Future High Street fund have already been mobilised while the ten projects under the Towns fund have addressed funding conditions to advance and in October were submitted to the next key government gateway. The development of detailed business cases using HM Treasury's five case business case model have begun. An Accelerated Towns Fund project utilizing £0.75m government grant has been used to develop designs and costings for Ly2 project and a planning permission has been granted.

10.3.3. The Royal Arcade Development, with a new Bus Station and Multi Storey Car Park has developed to RIBA Stage 4 – designs and costings. In September the full scheme including the leisure element secured a hybrid planning consent. The team have continued to work constructively with the development partner on costs, designs to progress for phase 1, and preparation works are commenced on site ahead of the start of construction of the Bus Station and Multi Storey Car Park Elements.

10.3.4. The newly refurbished Market Hall successfully opened in May 2021 and the data shows that it is becoming an anchor retail, leisure, and entertainment venue in the town. Early success is supported by footfall data which shows that between April 2021 and April 2022 there were 36% more people in the Crewe town centre area, to a total figure of approx 1,136,000 during the year.

**10.4.** Macclesfield regeneration activity has also been progressing;

10.4.1. A Levelling Up Fund bid was submitted to the government in June 2021 for £14.5m, to redevelop the market hall, upgrade the public realm to enable and encourage outdoor hospitality and to improve the Old Sunday School a grade 2\* listed building to enable greater and community and commercial use. Although unsuccessful in the national allocation, it has

provided further focus for a second – Round 2 – bid to be made this summer.

10.4.2. The £1.6m public realm investment on Castle St started in summer 2021 and was completed in early October 2021. In March 2022, the scheme received a Macclesfield Civic Society award for excellence. This council investment in public realm, has stimulated private investment in gateway buildings that were vacant providing new commercial and residential floorspace.

10.4.3. A specialist team of advisors has been appointed to develop an Options and Feasibility for the following areas have been completed and Officers are working through implications and business case development:

- Station Gateway/campus and Churchill Way Corridor
- Macclesfield Town Hall Study and
- the Market Hall.

10.4.4. Footfall data shows that year on year change between April 2021 and April 2022 in Macclesfield has increased 4% to 1.371m.

**10.5.** Our Market towns - The Regeneration and Development team also focus on the maximising the vitality of our other nine towns (listed below), addressing another of the key priorities in the corporate plan. Unsurprisingly, covid has impacted these centres more so then Crewe and Macclesfield, as can be seen by the footfall data below April 2021 and August 2021:-

Alsager	increase of	9%	to 0.395m
Congleton	decrease of	13%	to 0.804m
Handforth	no change	0%	to 0.385m
Knutsford	decrease of	5%	to 0.771m
Middlewich	decrease of	5%	to 0.347m
Nantwich	increase of	26%	to 0.582m
Poynton	decrease of	16%	to 0.410m
Sandbach	decrease of	9%	to 0.599m
Wilmslow	decrease of	7%	to 1.000m

**10.6.** This decrease in footfall in smaller towns is in line with national trends, data shows that between all but two of our key service towns saw a decrease in footfall as people favoured trips to their immediate and smaller centres.

**10.7.** The team has produced a series of Town Vitality baseline reports for all nine key service centres. These baselines bring together for each centre an analysis of the town centres as they currently exist. Draft tool kit reports have also been produced, and shared with Town Councils and other stakeholders, showing examples of initiative supporting town centres aligned to Institute of Place The Team has successfully closed the £572,870 Welcome Back to The High Street Fund. This funding was used to launch the Say Hi to the High St campaign with 11 mini videos (one for each town) on social media,

advertises in local press and mailshot to 187,000 residential and business premises to advertise safe reopening of local high streets.

- 10.8.** The Regeneration and Development team is also responsible for delivering three major housing schemes (known as the 'Strategic Sites'), combining land owned by the council with other landowners' sites to provide development of significant scale. This includes a potential 1675 dwellings at Garden Village, Handforth, 1000 dwellings at Leighton, Crewe and 950 in South Macclesfield.
- 10.9.** At Leighton Green, NW Crewe package negotiations are ongoing with other landowners to crystallise s106 to confirm grant of planning consent. This will unlock land parcels and delivery strategy to be agreed. Planning for the Council's development land was approved in Spring/Summer 2021.
- 10.10.** Further works have been commissioned on the Handforth Garden Village hybrid planning application during 2021-22 to supplement existing statements including further on-site investigations. This will enable the Planning application to be allocated for a committee date to be considered by Strategic Planning Board.
- 10.11.** The Projects team are also active in roles relating to energy and carbon saving such as :
- The delivery of the ELENA Energy programme which has levered over £30m of investment locally into low carbon projects;
  - Embedding carbon into the council's business planning process;
  - Progressing the Council's first solar farm; and
  - Delivering the Vanguard Hydrogen project.
- 10.12.** A key aim of the team is to also work in an integrated fashion with other service colleagues to embed carbon into other workstreams, including Handforth Garden Village, Crewe regeneration (Crewe Heat Network), and Macclesfield (Market Hall and Town Hall decarbonisation). At the Royal Arcade, for example, proposals for a scheme to incorporate increased electric vehicle charging capacity and photovoltaic cells in the bus station and multi-storey car park development have been adapted.
- 10.13.** Coordinating the covid response to Cheshire East businesses, the Business Support team's primary objective over the last 18 months has been the delivery of the COVID-19 discretionary business support grants. This work has been accommodated on top of their normal business roles, and at times utilising secondees from across other services within the Council to assist.
- 10.14.** Throughout the year the team reacted to emerging decisions and support programmes around the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality sectors. The Team established and processed the further rounds of the Additional Restrictions

Grant Schemes 1 and 2 (ARG) – Assessed 2133 applications and paid out £11.1million in grants to 1,102 businesses. These programmes ended on the 30 June 2021.

**10.15.** A new £3.4m ARG programme started in August 2021 and it conclude in March 2022. There were three workstreams:

10.15.1. the Extended Restrictions Grant Scheme – Launched in September 21 and to date paid out £322,000 to 143 businesses.

10.15.2. the Business Interruption Fund – Launched at the beginning of October 21 and to date approved 73 applications; and

10.15.3. the newly launched Recovery & Growth Programme to support local economic recovery and assisted businesses that are seeking to grow, adapt, diversify, and expand their current operation to support long-term sustainability.

10.15.4. This programme has been evaluated and 104 responded to the survey the evaluation identified that:

- **393** jobs were saved
- **284** new jobs were created
- Net job impact in Cheshire East **677**, and
- Additional revenue growth in businesses of **£17.06 million**

10.15.5. Within this programme additional support was provided to businesses via:

- 1:1 support through telephone, e-mail, live-chat, video call
- Guides and templates to aid the development of the application
- On-demand webinars explaining how to use the tools

10.15.6. During 2021-22 the Business and Support Team has continued to promote the borough and account managed the following Inward Investment activity:

- Development of a place-based investment plan
- Supporting investment plans for:
  - Bentley Motors – secured £2.5bn investment in Crewe over 10 years
  - Barclays – redevelopment of Radbroke Technology Campus including relocation of 1,000 jobs from Northwich
  - Club L London – eCommerce fashion brand, signed at Magnitude
  - Swizzels – expansion of new manufacturing plant at Magnitude
  - Tatton Services – planning application submitted for new motorway service area
  - Development of Expression of Interest for Great British Railways HQ

## **1. Implications**

### **1.1. Legal**

1.1.1. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

### **1.2. Finance**

1.2.1. The financial implications of changes in performance requirements or responding to current performance levels will be included in the Financial Year Review.

### **1.3. Policy**

1.3.1. The report sets out how the department is contributing to the Cheshire East Council Corporate Plan 2021-25.

### **1.4. Equality**

1.4.1. There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

### **1.5. Human Resources**

1.5.1. There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

### **1.6. Risk Management**

1.6.1. The performance reporting process provides opportunities for the Council to identify and focus on areas for improvement to support achievement of its strategic ambitions. Timely performance reporting mitigates risk of the Council not achieving its outcomes by providing the opportunity to review outputs, identify trends and areas for improvement, and introduce corrective and/or preventative actions wherever necessary to address areas of poor - or under – performance.

### **1.7. Rural Communities**

1.7.1. There are no implications for rural communities arising from this performance report.

### **1.8. Children and Young People/Cared for Children**

1.8.1. There are no implications for children and young people arising from this performance report.

### **1.9. Public Health**

1.10. There are no implications for public health arising from this performance report.

## 1.11. Climate Change

- 1.11.1. The performance report highlights key initiatives and schemes which support and benefit the Councils aims and objectives to reduce impact on climate change.

<b>Access to Information</b>	
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Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	None