

Council Agenda

Date: Wednesday 16th October 2024
Time: 11.00 am
Venue: Council Chamber, SKA Observatory, Jodrell Bank, Lower Withington, SK11 9FT

The agenda is divided into two parts. Part 1 is taken in the presence of the public and press. Part 2 items will be considered in the absence of the public and press for the reasons indicated on the agenda and at the foot of each report.

It should be noted that Part 1 items of Cheshire East Council decision making meetings are audio recorded and the recordings are uploaded to the Council's website.

PART 1 – MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS PRESENT

1. **Apologies for Absence**

2. **Declarations of Interest**

To provide an opportunity for Members and Officers to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests, other registerable interests, and non-registerable interests in any item on the agenda.

3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting** (Pages 5 - 18)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 17 July 2024.

4. **Mayor's Announcements**

To receive such announcements as may be made by the Mayor.

5. **Public Speaking Time/Open Session**

In accordance the Council Procedural Rules, a total period of 30 minutes is allocated for members of the public to speak at Council meetings. Individual members of the public may speak for up to 2 minutes, but the Chair will have discretion to vary this requirement where they consider it appropriate.

Members of the public wishing to speak are required to provide notice of this at least three clear working days' in advance of the meeting and should include the question with that notice. Questions should be submitted to: katie.small@cheshireeast.gov.uk or brian.reed@cheshireeast.gov.uk.

Petitions - To receive any petitions which have met the criteria - [Petitions Scheme Criteria](#), and falls within the remit of the Committee. Petition organisers will be allowed up to three minutes to speak.

6. **Leader's and Deputy Leader's Announcements**

To receive such announcements as may be made by the Leader and Deputy Leader.

7. **Recommendation from Corporate Policy Committee: Proposed New Senior Management Structure** (Pages 19 - 40)

To consider the recommendations from the Corporate Policy Committee.

8. **Recommendation from Children and Families Committee: Youth Justice Plan 2024-27** (Pages 41 - 110)

To consider the recommendation from the Children and Families Committee.

9. **Supplementary Revenue Estimates (First Financial Review 2024/25)**
(Pages 111 - 116)

To approve the supplementary revenue estimate.

10. **Notices of Motion** (Pages 117 - 120)

To consider any Notices of Motion that have been received in accordance with the Council Procedure Rules.

11. **Questions**

In accordance the Council Procedure Rules, opportunity is provided for Members of the Council to ask the Mayor or the Chair of a Committee any question about a matter which the Council, or the Committee has powers, duties or responsibilities.

At Council meeting, there will be a maximum question time period of 30 minutes. A period of two minutes will be allowed for each Councillor wishing to ask a question. The Mayor will have the discretion to vary this requirement where they consider it appropriate.

12. **Reporting of Urgent Decisions taken by the Chief Executive** (Pages 121 - 122)

To note the urgent decisions taken by the Chief Executive on behalf of Council.

13. **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

The report relating to the remaining items on the agenda has been withheld from public circulation and deposit pursuant to Section 100(B)(2) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the matters may be determined with the press and public excluded.

The Committee may decide that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item pursuant to Section 100(A)4 of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 and public interest would not be served in publishing the information.

PART 2 - MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITHOUT THE PUBLIC AND PRESS PRESENT

14. **Recommendation from Corporate Policy Committee: Proposed New Senior Management Structure** (Pages 123 - 128)

To consider the confidential appendices.

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CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Council**
held on Wednesday, 17th July, 2024 in the Council Chamber, SKA
Observatory, Jodrell Bank, Lower Withington, SK11 9FT

PRESENT

Councillor M Houston (Mayor/Chair)

Councillor D Edwardes (Deputy Mayor/Vice-Chair)

Councillors S Adams, L Anderson, M Beanland, S Bennett-Wake, J Bird, L Braithwaite, J Bratherton, M Brooks, D Brown, C Browne, L Buchanan, C Bulman, A Burton, R Chadwick, C Chapman, D Clark, J Clowes, P Coan, A Coiley, S Corcoran, L Crane, T Dean, B Drake, S Edgar, K Edwards, M Edwards, H Faddes, A Farrall, R Fletcher, A Gage, S Gardiner, M Goldsmith, M Gorman, E Hall, A Harrison, G Hayes, A Heler, C Hilliard, S Holland, T Jackson, D Jefferay, R Kain, A Kolker, N Mannion, G Marshall, A Moran, R Moreton, R Morris, H Moss, M Muldoon, C O'Leary, B Posnett, B Puddicombe, P Redstone, J Rhodes, J Saunders, H Seddon, M Simon, L Smetham, G Smith, J Smith, J Smith, L Smith, J Snowball, L Wardlaw, M Warren, H Whitaker, F Wilson and J Wray

24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors R Bailey, N Cook, E Gilman, K Hague, J Pearson, J Place, J Pratt, J Priest, M Sewart, and R Vernon.

25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor C O'Leary declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to Item 10 – Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services Improvement Plan as he did research around care leaver services.

During consideration of Item 14 - Cheshire and Merseyside Joint Health Scrutiny Arrangements Protocol, Councillor L Wardlaw declared she was a member of the Cheshire and Merseyside Joint Health Scrutiny Committee and would leave the meeting during consideration of the item.

26 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Consideration was given to the minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 15 May 2024.

An amendment was proposed and seconded to the minutes as follows:

Minute 10 - Election of Leader of the Council

Delete the sentence *“The motion was put to the vote and declared carried.”*

Replace with *“There were 74 Members present, 75 votes were cast - 35 for the motion, 34 against with 6 abstentions. The motion was declared carried.”*

A recorded vote was requested with the following results: -

FOR

Councillors S Adams, M Beanland, D Brown, R Chadwick, J Clowes, P Coan, T Dean, S Edgar, R Fletcher, A Gage, S Gardiner, E Hall, A Harrison, G Hayes, A Heler, S Holland, T Jackson, R Kain, A Kolker, R Morris, M Muldoon, C O’Leary, B Posnett, P Redstone, J Saunders, M Simon, L Smetham, John Smith, Julie Smith, L Smith, L Wardlaw, H Whitaker and J Wray.

AGAINST

Councillors L Anderson, S Bennett-Wake, J Bird, L Braithwaite, J Bratherton, M Brooks, C Browne, L Buchanan, C Bulman, A Burton, C Chapman, D Clark, A Coiley, S Corcoran, L Crane, D Edwardes, K Edwards, M Edwards, H Faddes, M Goldsmith, M Gorman, C Hilliard, N Mannion, G Marshall, B Puddicombe, J Rhodes, H Seddon, G Smith, J Snowball, M Warren and F Wilson.

NOT VOTING

Councillors M Houston, D Jefferay, A Moran, R Moreton, and H Moss.

The motion was declared carried with 33 votes for, 31 against and 5 not voting.

RESOLVED: That

- 1 the minutes of the Mayor Making and Annual Meeting held on 15 May be approved as a correct record subject to the following amendment:

Minute 10 - Election of Leader of the Council

Delete the sentence *“The motion was put to the vote and declared carried.”*

Replace with *“There were 74 Members present, 75 votes were cast - 35 for the motion, 34 against with 6 abstentions. The motion was declared carried.”*

- 2 the minutes of the Special Meeting of Council held on 15 May 2024 be approved as a correct record.

27 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor, in summary

- 1 thanked the SKA Observatory for their generosity in providing their Council Chamber to the Council free of charge.
- 2 reported that details of all engagements undertaken by both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor could now be found on the Council's website and to save time at Council meetings the Mayor would not be routinely referring to civic engagements in their announcements.
- 3 congratulated all those who were elected as Members of Parliament to represent those living in Cheshire East and stated that following the boundary changes, there were now six parliamentary constituencies that are wholly or partly in the Borough.
- 4 stated that there had never before been a Cheshire East Councillor elected as a Member of Parliament and acknowledged the election of Connor Naismith as MP for Crewe and Nantwich. Connor Naismith had now resigned from the Council and in due course a by-election would be held. The Mayor also congratulated Cllr Rob Moreton for his candidature in the Congleton constituency.
- 5 Stated that a number of reports on the agenda referred to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. Following the general election, the Department had reverted to its former name, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, and the minutes of the meeting would reflect this change.

28 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

Mr Stuart Redgard referred to planning application 15/0064M - Peat Farm, Moor Lane, Wilmslow and stated that he had informed the Council of potential breaches to the conditions 4, 7 and 33 attached to this application, and that he had not heard back from the Council. Mr Redgard asked what conditions had been breached, how they had been breached and what action the Council had already taken or intended to take in the future to enforce these conditions.

In response, Councillor B Puddicombe, Chair of Strategic Planning Board, stated that following receipt of complaints from local residents regarding potential breaches of conditions 4, 7 and 33 of permission 15/0064M, these matters were investigated by the Planning Enforcement team, who had agreed a set of timescales with the applicant for the submission of the outstanding information that was required to discharge these conditions. Cllr Puddicombe reported that Condition 33, which concerned the community liaison scheme had been submitted to the planning department and the scheme was considered acceptable and that this condition had

been discharged. Condition 4 required the detailed design of each compartment to be submitted to the planning authority for approval. A range of dates had been agreed with the applicant for each scheme to be submitted and the first three round of designs had been submitted to the Council, most recently on 3rd June. Following submission of the detailed designs, the Council was in the process of liaising with a range of technical consultees and representatives of Transition Wilmslow to ensure the compartment designs created the conditions necessary for the re-establishment of the peat bog. Further detailed designs would be submitted going forward for the remainder of the compartments in accordance with the timescales that had agreed with the applicant. Condition 7 required the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans. Cllr Puddicombe was not aware that there were any outstanding complaints with respect to compliance with the approved documents aside from the matters detailed above. The site would be subject to periodic monitoring to ensure that the works were progressing in accordance with the approved designs.

Mr Alan Butler asked about the trial of the acoustic camera on Pendleton Way in Wilmslow and why no steps had been taken to implement a Public Space Protection Order during the trial period.

In response Councillor M Warren, Chair of Environment and Communities Committee, stated that the trial of the noise camera on the A34 had been funded via the Police and Crime Commissioner and that it was intended to gather the evidence necessary to inform a decision as to whether a Public Space Protection Order could be legally implemented. The Council continued to work with the Police and Crime Commissioner and their officers to review the data gathered during the trial and would make a decision around future implementation of a Public Space Protection Order once this due diligence had concluded. This was also subject to securing funding from the respective local councils for the permanent acquisition of the camera equipment.

Sue Helliwell referred to the recommendations of the Corporate Peer Review report which she said stated that the Council needed to streamline current decision-making arrangements to avoid working in isolation across committees and reduce confusion and lost capacity caused by the current system. She asked whether, if the financial powers were given to the Corporate Policy Committee this wasn't the cabinet system under another name? She said that it would be essential that the Leader, Deputy Leader, and Chief Executive were visible in the organisation, championing the Council's improvement and transformation, and that for this to happen it was time for the Leader of the Council to step aside.

In response Councillor S Corcoran stated that most of the matters raised would be covered in the agenda of the meeting. He stated that there did need to be a look again at the committee system. The present scrutiny committee was an external facing committee and that there was a need to improve internal scrutiny of the Council's decision making.

Laura Turner referred to the Fight for Middlewich campaign and the response received from the Council. She stated it had been a frustrating and challenging experience and that she had experienced poor customer service, inaccurate documents, and resistance from elected members. She stated that it was now time for the Council to make changes and elect a new Leader of the Council.

29 LEADER'S AND DEPUTY LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader, in summary: -

- 1 congratulated the six recently elected MPs who represented constituencies in the borough of Cheshire East.
- 2 referred to the financial challenges faced by the Council.
- 3 reported that there would be an additional meeting of the Corporate Policy Committee on 21 August 2024 to discuss the Transformation Plan, proposed new senior management structure and the response to the Corporate Peer Challenge report.
- 4 reported that he had been involved with an event to mark the 80th anniversary of D-Day.
- 5 referred to the launch of Foster4 which aimed to recruit new foster carers – the details of the scheme were available on the Council's website.
- 6 highlighted the Home from Hospital Good Neighbour Scheme which supported people discharged from Macclesfield and Crewe Leighton hospitals.
- 7 welcomed the improvements to the no. 38 bus service between Crewe and Macclesfield.
- 8 stated that he had been the Leader of the Council since 2019 and outlined the achievements of the Council under his leadership. However, the last year had been difficult for him seeing many of the things he had worked for being dismantled.
- 9 stated that the Leader of the Council needed the confidence of all the political groups of the Council to carry through the Transformation programme and as he did not have this confidence, he resigned as Leader of the Council.

The Deputy Leader paid tribute to Councillor Corcoran in his role as Leader of the Council.

He continued with the deputy leader announcements, in summary: -

- 1 reported that in conjunction with the Lawn Tennis Association, work would take place over the summer to improve the tennis courts at Alderley Edge Park, Bollington Recreation Ground, Handforth Meriton Road Park, and Macclesfield South Park.
- 2 reported that Oak Street Car Park in Crewe had closed and had been handed over to the charity responsible for building the Youth Zone on the site, with construction expected to be completed by next summer.
- 3 reported that the main spine road– Tottys Hall Way, of the Crewe Northwest Package scheme had been officially opened and would help reduce the congestion in the area and create quicker access to Leighton Hospital and underpin economic growth.
- 4 reported that work on the first phase of the Southern Gateway project had commence. The scheme would improve the pedestrian and cyclist access from south of Crewe into the town centre.

30 APPOINTMENT OF LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Nominations were invited for the election of the Leader of the Council.

It was proposed by Councillor F Wilson and seconded by Councillor M Brooks that Councillor Nick Mannion be appointed as the Leader of the Council.

A recorded vote was requested with the following results:-

FOR

Councillors L Anderson, S Bennett-Wake, J Bird, L Braithwaite, J Bratherton, M Brooks, L Buchanan, C Bulman, A Burton, R Chadwick, C Chapman, D Clark, J Clowes, A Coiley, S Corcoran, L Crane, T Dean, B Drake, D Edwardes, K Edwards, M Edwards, H Faddes, A Farrall, R Fletcher, S Gardiner, M Goldsmith, M Gorman, E Hall, A Harrison, C Hilliard, D Jefferay, R Kain, N Mannion, G Marshall, A Moran, R Moreton, R Morris, H Moss, B Puddicombe, J Rhodes, J Saunders, H Seddon, M Simon, G Smith, J Snowball, M Warren, F Wilson and J Wray.

AGAINST

None

NOT VOTING

Councillors S Adams, M Beanland, D Brown, C Browne, P Coan, S Edgar, A Gage, G Hayes, A Heler, S Holland, M Houston, T Jackson, M Muldoon, C O'Leary, B Posnett, P Redstone, L Smetham, John Smith, Julie Smith, L Smith, L Wardlaw and H Whitaker.

The motion was declared carried with 48 votes for, 0 against and 22 not voting.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Nick Mannion be appointed as Leader of the Council.

31 RECOMMENDATION FROM CORPORATE POLICY COMMITTEE: CHESHIRE EAST PLAN 2024-25

Consideration was given to the recommendation from the Corporate Policy Committee to approve the Cheshire East Plan 2024-25.

The recommendation was proposed and seconded and during the debate an amendment was proposed and seconded: -

“Paragraph A3.4.3 of the Plan be amended to read “Secure further funding for active travel.”

The proposer and seconder of the recommendation from the Corporate Policy Committee to Council agreed to accept the amendment and therefore the amendment became part of the substantive motion.

RESOLVED:

That Council approve the Cheshire East Plan 2024-25, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

32 CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE REPORT

Consideration was given to the Corporate Peer Challenge report which had been published following the recent Local Government Association review and to the draft action plan developed in response to the recommendations in the Peer Challenge Report.

The recommendations were proposed and seconded and following debate a recorded vote was requested with the following results: -

FOR

Councillors S Adams, M Beanland, S Bennett-Wake, J Bird, L Braithwaite, J Bratherton, M Brooks, D Brown, C Browne, L Buchanan, C Bulman, A Burton, R Chadwick, C Chapman, D Clark, J Clowes, P Coan, A Coiley, S Corcoran, L Crane, T Dean, B Drake, S Edgar, D Edwardes, K Edwards, M Edwards, H Faddes, A Farrall, R Fletcher, A Gage, S Gardiner, M Goldsmith, M Gorman, E Hall, A Harrison, G Hayes, A Heler, C Hilliard, S Holland, T Jackson, D Jefferay, R Kain, N Mannion, G Marshall, A Moran, R Moreton, R Morris, H Moss, M Muldoon, C O’Leary, B Posnett, B Puddicombe, P Redstone, J Rhodes, J Saunders, H Seddon, M Simon,

L Smetham, G Smith, John Smith, Julie Smith, J Snowball, L Wardlaw, M Warren, H Whitaker, F Wilson and J Wray.

AGAINST

None

NOT VOTING

Councillor M Houston.

The motion was declared carried with 68 votes for, 0 against and 1 not voting.

RESOLVED: That Council

- 1 note the Corporate Peer Challenge Report, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report.
- 2 agree the draft Corporate Challenge Action Plan.
- 3 delegate authority to the Chief Executive to finalise the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan and arrange for its publication by 28 August 2024, as required by the LGA.

33 ESTABLISHMENT OF ASSURANCE PANEL

Consideration was given to the report on the establishment of an Assurance Panel to support the Council with the changes recommended by the Peer Review.

RESOLVED: That Council

- 1 approve the establishment of an Assurance Panel.
- 2 approve the membership and terms of reference of and other arrangements for the Assurance Panel, as set out in the report.
- 3 delegate authority to the Chief Executive to make all necessary arrangements to ensure that the Assurance Panel is appointed to and ready to begin its work with the Council, in accordance with the Terms of Reference which were appended to the report, as quickly as possible.

34 RECOMMENDATION FROM CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMITTEE: INSPECTION OF LOCAL AUTHORITY CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Consideration was given to the recommendation from the Children and Families Committee in relation to the Inspection of Local Authority Children Services Improvement Plan.

The Children and Families Committee at its meeting on 16 July 2024 had considered the Improvement Plan which addressed the findings of the Ofsted Inspection conducted in February and March 2024 and recommended to Council the approval of the Plan for submission to Ofsted.

RESOLVED:

That Council approve the Implementation Plan, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

35 PROPOSED NEW SENIOR MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

Consideration was given to the report which provided an update on the independent review of the current senior management organisational structure conducted by the Local Government Association as well as the next steps in the process to bring the necessary senior management capacity to deliver transformation over the next four years and thereafter.

RESOLVED: That Council

- 1 note the update on the independent review of the current senior management organisational structure,
- 2 delegate authority to the Chief Executive to produce a draft new senior management structure, undertake consultation with affected employees and trade unions on the draft, and present a final structure to Corporate Policy Committee for recommendation to full Council for approval, including approval of any new positions with salaries in excess of £100,000 per annum.
- 3 note the update on the recruitment to the post of Executive Director Place.
- 4 note the indicative timetable required to conclude the review.

36 PROGRESS OF TRANSFORMATION

Consideration was given to the report on the progress of the transformation programme.

The recommendations were proposed and seconded and during the debate two amendments were proposed and seconded.

Amendment 1

Additional wording be added to Recommendation 2 after the full stop so the last line would read “...*Exceptional Financial Support as required, subject to the Transformation Plan being presented to a special meeting of the Corporate Policy Committee prior to submission to the MHCLG.*”

Amendment 2

Additional wording to be added to Recommendation 3 after the full stop so that the last line read “...*Financial Support as needed to support the council, following presentation to Corporate Policy Committee.*”

The proposer and seconder of the recommendations agreed to accept the two amendments and therefore the amendments became part of the substantive motion.

RESOLVED: That Council

- 1 note the progress of Phase 1 of the transformation and that it will be submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government by 27 August 2024.
- 2 delegate authority to the Chief Executive to finalise the transformation programme plan and to submit it to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to meet the requirements for utilisation of the Exceptional Financial Support as required, subject to the Transformation Plan being presented to a special meeting of the Corporate Policy Committee prior to submission to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.
- 3 agree the Chief Financial Officer will utilise any agreed Exceptional Financial Support as needed to support the Council, following presentation to Corporate Policy Committee.
- 4 agree the funding envelope of £3M for Phase 2 transformation, as outlined within the S151 section of the report.

37 PRODUCTIVITY PLAN

Consideration was given to the report seeking approval for publication of the Productivity Plan and submission to the Government by the 19 July 2024 deadline.

RESOLVED:

That Council approve the publication of the Productivity Plan, as set out in appendix 2 to the report, and submission to the Government by 19 July 2024 deadline.

38 RECOMMENDATION FROM ADULTS AND HEALTH COMMITTEE: CHESHIRE AND MERSEYSIDE JOINT HEALTH SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS PROTOCOL

Cllr L Wardlaw, having declared an interest as being a member of the Cheshire and Merseyside Joint Health Scrutiny Committee, left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Consideration was given to the recommendations of the Adults and Health Committee in relation to the revised Cheshire and Merseyside Joint Health Scrutiny Arrangements Protocol.

RESOLVED:

That Council approved the revised Joint Health Scrutiny Protocol for the joint health scrutiny arrangements for Cheshire and Merseyside, as set out in appendix 1 to the report.

39 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FINANCE SUB COMMITTEE: FINAL OUTTURN 2023/24 APPROVAL OF SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES AND VIREMENTS

Consideration was given to the recommendation of the Finance Sub Committee in respect of the approval of a supplementary capital estimates and capital virement.

RESOLVED: That Council approve

- | | | |
|---|--|-------------|
| 1 | Children and Families - supplementary capital estimates for | |
| | Safety Value High Needs Funding allocation 24/25 | £16,574,250 |
| | Additional High Needs allocation for 23/24 | £ 4,125,537 |
| | High Needs allocation for 24-25 | £ 1,677,718 |
| 2 | Children and Families – supplementary capital virement for | |
| | HNPCF – Safety Valve Capital Schemes | £16,000,000 |
| 3 | Highways and Transport – supplementary capital estimates for | |
| | Network North | £ 3,316,000 |
| | LEVI Capital Fund 23/24 | £ 2,172,000 |

40 SUPPLEMENTARY REVENUE ESTIMATE - SUPPLEMENTARY SUBSTANCE MISUSE TREATMENT GRANT

Consideration was given to the report seeking approval for a supplementary revenue estimate relating to the Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Grant.

RESOLVED:

That Council approve the fully funded Supplementary Revenue Estimate of £524,528 for the Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Grant.

41 NOTICES OF MOTION

The Notice of Motion, set out in the agenda for the meeting, was withdrawn from the agenda.

42 QUESTIONS

Councillor A Harrison sought reassurance that the Council would respond to himself or his constituents in a timely manner. The chair of Nether Alderley Parish Council and Cllr Harrison had chased updates in respect of S106 monies for the community of Nether Alderley since November 2023. He requested as a matter of urgency due to the necessary work of Alderley Parish Council, that the allocated funds needed to be drawn down. Cllr Harrison requested that a detailed response be provided before additional costs were imposed on the taxpayers of Nether Alderley Parish Council, as alternative funds would need to be sought in the short term where borrowing would be required. It was agreed that a written response would be provided.

Councillor L Wardlaw stated that in June 2024 the Shadow Secretary for Transport had announced that a new Labour government would deliver major transport projects 25% faster and 20% cheaper than current levels. Cllr Wardlaw referred to the delays of progressing the Middlewich Eastern Bypass Scheme and asked how the administration would emulate the government's aspirations. In response, Councillor M Goldsmith, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, stated that the Middlewich Eastern Bypass Scheme business case had been submitted to Government and the Council awaited its approval.

Councillor A Gage stated that in April 2025 the Council would charge those with a second home a premium on Council Tax. Cllr Gage highlighted that when there was a death in the family it could take up to 12 months for a property to be released and in the current market conditions between 9-12 months to sell the property ultimately, leaving a family with no disposal income and paying council tax on a home they wished to sell. Cllr Gage sought assurance that this was an anomaly, and that the Council would not look to charge in these circumstances. Councillor M Goldsmith responded to confirm that this seemed to be an anomaly and it was likely that the authority would adopt a similar process to other local authorities where council tax was exempt for 9 months after probate had taken place.

Councillor R Fletcher stated that it had been over two years since Highways had agreed that the bus stop on Goss Place Estate, Crewe

Road, Alsager had to be moved as it was a safety hazard. Cllr Fletcher asked when would the bus stop would be moved. In response, Councillor M Goldsmith, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, confirmed that the Highways Service would be undertaking a review of all bus stops and seeking to upgrade where possible. Cllr Goldsmith committed to providing a written response in relation to the specific bus stop referred to.

Councillor B Posnett stated that the Community Infrastructure Levy on planning applications were routed to Middlewich Eastern Bypass - £2.6m and asked where the Community Infrastructure Levy monies going to at the moment, and whether they would be returned to the communities for which they were meant. Cllr M Warren, Chair of Environment and Communities Committee, undertook to provide a written response.

Councillor G Marshall referred to the ongoing delay of the Middlewich Eastern Bypass and highlighted that part of the scheme was to be funded by S106 contributions. Cllr Marshall asked if the S106 monies could be returned to Middlewich Town Council whilst the Council awaited the decision of the new government on the scheme. In response, Cllr M Goldsmith, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, confirmed that the completion of the Middlewich Eastern Bypass scheme remained a priority for the Council to construct and that it was not possible for monies to be returned as they had been already allocated to the project.

Cllr B Puddicombe highlighted the parking problems caused when visitors attended matches at the Macclesfield Town football stadium. Visitor parking was often obstructive and dangerous. Cllr Puddicombe asked the Council to seek a practical and achievable solution to this problem. In response Cllr M Goldsmith, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, stated that this was a national problem, and that the Council did not have any powers to deal with obstructive or pavement parking as this was a Police matter. It was confirmed that Council officers would participate in the football team's safety advisory group.

Cllr A Burton refereed to the Emergency Assistance Scheme which had been funded by the Council until 31 March 2024 and to the Household Support Scheme, which would be funded by central government until the end of September 2024, and asked where the Council saw the future of these support provisions. She sought assurance that it would not be picked up by the voluntary community and faith sectors. Cllr J Rhodes, Chair of Adults and Health Committee undertook to provide a written response.

Cllr J Clowes stated that the council employed a third-party organisation to oversee claims relating to damage to vehicles from Cheshire East roads. Cllr Clowes highlighted that a large number of local residents identified how their claims had been rejected for compensation and that there seemed to be a lack of consistency for reasons for accepting and rejecting claims. Cllr Clowes asked for a set of criteria for the allocation for compensation to be provided to all elected members to enable them to

guide and advise local residents. Cllr Goldsmith, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee undertook to provide a written response.

The meeting commenced at 11.00 am and concluded at 4.18 pm

Councillor M Houston (Mayor/Chair)

COUNCIL MEETING – 16 October 2024**Proposed New Senior Management Structure****RECOMMENDATION****That Council**

- 1 agree the senior management structure, (Phase 1 only), as set out in Appendix 1, including the approval of new positions within that structure with salaries more than £100,000 per annum and statutory officers, prior to implementation, and agree that the Chief Executive commences recruitment to vacant/new positions within the senior management structure.**
- 2 note the implementation/recruitment timeline to a new senior management structure.**
- 3 subject to the approval of recommendation 1, agree the release and associated redundancy and pension costs of the impacted/at risk staff members.**

Extract from the Minutes of the Corporate Policy Committee meeting held on 3 October 2024

The Committee considered the report which set out the proposed new senior management structure created following a period of formal consultation. The proposed structure had been designed to respond to the recommendations within the peer challenge and meet the requirements to achieve financial stability, deliver the Children's Services Improvement Plan and the Council's Transformation Programme.

The Committee agreed a friendly amendment to recommendation 3, that this be amended to *"Subject to Full Council approval of recommendation 1, that the Corporate Policy Committee recommend the release, and associated redundancy and pension costs, of the impacted/at risk staff members"*.

The Committee acknowledged the costs and timeline associated with the recruitment process however agreed that progressing this and filling critical vacant posts was essential to achieve stability and accountability across the organisation, and to further drive improvement as outlined in the Transformation Plan, Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan and Children's Services Improvement Plan.

It was confirmed that Appendix A would not be a confidential Part 2 item when published for Full Council on 16 October 2024.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Corporate Policy Committee

- 1 Agree that the senior management structure, (Phase 1 only), set out in Appendix 1 be presented to Full Council for approval, including approval of new positions within that structure with salaries more than £100,000 per annum and statutory officers, prior to implementation, and agreement that the Chief Executive commences recruitment to vacant/new positions within the senior management structure.
- 2 Note the implementation/recruitment timeline to a new senior management structure.
- 3 Subject to Full Council approval of recommendation 1, that the Corporate Policy Committee recommend to Full Council the release, and associated redundancy and pension costs, of the impacted/at risk staff members.

Note: Since the meeting of the Corporate Policy Committee on 3 October 2024 Appendices 1, 2 and 5 to the report are available in the public domain.

Appendices 3 and 4 -NOT FOR PUBLICATION

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 and 2 of Part 1 Schedule 1 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Corporate Policy Committee

3 October 2024

Proposed New Senior Management Structure

Report of: Rob Polkinghorne, Chief Executive

Report Reference No: CP/37/24-25

Ward(s) Affected: All

Purpose of Report

- 1 Following a period of formal consultation with appropriate staff, this report sets out the proposed senior management structure created following consideration of recommendations from the Local Government Association (LGA) Decision Making Accountability (DMA) review, and the Corporate Peer Challenge, together with the timescale for implementing the structure. This proposed structure is designed to ensure there is sufficient capacity and skills to respond to the recommendations within the peer challenge and meet the requirements to achieve financial stability, deliver the Children's Services Improvement Plan and the Council's transformation programme.
- 2 As set out in the report to Committee dated 21st August 2024, interim and temporary arrangements are in place whilst proposals were being consulted on and finalised, and these interim arrangements will need to continue until the implementation of, and recruitment to, the new senior management structure, to ensure the Council delivers its responsibilities until the onboarding of new appointees is complete. In addition, this report provides information about further interim roles to be established as a result of LGA recommendations.
- 3 This report contributes to the strategic aim of being an open and enabling organisation within the Council's Corporate Plan 2021-25 and supports the objectives.
- 4 Appendices 1, 3, 4 and 5 to this report contains exempt information pursuant to schedule 12A of The Local Government Act 1972 and

are therefore withheld from public inspection. The exempt information falls within paragraphs 2 and 4 of the exempt information categories contained within paragraph 24 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules in the Council's Constitution and contain information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual as it relates to proposed changes to the senior management structure of the Council, information about the financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information), and provide information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or officer-holders under the authority

- 5 The information provided as to posts and spot salaries, can be connected to identifiable individuals. The public interest in maintaining the exemptions outweigh the public interest in disclosure, for the reasons stated and that it would not be appropriate to identify those individuals at by way of a committee report as to do so would be breach confidentiality.

Executive Summary

- 6 The two-phase approach being taken to the senior management restructure will minimise disruption to the organisation particularly in those service areas currently undergoing significant transformational activity.
- 7 Phase 1 focuses on the posts of Executive Directors and Directors (tier 2 and 3) across the organisation to provide stability and capacity at the most senior level and is the subject of this report.
- 8 Phase 1 will also include the structure within Corporate (Resources) Services to Head of Service (tier 4) to ensure an enabling structure is in place to drive the transformation programme, support Childrens' services improvement, deliver the Corporate Peer Challenge action plan and to achieve financial sustainability over the medium term.
- 9 Phase 2 will focus on the management structure at Head of Service level for the remaining three directorates with professional input from the newly appointed or designate Executive Directors and Directors. Phase 2 will be commenced early/mid 2025.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corporate Policy Committee is recommended to:

1. Following formal consultation, agree that the senior management structure, (Phase 1 only), set out in Appendix 1 (confidential) be presented to Full Council for approval, including approval of new positions within that structure with salaries more than £100,000 per annum and statutory officers, prior to implementation, and agreement that the Chief Executive commences recruitment to vacant/new positions within the senior management structure.
2. Note the implementation/recruitment timeline to a new senior management structure.
3. Recommend the release, and associated redundancy and pension costs, of the impacted/at risk staff members.

Background

- 10 The current operating environment for local government in general, and for Cheshire East Council, in particular requires the Council to adapt to changing and challenging circumstances. The current fiscal pressure requires Cheshire East Council to change and adapt at pace.
- 11 Following the Local Government Association (LGA) independent review of the current organisational structure at Cheshire East Council a full consultation has been undertaken and concluded which is now proposed for implementation.
- 12 The finalised structure provides opportunities to transform services, to achieve capacity and capability and provide for a stable and sustainable organisational structure.
- 13 The finalised structure will drive strategic and operational capacity, identifying synergies, whilst ensuring effective future strategic leadership and transformation of the council and the delivery of good outcomes for residents and communities within Cheshire East.
- 14 It is essential that the senior management team has the capacity to deliver transformational change and improvement activity at the same time as continuing to deliver services.

Final Structure

- 15 It is essential for the Council to achieve stability within the senior leadership team to provide strategic leadership, strong direction and vision which is required to drive performance and a One Council approach. The top structure will be both visible and involved to support the Chief Executive to achieve this.
- 16 Following a 30-day consultation period, the Chief Executive has reviewed and considered all feedback and has determined a final structure which differs slightly to the original proposed structure. Please refer to Appendix 1 (confidential).
- 17 The final structure, at both phase 1 and phase 2, will enable Directors and Heads of Service to manage more than one team to reduce silos, integration and improved team working.
- 18 The final structure is designed to support clearer decision-making processes and will enable senior managers to provide clarity of risk tolerance and more strategic 'whole Council' thinking.
- 19 The final proposed new structure for Phase 1 can be found in Appendix 1 (confidential).
- 20 Phase 1 will focus on recruiting to several open and/or new posts, and these can be found in Appendix 5 (confidential)
- 21 Phase 2 will focus on the Heads of Service structure in Children's Services, Adults, Health and Integration and Place. It will commence as quickly as possible after Phase 1 as the more senior appointments are made.
- 22 The recruitment and selection process will commence as soon as the recruitment partner has been appropriately procured and appointed.

Interim and temporary arrangements

- 23 Several interim senior management arrangements have been introduced to ensure that the Council continues to deliver its responsibilities and to provide time to develop a revised permanent structure for senior management structures. Some if not all of these arrangements will continue until the appointment to and onboarding of new recruits in post is completed.
- 24 It is also expected that additional interim capacity will be required to provide support for the Chief Executive until the implementation of, and the appointment to, a new senior management structure.

This will be managed within existing financial resources and through use of currently vacant posts.

- 25 As part of the DMA, the LGA have recommended the Chief Executive considers additional interim support specifically for him. This resource will be contracted through an external provider and will be fully funded by a grant provided by the LGA.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 26 The final proposed new Senior Leadership structure will:
- provide greater stability and strategic capacity.
 - focus on transforming services improving culture and financial management.
 - break-down the silos within the organisation.
 - create clarity of job title, role and levels of expectations.
 - set clear accountability and responsibility.
 - create a clear organisational customer focus, rather than a service focus.
 - improve collaboration, reduce overlaps and bring teams closer together.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer / Legal

- 27 The Council's recruitment and selection policy and the Employment Procedural Rules will be followed, and a transparent, objective and fair selection process will be adhered to for any new or vacant posts.
- 28 Appointments to statutory officers and executive director roles will be undertaken via the Council's Appointments Committee with the former be formally appointed at Full Council.

Section 151 Officer / Finance

- 29 The costs associated with final structure for Phase 1 of the senior management structure are shown in (confidential) Appendix 3 (confidential).

- 30 The costing assumes appointment at the salary points shown. However, if any candidate was appointed at a higher salary point, the relevant service would need to identify funding to maintain our financial resources.
- 31 Other payments available additional to base pay may include organisation's contribution to pensions, market supplements, expenses, and allowances.
- 32 There is a small difference between costs of the current structure versus the final structure, reflecting small variances in grading between temporary and permanent arrangement. These costs would need to be managed by the relevant services areas as would normally be case when appointing at a spot salary.
- 33 The procurement process for the appointment of a recruitment partner for any new/vacant posts was agreed by the Appointments Committee on 29 April 2024. Timeline for recruitment is at Appendix 2.

Policy

- 34 The appointments will be made with reference to the pay policy statement to provide transparency to the Council's approach to setting the pay of its senior managers.
- 35 The report supports all the priorities in the [Corporate Plan](#) given this is about ensuring that we have a properly resourced leadership to lead on our strategic priorities.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 36 The recruitment and selection process will be open, fair and inclusive which reflect our vision, values and Employee Deal, ensuring objective recruitment decisions are made.
- 37 An Equality Impact Assessment was conducted as part of the preparation for the restructure consultation.

Human Resources

- 38 Actions will be undertaken in accordance with the Constitution and the Employment Procedure Rules as well as appropriate HR policies and procedures.

Risk Management

- 39 As identified in the strategic risk register, the impact of restricted recruitment (and spending) has been identified as a significant risk in relation to both the Leadership Capacity and Ability to Achieve Organisational Change risks. This report assists in the mitigation of the strategic risk reported to Corporate Policy Committee on 21 March 2024, specifically SR07 and SR09.

Rural Communities

- 40 None

Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

- 41 The final structure for the overall council, in particular Children's Services, will enhance service delivery for all Cheshire East children and young people.

Public Health

- 42 This report and its recommendations/decisions here, by considering whether the proposals within are likely to have a positive overall impact on the health and wellbeing of Cheshire East residents.

Climate Change

- 43 None

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Rob Polkinghorne Rob.polkinghorne@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1: Final senior management structure Appendix 2: Timeline for recruitment Appendix 3: Final structure costs for phase 1 senior management structure (confidential) Appendix 4: Exit costs for impacted posts in phase 1 (confidential) Appendix 5: Open/Vacant posts

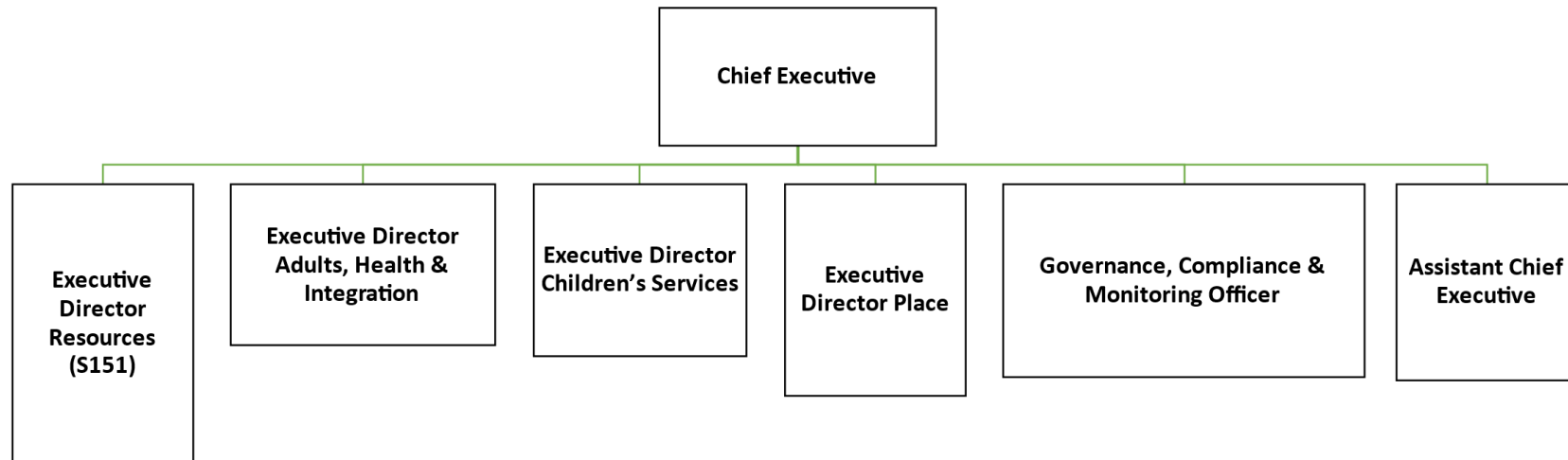
Backgro und Papers:	https://moderngov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ecminutes/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=959&MId=10644
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Appendix 1

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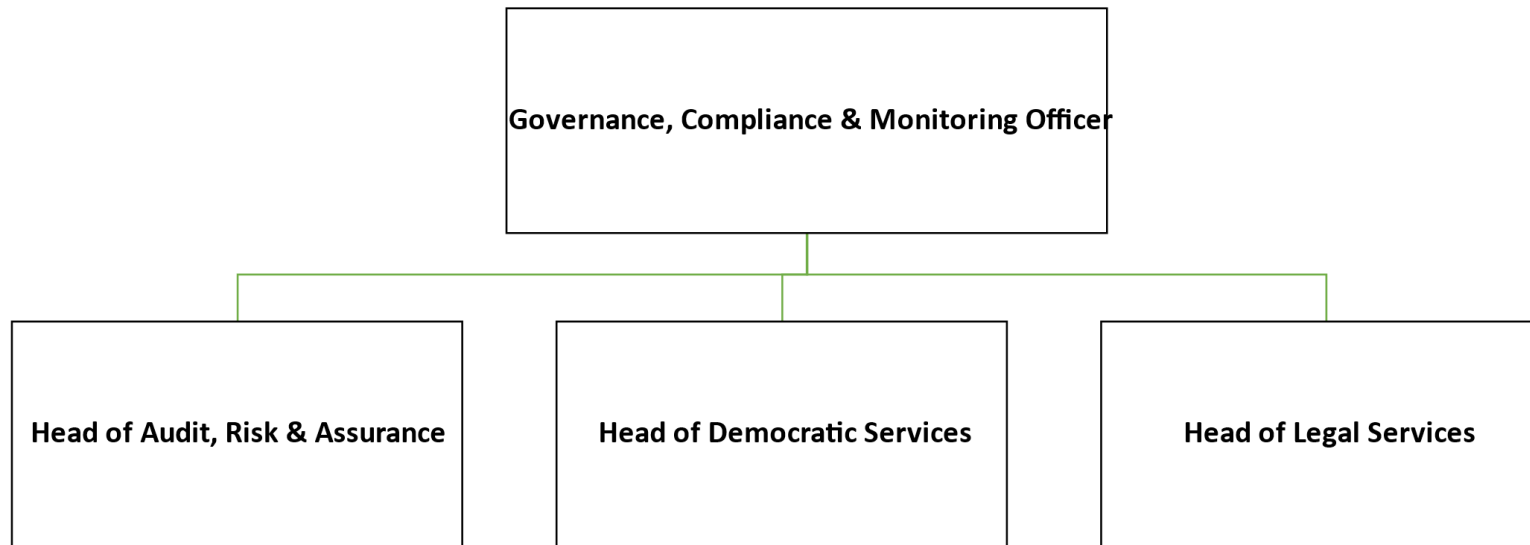
Final Senior Leadership StructurePhase 1



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Final Structure– Governance, Compliance & Monitoring Officer– Phase 1

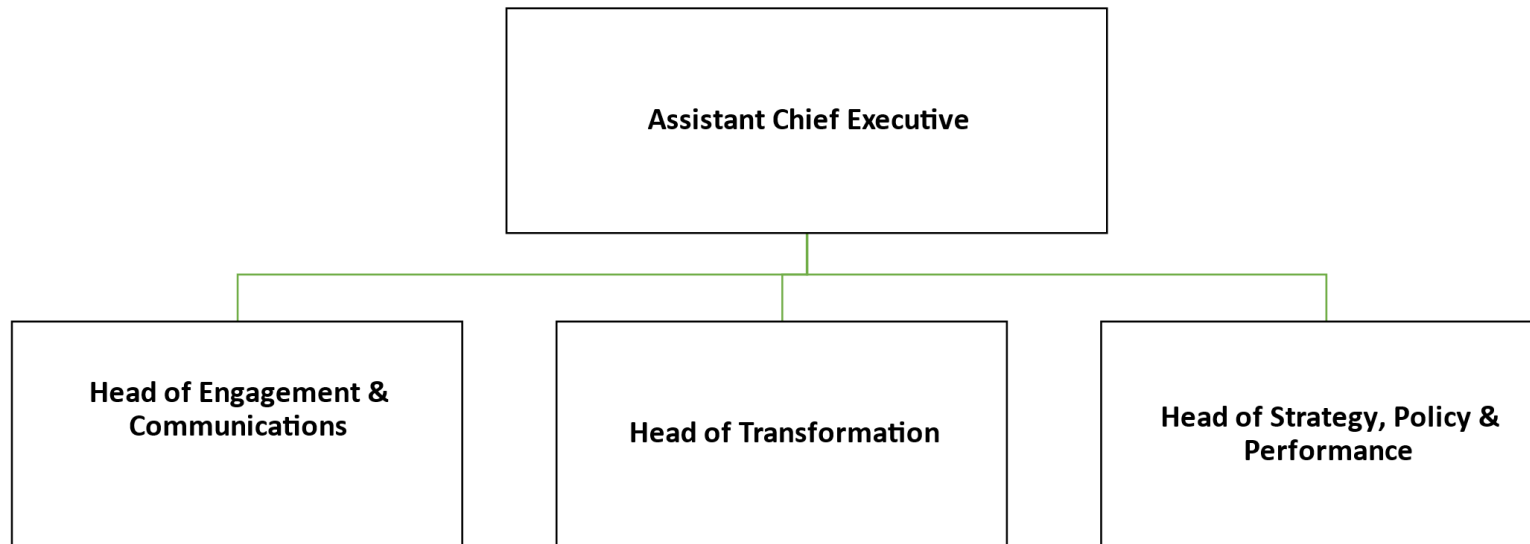


NOTE: Heads of Audit, Risk & Assurance, Democratic Services and Legal brought into scope of phase 1 based on feedback through consultation

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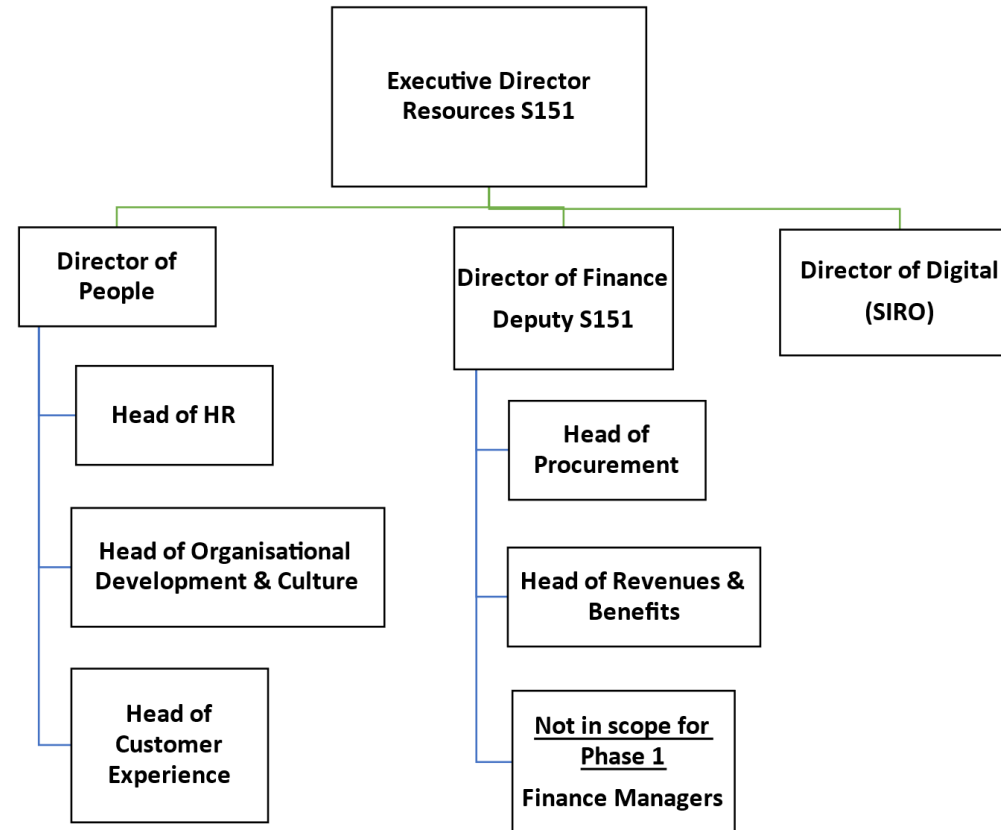
Final Structure— Assistant Chief Executive— Phase 1



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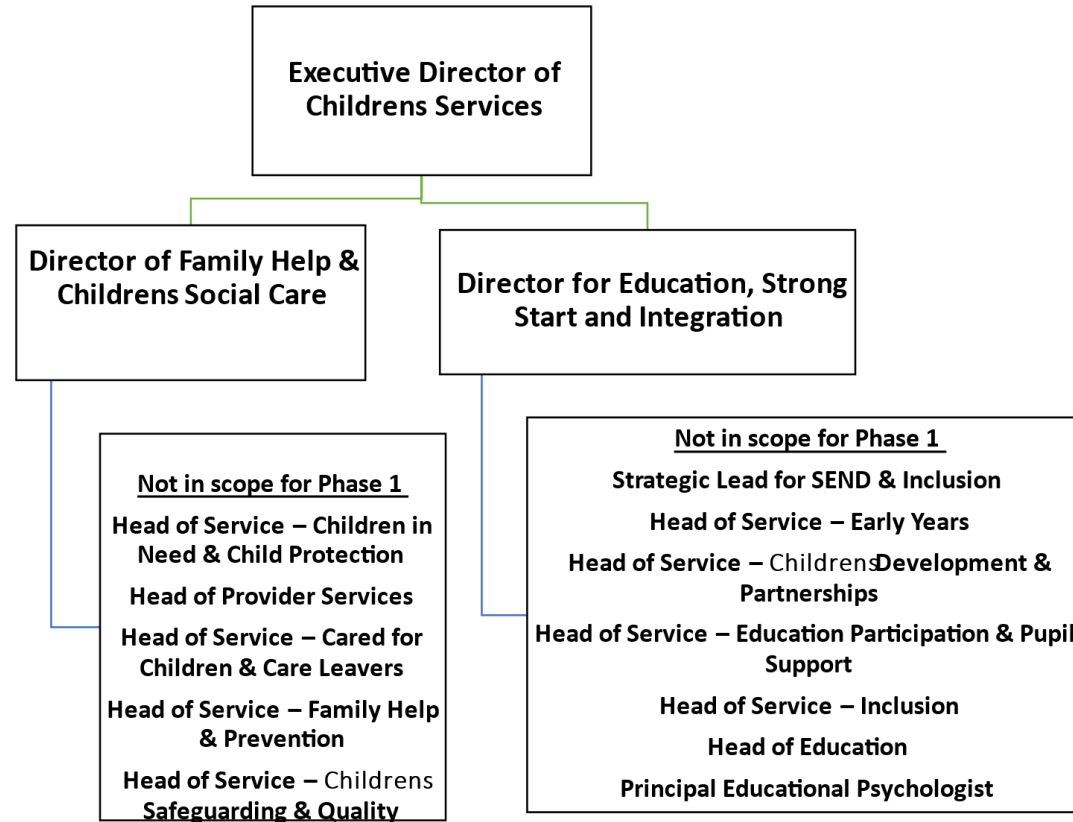
Final Structure – Resources– Phase 1



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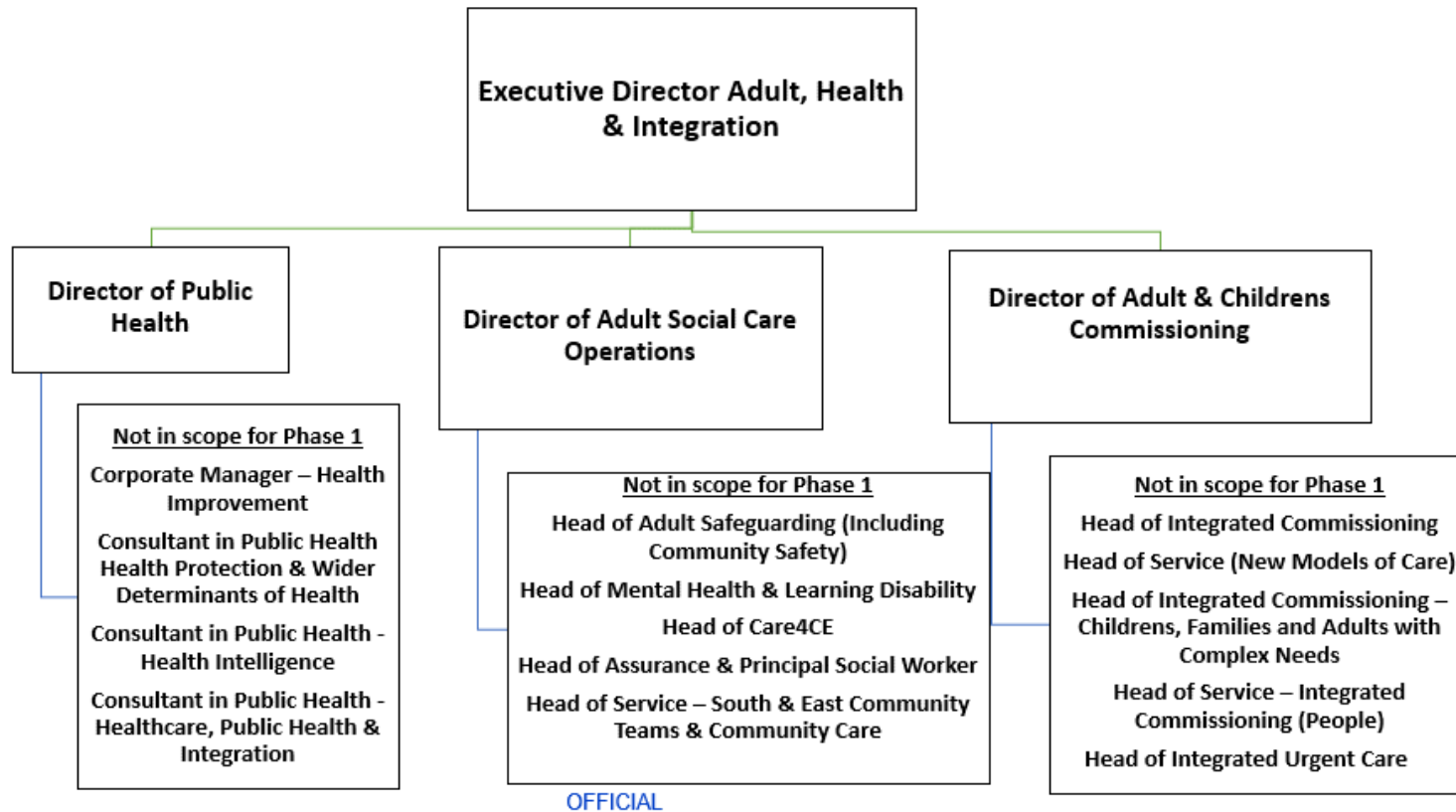
Final Structure— Children's— Phase 1



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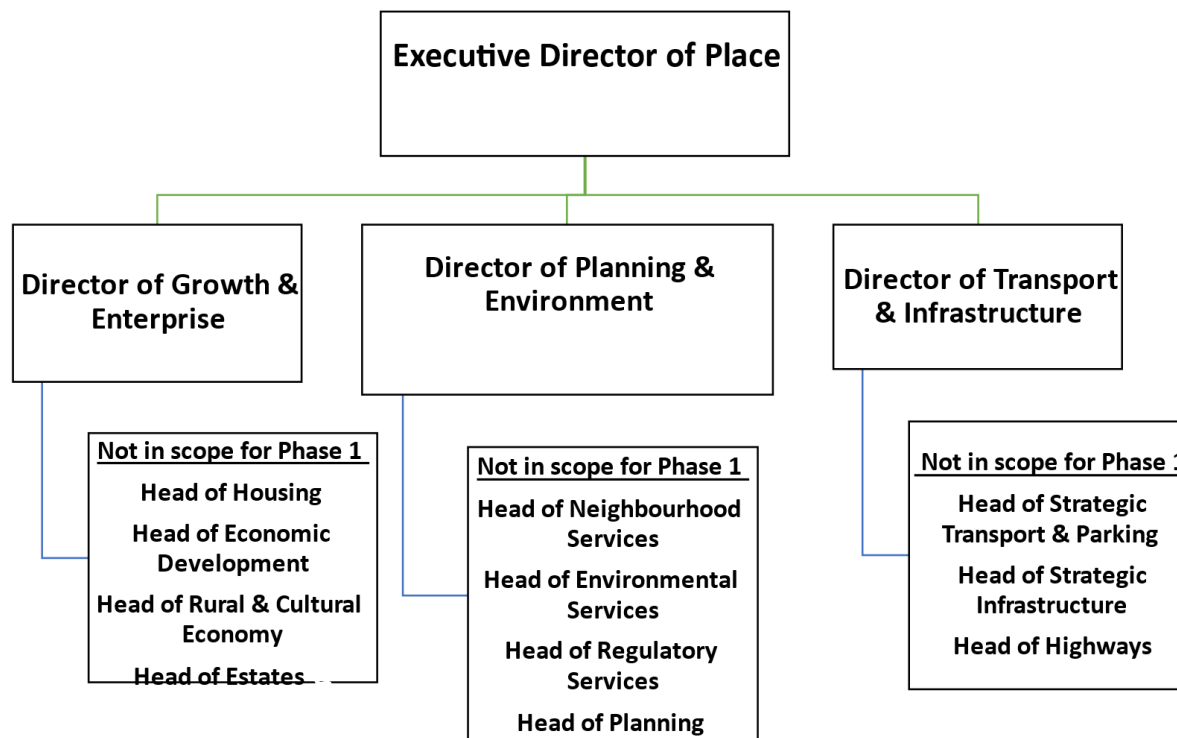
Final Structure – Adults – Phase 1



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Final Structure– Place – Phase 1



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APPENDIX 2 – INDICATIVE RECRUITMENT TIMELINE

Activity	Date / Timescales
Initial 'Kick off' Meeting/video call between the recruitment partner and the Authority's Appointments Committee	w/c 7 October 2024
Finalise recruitment campaign	18 October 2024
Advertisement placed	Mid/late October 2024
Deadline for applications	Mid November 2024 (tbc)
Sifting & long-listing	Mid November 2024 (tbc)
Short list finalised	Late November
Selected candidates notified of interview	Late November/early December 2024 (tbc)
Shortlisted candidates	Early December
Assessment and Interviews, confirm candidate	December 2024 – January 2025 (tbc)
Take up references (if not secured earlier in the process).	January/February (tbc) (after assessment centre)

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APPENDIX 5

POSITIONS TO BE RECRUITED TO POST CONSULTATION

JOB TITLE	GRADE	DIRECTORATE	Salary Range	
			From	To
Executive Director Resources (S151)	CX	Resources	£131,208	£148,823
Executive Director Children's Services	CX	Childrens	£131,208	£148,823
Governance, Compliance & Monitoring Officer	D	Resources	£85,883	£115,826
Director of People	D	Resources	£85,883	£115,826
Assistant Chief Executive	D	Resources	£85,883	£115,826
Director of Family Help & Children's Social Care	D	Childrens	£85,883	£115,826
Director of Public Health	D	Adults, Health & Integration	£85,883	£115,826
Director of Adult & Childrens Commissioning	D	Adults, Health & Integration	£85,883	£115,826
Director of Planning & Environment	D	Place	£85,883	£115,826
Director of Finance (Deputy 151)	D	Resources	£85,883	£115,826
Head of Customer Experience	SMG	Resources	£73,906	£85,883
Head of Transformation	SMG	Resources	£73,906	£85,883
Head of Strategy, Policy & Performance	SMG	Resources	£73,906	£85,883
Head of Organisational Development & Culture	SMG	Resources	£73,906	£85,883

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COUNCIL MEETING – 16 OCTOBER 2024**RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMITTEE: YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2024-27****RECOMMENDATION**

That Council approve the 2024-27 Youth Justice Plan.

Extract from the Minutes of the Children and Families Committee meeting held on 16 September 2024.

34 YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2024-27

The Committee received the report on the Youth Justice Plan 2024-27. Local authorities had a statutory duty to submit an annual youth justice plan relating to their provision of youth justice services. Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 set out the youth justice partnership's responsibilities in producing a plan. It stated that it was the duty of each local authority, after consultation with the partner agencies, to formulate and implement a youth justice plan, setting out how youth justice services in their area are to be provided and funded, how they will operate, and what functions will be carried out.

An amendment was moved and seconded which sought to amend the recommendation as set out in the report to:

That the Children and Families Committee recommend that full Council approves the 2024-27 Youth Justice Plan.

This amendment was carried by majority and became the substantive motion.

RESOLVED (by majority):

That the Children and Families Committee recommend that full Council approves the 2024-27 Youth Justice Plan.

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OPEN

Children & Families Committee

16 September 2024

Youth Justice Plan 2024-27

Report of: Tom Dooks (Head of Cheshire Youth Justice Services)

Report Reference No: CF/24/24-25

Ward(s) Affected: All

Purpose of Report

- 1 Local authorities have a statutory duty to submit an annual youth justice plan relating to their provision of youth justice services (YJS). Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 sets out the youth justice partnership's responsibilities in producing a plan. It states that it is the duty of each local authority, after consultation with the partner agencies, to formulate and implement a youth justice plan, setting out how youth justice services in their area are to be provided and funded, how they will operate, and what functions will be carried out.
- 2 Cheshire East have a shared service arrangement for Youth Justice Services with the other three Local Authorities in the sub-region and as such the Governance arrangements for Youth Justice are overseen by a pan Cheshire Partnership Management Board. The Youth Justice Service have drafted a three-year strategic plan 2024-27 in partnership with Cheshire Police and other statutory partners and it was approved by Cheshire Youth Justice Management Board on the 27th of June.
- 3 This report will brief committee on the content of the 2024-27 Youth Justice Plan for Cheshire and seek formal sign off in compliance with Youth Justice Board Guidance (Ministry of Justice) and Regulation 4 of the 'Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000'.

Executive Summary

- 4 The Cheshire sub-region is a large complex area and the Youth Justice partnership between and across the four local authorities provides a powerful base to meet the various complexities and challenges faced by the county's children, families, and victims.
- 5 Despite the scale, Cheshire YJS is a comparatively small organisation comprising fewer than 75 WTE staff, including seconded workers plus approximately thirty active volunteers. The human resource arrangements for the entire workforce currently involve eleven different employing organisations but also includes police, probation, three different NHS Trusts and two independent providers (speech and language and substance misuse specialists). This committee approved in April the transition to a simpler fully hosted model for the Youth Justice Service which will see Cheshire West Council acting as 'lead authority' on behalf of the pan Cheshire partnership. The statutory responsibilities remain with each of the four local authorities so an annual refresh of the three-year Youth Justice Strategic Plan will still be presented formally for approval at this committee in 2025 and beyond.
- 6 The national body responsible for inspecting Youth Justice Services are His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMiP) with national oversight provided by the Youth Justice Board (YJB). Both HMiP and the YJB recognise Cheshire YJS as of a high standard. The former rated Cheshire YJS as 'Good' in a 2021 full joint inspection (Governance and leadership were rated as 'Outstanding') and the latter granted 2-year pathfinder status for Cheshire's successful youth diversion programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Children and Families Committee is recommended to:

1. Formally approve the 2024-27 Youth Justice Plan

Background

- 7 Youth justice plans are an opportunity to review performance and developments and plan for the year (or in this case years) ahead. This allows services to be able to respond to any changes that have taken

place including new legislation, demographic changes, delivery of key performance indicators, and developments in service delivery. The production of a youth justice plan is beneficial to partnership working and service delivery to ensure the best outcomes for children.

- 8 The Plan has been produced in accordance with national Youth Justice Board guidance and follows their prescribed template to include, Introduction, vision and strategy, Governance, leadership and partnership arrangements, Board development, Progress on the previous year(s), Resources and services, Performance including National key performance indicators, Priorities, information on Children from groups which are over-represented, Prevention, Diversion, Education, Restorative approaches and victims, Serious violence and exploitation, Detention in police custody, Remands, Use of custody, Standards for children in the justice system, Workforce Development, Evidence-based practice and innovation, Service Development, Challenges, risks and issues.
- 9 Performance figures included within the YJ Plan show that Cheshire YJS continue to achieve good levels of performance against the main performance indicators: First Time Entrants to the criminal justice system (FTEs), Custody rates and re-offending (detailed within the YJ Plan)
- 10 In 2023-24 there were just twenty-five Cheshire East first time entrants to the justice system and only two Cheshire East children were sentenced to custody. Rates of Serious Youth Violence in Cheshire in 2023-24 were well below the national average at 2.7 offences per 10,000 children compared to a regional average of 4.7 and national average of 5.5.
- 11 The priorities for Youth Justice in Cheshire are described fully in the YJ Plan but include; 1) Further developing participation and relationship based practice across Cheshire to facilitate a culture of collaboration where children, volunteers and community groups are enabled to promote pro-social identity and desistance from crime 2) Ensuring the YJS support offer to victims is compliant with the new duty to collaborate responsibilities outlined in the new Victim and Prisoners Act. and 3) Design a new comprehensive performance reporting and quality assurance framework, ensuring the service is data driven and makes full use of the management information system to drive practice and improve outcomes for children, families, and victims.

Consultation and Engagement

- 12 The Youth Justice Service have consulted with children, young people, parents, carers, and stakeholders in the development of the Youth Justice Plan 2024-27

Reasons for Recommendations

- 13 There is provision within the national YJB guidance for the Chair of the local Youth Justice Management Board to sign off the Youth Justice Plan and for retrospective approval to be sought from Full Council. Given the timescales and complex multi-authority configuration of Youth Justice Services across Cheshire this is the approach that was given approval by committee last year. It is recommended again that Cheshire East council (along with the other three councils in the partnership) delegate sign-off of next year's annual update to this Youth Justice Plan to the Chair of the pan Cheshire Management Board so it can be submitted by the end of June again next year before then being presented to committee.

Other Options Considered

- 14 The only other option is for the annual Youth Justice Plan to be presented to full council in four local authority areas prior to the deadline for submission at the end of June. Given the timelines and different processes across four separate councils this would be logistically challenging hence the recommendation for councils to delegate authority for sign-off to the Chair of the pan Cheshire Board which is permissible within the guidance.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 15 Production of an annual YJ Plan is in compliance with section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and with the refreshed guidance published by the Youth Justice Board in March 2023, which made clear that in order to comply with Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 there is a requirement for Full Council to approve and sign off their local areas annual Youth Justice Plan

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 16 Cheshire Youth Justice Service is a shared service partnership arrangement and is funded by the four Local Authorities, with contributions from statutory partner agencies (Police, Health, National Probation Service) with the largest amount of funding coming from the national Youth Justice Board as a ring-fenced national grant.

- 17 Cheshire East Councils financial contribution to the Youth Justice Service in 2024/25 will be £444,538 (Total budget for the service is £3.22m)

Policy

- 18 No policy implications

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

- 19 The Youth Justice Plan has been produced with due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equalities Act 2010 and to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Human Resources

- 20 None

Risk Management

- 21 No risks identified.

Rural Communities

- 22 No specific implications identified.

Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

- 23 The Youth Justice plan takes full consideration of and makes and explicit reference to Cared for Children and those with SEND – both of whom are over-represented in the Criminal Justice System.

Public Health

- 24 No specific public health implications of this report other than to state the strategy for Youth Justice partnership is to minimise the volume of children with previously unmet health needs that are criminalised for offences/behaviour that is symptomatic of previously unidentified health needs.

Climate Change

- 25 No specific or relevant implications

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Tom Dooks Head of Cheshire Youth Justice Service tom.dooks@youthjusticeservices.org.uk
Appendices:	Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2024-27 (Cheshire YJS)
Background Papers:	N/A

Youth Justice Services

Cheshire East, Cheshire West,
Halton and Warrington

Strategic plan
2024-27



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Head of Service: Tom Dooks

Chair of the Management Board: Helen Brackenbury

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List of abbreviations

AYM	Association of Youth Offending Team Managers
CJB	Criminal Justice Board
CJS	Criminal Justice System
CJI	Centre for Justice Innovation
ETE	Education Training and Employment
FTE	First Time Entrant
GRT	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller
HNA	Health Needs Assessment
HMCTS	HM Courts and Tribunal service
HMIP	HM Inspectorate of Probation
ICB	Integrated Care Board
LGA	Local Government Association
JSNA	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
JTAI	Joint Thematic Area Inspection
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
NS	National Standards
OCG	Organised Crime Group
OPCC	Office of the Police Crime Commissioner
PACE	Police and Criminal Evidence
PNC	Police National Computer
SVS	Serious Violence Strategy
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
VRU	Violence Reduction Unit
YJAF	Youth Justice Application Framework
YJB	Youth Justice Board
YJS	Youth Justice Services (Cheshire)

Foreword

Cheshire has some unique opportunities and challenges, being one of only two youth justice services to operate over multiple local authorities' footprints and an entire policing constabulary area. This 3-year plan sets out a journey and commitment for a service that will be "child first" and evidence-based in its principles, recognising the traumatic impact of children's offending on victims - most of whom are other vulnerable children.

The last 12 months have seen an extended transition to embed a new leadership team following the retirement of a long-standing Head of Service and some significant infrastructure changes. This plan includes a proposal to simplify the operational arrangements by moving to a new fully hosted model for the service - with Cheshire West and Chester Council becoming the lead authority on behalf of the sub-regional partnership.

The murder of Brianna Ghey by two 15-year-olds in Warrington last year was shocking for everyone both in its brutality and pre-meditation. Intense media attention surrounded the trial and sentencing but the bravery and compassion shown by Brianna's mother, Esther Ghey has been inspirational. Youth Justice Services (YJS) is contributing to an independent learning review commissioned by Warrington Children's Safeguarding Partnership due to be published in summer 2024.

While offences such as these by children are incredibly rare in Cheshire, there is an increasing complexity and seriousness to some children's behaviour. Professionals sometimes have a difficult task in building trusted relationships with children to try and help keep them and those around them safe and move forward positively in their lives. Helping some children achieve an identity shift, to desist from offending and see a brighter future is not easy. It requires empathy, compassion and persistence – characteristics we in Cheshire are proud to have in such a skilled, dedicated, multi-disciplinary workforce.

The YJS Management Board is committed to delivering this plan and will oversee its progress, ensuring an annual refresh is produced and published through local channels.

Helen Brackenbury
Chair of YJS Management Board

Executive summary

It is evident from national research and two recently commissioned local needs analyses¹, that children entering the Youth Justice System experience multiple adversities and trauma. Early childhood exposure to violence, abuse, neglect, poverty, school exclusion and poor health among justice-involved-children are all disproportionate to the general 10-17 population. This understanding has influenced the strategic direction of travel for Youth Justice Services (YJS) across Cheshire. The priorities and content included in this plan will align with those relating to children and young people from across the four Cheshire places and with the public health approach to violence prevention as articulated in the Serious Violence Strategy² for the county. There has been a significant decrease in the overall number of children entering the justice system over several years, and the historically low levels have been sustained across Cheshire despite the backdrop of the cost-of-living crisis and other societal pressures. Some regions with similar reductions have witnessed an upturn in the last couple of years, so we are proud to see the sustained impact of our pan-Cheshire youth diversion model. We will work with the police to ensure national developments such as the new child gravity matrix for children is incorporated into the decision-making process for out-of-court disposals.

The previous Head of Service retired in the summer of 2023, with a long-standing Senior Manager appointed through an internal promotion. A new and very experienced Senior Manager was subsequently recruited externally and joined the service in February 2024, bringing new insight and fresh perspectives, so the right balance of continuity and change is assured. This is an exciting time for Cheshire and an opportunity to build on existing performance and partnership working, while modernising the service and embracing the latest national and international evidence on youth justice.

Some change has been forced on the service by financial inflationary pressures particularly in relation to the provision of ICT, but some of it is informed by what the latest research, evidence and data tells us about children, the offences they commit and the most effective ways of helping steer them away from crime.

This plan will outline a new “three pillars” vision for the service (Figure 1) which is rooted in the latest evidence and research on what works. But the new leadership team will also be implementing some modest service re-design intended

¹ [Public Health research institute HNA of Cheshire YJ service users July 2023](#)

² [Cheshire Serious Violence Strategy](#)

to retain the economies of scale and equity of service at a sub-regional level, while aligning more effectively with local place-based services for children, victims and caregivers.

YJS has a very good regional and national reputation for delivering positive outcomes for children, victims and caregivers and, in common with all youth justice services across England and Wales, will be reporting against 10 new key performance indicators (KPIs) in addition to the three main outcome measures First Time Entrants (FTE) to the justice system, reoffending and the use of custody.

In 2024-2025, Cheshire YJS will enter a period of substantial infrastructure and organisational change. The current shared service arrangements for youth justice delivery have evolved across the sub-region over two decades and have been through several iterations as Cheshire County Council separated into two unitary authorities and youth justice teams merged incrementally. A comprehensive review of governance arrangements undertaken in 2021, commented on the historical legacy arrangements of a service that had evolved over time with a complicated mix of cash and 'in-kind' contributions. One authority provides the ICT for YJS, another holds the accounts and all four employ the staff, and as local authorities have updated their own ICT systems and security compliance has tightened (and licensing costs increased) it has revealed a degree of organisational fragility.

Consequently, a sub-regional review into the governance arrangements, structure, and future sustainability of YJS as a pan-cheshire partnership, recommended the service should be 'fully hosted' by one local authority. This proposal was agreed by all statutory partners and formerly approved by all four councils in the spring of 2024 and will necessitate multiple workstreams to land the significant infrastructure change needed for a smooth transition by the end of this fiscal year. Cheshire's Youth Justice Plan for 2024-2027 is written against the backdrop of this major organisational change so maintaining service continuity, while in transition to a hosted model is flagged in Section 3 as the principal risk for the partnership.

Service development priorities for the next 12 months include reviewing the pathway and joint decision-making process for out of court disposals, ensuring our offer to victims is fully aligned with the new Victims' Bill, developing participation and designing a new performance management framework, which incorporates the 10 new national KPIs.

Vision

The vision for youth justice across Cheshire is:

‘To be a national leader in Youth Justice, where children and victims are at the heart of everything we do and where children are supported to achieve a positive, offence-free journey into adulthood.’

We will continue to value diversity, challenge social inequality and listen to children while developing trusted relationships that take their views into account. We understand the wider causes of offending behaviour are often rooted in trauma and social inequality, so trauma-informed practice and systemic ideas are at the heart of how we work. We will work in a restorative way and strive to achieve the best possible outcomes for our children. The YJS will work with partners on diverting children away from the formal Criminal Justice System (CJS) and will seek to detain a minimal number of children in custody, believing they are best supported to make changes in their lives whilst in the community, for all but the most serious of offences.

The latest research and evidence say services working with children who cause harm to others should adhere to Child First principles³ and be Trauma-Informed and Relationship-Based in the way they are configured and delivered. Cheshire has taken these tenets and adopted them as our three pillars (Figure 1) to inform the Youth Justice strategy from point of arrest, right through to the resettlement of children following release from custody.

Mission

Supporting children, young people and parents and carers to make positive changes through working collaboratively;

- Promoting safer communities and reducing the likelihood of reoffending and harm caused – by tackling the root causes of children’s offending.
- Listening and responding to the voice of the victim and empowering them to become involved.
- Connecting with children, helping them to understand the impact of their behaviour and achieve improved outcomes.

³ Child First recognises that children have different needs and vulnerabilities to adults and should not be treated in the same way

Regional and local context

The Cheshire footprint covered by YJS comprises the four unitary local authorities of Cheshire East, Cheshire West, Halton and Warrington (Figure 2). Each local authority area has a Children's Safeguarding and Community Safety Partnership and Cheshire is divided into three Probation delivery units (North, West and East) and has nine local policing units. The workforce of Cheshire YJS has staff employed by Warrington, Cheshire West and Cheshire East Councils and seconded workers from Halton Borough Council, Cheshire Constabulary, the Probation Service, three different NHS Trusts and two private providers. The service also has support in a variety of different roles from over 50 volunteers. This provides a strong partnership base to meet the various complexities and challenges faced by the county's children, caregivers and victims. An organisational structure chart of staff is shown in Appendix A along with ethnicity and gender and whole time equivalent and contract details (Appendix B).

Around 250,000 Cheshire residents are below the age of 18 with 101,077 aged 10-17. Across the four local authorities, there are over 1,000 cared for children. The large geographical area of 905 square miles does present some logistical challenges for the service, which has offices in Crewe, Winsford and Widnes. Staff work on a hybrid basis with additional virtual working areas in Macclesfield, Warrington, Chester, Runcorn, and Ellesmere Port. The children we work with tend to live in these larger more urban locations.

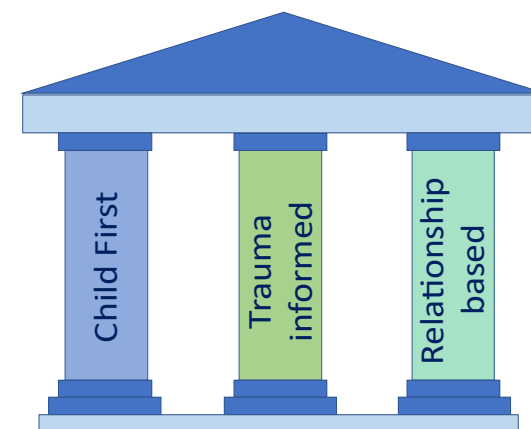


Figure 1. Cheshire YJS Three Pillars Strategic Vision

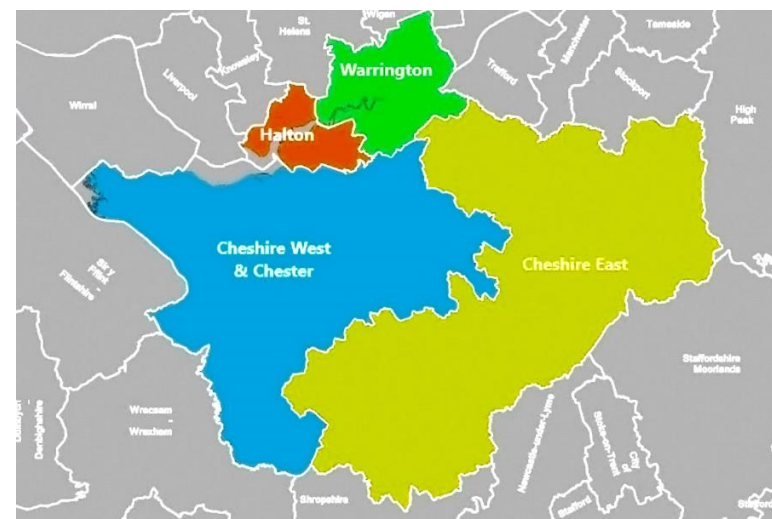


Figure 2. Cheshire and surrounding local authorities

Cheshire can be viewed as an affluent and rural county with pockets of urban deprivation. There is a marked difference in terms of local authority ranking of socio-economic indices and out of 317, Halton is ranked 23, Cheshire West 175, Warrington 183, and Cheshire East 228. Halton also has eight 'Left Behind' neighbourhoods with Cheshire East and Warrington having one each. Although highly diverse in terms of age, the county is not as diverse compared to other areas of England, with around 95% of residents identifying as 'White British'. The Gypsy, Roma, Traveller (GRT) community also has a presence in some areas. The region shares borders with 15 other local authority areas (Figure 2) and has excellent road and rail links to the three closest cities of Manchester, Liverpool, and Birmingham. Although these provide improved economic and lifestyle experiences, they also enable organised criminal activity such as County Lines and other forms of child exploitation. Cheshire Police have implemented a model for tackling County Lines and although the number fluctuates throughout the year, the average number identified has become more consistent, reducing from 44 in 2022-2023 to 38 in 2024 (range 32-63 and 22-68 respectively).

The place-based graphics presented in figure 3 show contextual demographic data provided by local authorities, Public Health England and from the internal YJS case management system. The information is presented for context only and comparisons between areas should be treated with caution because the data is not exactly like for like. The number of '*children with harmful sexual behaviour*' refers to the number of children resident in that local authority area who received specialist Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) assessment and intervention from YJS following a conviction or out of court disposal for a sexual offence.

The volume of children in the justice system fluctuates between local authority areas but is broadly what would be expected based on population size relative to social deprivation. Cheshire East and Cheshire West have the largest populations and Halton the smallest, but levels of social deprivation are significantly higher in Halton. Local authority contributions to the service are made according to a percentage funding formula, calculated following a comprehensive zero-based review exercise into service demand and activity.

Youth Justice Services Plan 2024-2027

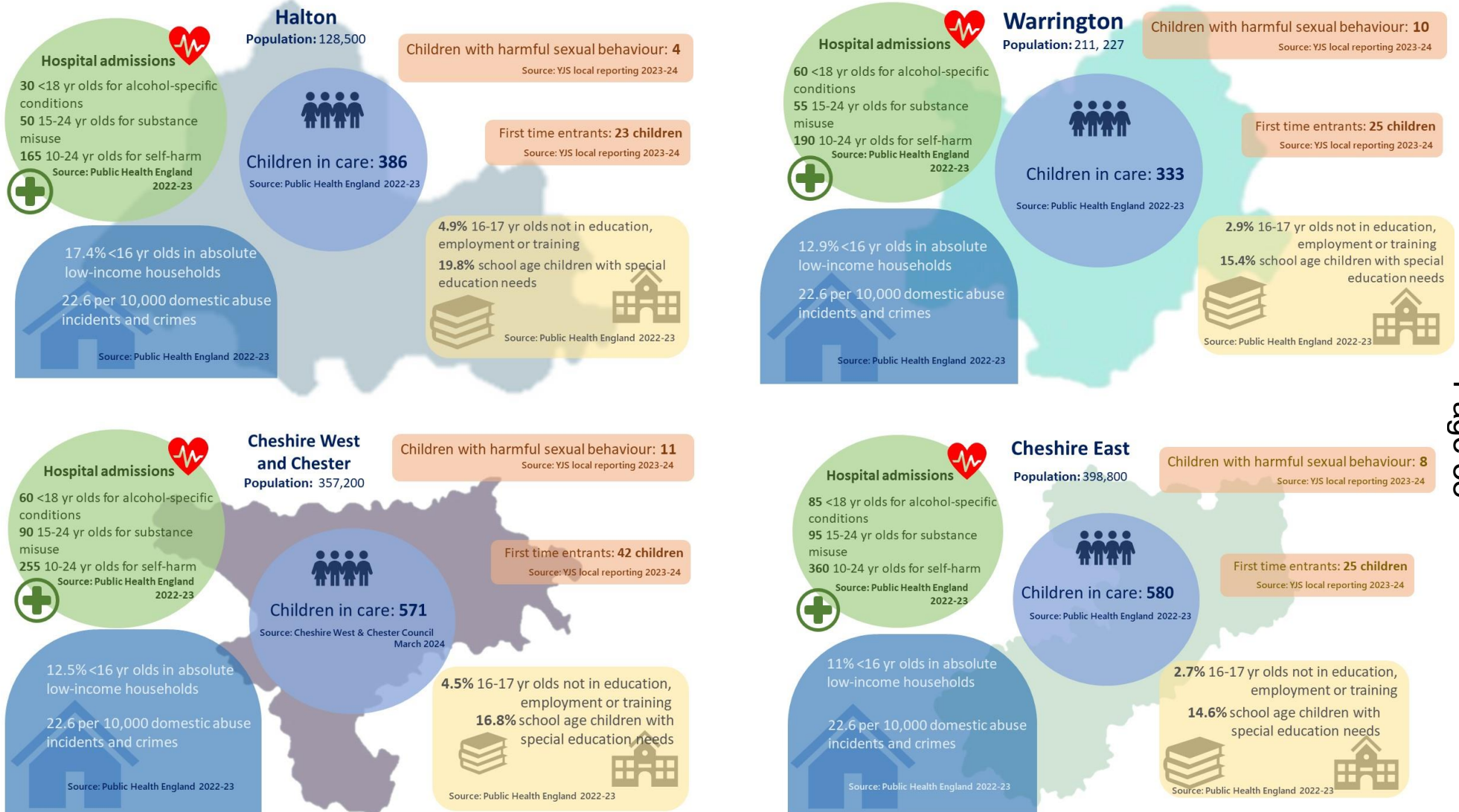
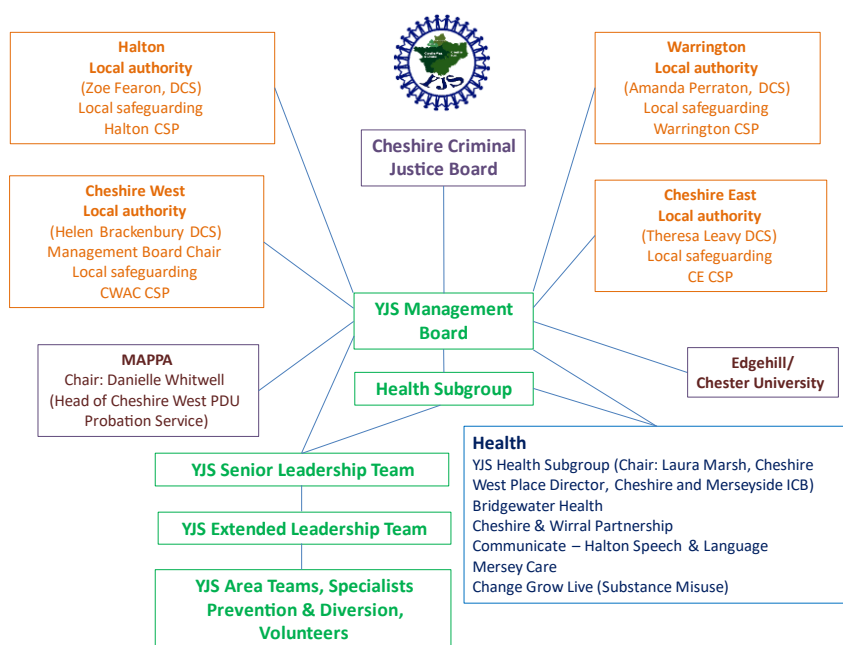


Figure 3. Figure place-based demographics for Halton, Warrington, Cheshire West and Chester and Cheshire East



DCS Director of Children's Services. CSP Children's Safeguarding Partnership, PDU Probation Delivery Unit, ICB Integrated Care Board

Figure 4. Sub-regional Youth Justice System Strategic Partnership

Cheshire YJS is also a core member of the four Children Safeguarding Partnerships, the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), and well linked to the Cheshire Integrated Offender Management model. These links have been enhanced by the adoption of a more youth justice-focussed role for the police officers, as recommended by the last HMIP inspection of Cheshire. YJS now has three police officers fully seconded and embedded within the service. A review will take place in 2024-2025, in partnership with Cheshire Constabulary to ensure the role of our seconded officers is in line with recently revised national guidance.

Cheshire does not have a Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) so as a sub-region, it does lack some of the investment, infrastructure and collaborative commissioning at scale brought by a VRU to urban metropolitan areas. Cheshire YJS

Governance, leadership and partnership arrangements

A strength of Cheshire YJS is the strategic and professional links it has with colleagues at a sub-regional level in the public, private, academic, and voluntary sectors (Figure 4). The YJS Head of Service is a core member of both the pan-Cheshire Criminal Justice Board (CJB) and Serious Violence Duty Partnership Board with senior youth justice management representation at the other CJB sub-groups (Reducing Reoffending, Disproportionality and Victims).

YJS is well placed to influence strategy and decisions at scale despite working in a complex governance landscape comprising four children's safeguarding partnerships, four community safety partnerships and a plethora of other place-based and subregional strategic groups, where Cheshire YJS has a duty (or need) to cooperate.

is an example of how strong governance and leadership can oversee the delivery of an effective multi-agency / multi-disciplinary service across local authority boundaries. However, the intention to move to a single local authority hosted model reflects the need to simplify the operating environment, solve some of the organisational challenges and improve efficiency, enabling the YJS, to focus more time on delivering a quality service.

Neglect, Domestic Abuse and Exploitation often feature in the lives of justice-involved children and these are the priority thematic areas for all four safeguarding children partnerships. This plan specifically refers to the youth justice system but the strategic vision to improve outcomes for children, victims and communities across Cheshire is shared by the wider pan-Cheshire partnership. Timelines for approval at full council are complicated given the sub-regional arrangement. However, there is commitment from the four Directors of Children's Services to take this Youth Justice Plan (with an annual update) through their respective council governance channels.

Board membership and leadership

The Management Board Chair usually rotates every 2 years, across the four local authorities. Cheshire West and Chester Council's Director of Children's Services took over from Halton in 2022 and was due to handover the chairing to Warrington in April 2024. However, the Chair agreed to stay on to lead the Transitions Board overseeing the multiple project workstreams necessary to transition YJS to Cheshire West and Chester Council as a hosted service.

Board membership is fully constituted with membership at a sufficiently senior level from all statutory partners, supplemented by other key members including a leading academic advisor, an independent safeguarding advisor and a magistrate. Job descriptions and induction processes are in place for new Board members but the over-arching legal partnership agreement, which constitutes the service as a sub-regional arrangement, is due for review and will form one workstream of the Board overseeing transition to the hosted model. The Youth Justice partnership (Board) will utilise the children's committee of Cheshire and Mersey Integrated Care Board (ICB) to highlight service achievements and risks. The Director of Children's Services in Warrington bridges the Youth Justice Management Board and the children's committee of the ICB. Notwithstanding the financial pressures on the ICB, we will be signaling that cash contributions from health to YJS across Cheshire have not increased in line with inflation for several years, so a new funding formula to ensure equitable flow from Cheshire and Merseyside ICB to Place is required.

The YJS Management Health Sub-Group was established as the only explicitly sub-group of the Board because of the complexity of Health commissioning and provider arrangements across the sub-region. The Chair of the Health Sub-Group also acts as Management Board representative for health, while also ensuring connectivity to Place Directors and Cheshire and Merseyside ICB.

The subgroup commissioned the Public Health Research Institute at Liverpool John Moores University to undertake a comprehensive Health Needs Analysis (HNA). Published in 2023⁴, the HNA was based on in-depth analysis of 70% of the children Cheshire YJS worked with in 2022. To date, it is one of the most comprehensive and statistically valid studies into the presenting health needs (sometimes undiagnosed, and frequently unmet) of children in/on cusp of the justice system anywhere in the UK. In early 2024, the terms of reference of the health subgroup were reviewed and with the help of public health representation, the group will pivot towards informing the commissioning of services further upstream (at the place level). Since 2017, the Chair of the Health Sub-group has been a long-standing former Chief Clinical Officer and in June 2024, he will hand over this role to the Cheshire West and Chester Director of Place.

Given the multi-authority constitution elected members are not on the Youth Justice Management Board, but to raise their awareness of the service, we held a bespoke open day for them in February 2024. This was an opportunity for elected members to learn more about the child first, trauma-informed and relational way our staff, from different professional disciplines, work together across authorities to support children, caregivers and victims. The event was very positively received by elected members, and YJS staff also welcomed the opportunity to share real examples of how they make a positive difference to the lives of some of the county's most vulnerable people.

This 3-year strategic plan (and subsequent annual updates) will progress through formal local channels for scrutiny, oversight and formal sign off by all four councils in accordance with the legislative requirement after it has been approved by the sub-regional management board. This process will remain in place even after the service has transitioned to a fully

⁴ [Cheshire Youth Justice Services Health Needs Assessment Summary July 2023](#)

hosted model because each authority will retain the statutory requirement for provision, scrutiny and oversight of youth justice delivery in their area.

Under a new senior leadership team in 2024-2025, YJS has undertaken some re-design to mirror the area delivery units of policing and probation and to align more effectively with place-based services for children, caregivers and victims (see Section 10.3 Service Development).

1. Update on 2023-2024

1.1 Progress on priorities in previous plan

Priority 2023-2024	Progress, what have the outcomes/outputs been?
Ensure transitional arrangements are in place following change of Head of Service in summer 2023	The long-standing Senior Manager in YJS was swiftly appointed to take over as Head of Service. This provided a degree of continuity but meant there was only one youth justice strategic manager covering four place-based partnerships until the replacement Senior Manager came into post in February 2024. YJS in Cheshire now has two very experienced senior leaders who will endeavour to build on the current strengths and reputation of the service to become outstanding.
Ensure the findings of the HNA are considered by relevant strategic partners to improve access to services for children in and at risk of entering the youth justice system	<p>The completion of the HNA was a major undertaking and represents one of the most comprehensive (validated) analyses of the wider health needs of justice-involved-children undertaken anywhere in the UK in recent years.</p> <p>The Head of Service has presented findings at Health and Wellbeing Boards and several other partnership forums across the sub-region. Data and analysis from the HNA were provided to Crest Consultancy for their collation of a Strategic Needs Assessment to inform the Serious Violence Strategy (SVS) for Cheshire.</p> <p>A newly commissioned provider for Liaison and Diversion (Midland Partnership Foundation Trust [MPFT]) now covers the whole of Cheshire and there is improved provision, communication and a more effective pathway in place following productive meetings between YJS and MPFT.</p> <p>Issues are still being worked through with senior commissioners and Cheshire Wirral Partnership Trust around the dedicated speech and language therapy offer to justice-involved-children across Cheshire East and Cheshire West footprints, which is currently insufficient to meet the volume/demand revealed by the HNA. The Head of Service has written a paper to be tabled at Cheshire and Merseyside's Integrated Care Board in summer 2024, outlining regional funding discrepancies and requesting a review of cash contributions to youth justice services across the Cheshire and Merseyside region.</p>
Explore with an aspiration to move to a single host	A report providing the rationale and clear business case, with costings to deliver YJS as a fully hosted model, was completed in December 2023. This report was presented to corporate

arrangement to reduce inefficiency, inequity of employment and clarify partnership responsibilities, whilst also improving local Place based delivery and reporting models	<p>leadership teams across Cheshire with approval to proceed given by cabinets (committee for Cheshire East Council) in spring 2024.</p> <p>This major infrastructure and organisational change project will be overseen by a Transitions Board, chaired by Cheshire West and Chester Council's Director for Children and Families. Multiple workstreams will be established, a priority for the YJS partnership for 2024-2025 with a go-live date of April 2025.</p>
Child-first, trauma-informed and relationship-based practice will continue to be embedded as routine	<p>The new Head of Service has articulated Child First, Trauma-Informed and Relationship-Based Practice as the three key pillars upon which the service will continue to develop. The new Senior Manager launched the revised 'area-based' service design for 2024-2025.</p> <p>Cheshire YJS have further developed social prescribing through partnerships with the Canal and River Trust (fishing as mindfulness), Rage Fitness (Health and Wellbeing Centre) and other bespoke psychosocial therapeutic activities for children. The Local Government Association (LGA) and Youth Justice Board (YJB) have cited Cheshire's social prescribing approach as an exemplar of innovative best practice.</p> <p>In 2023, the service rolled out Schwartz⁵ rounds to provide a safe reflective space for staff across all teams and levels (front line practitioners, back-office staff and managers) to share their experiences, thoughts and feelings on topics of their choice. This is an important but sometimes overlooked aspect of Trauma-Informed Service Development because staff can experience trauma vicariously. The Schwartz rounds in Cheshire are facilitated by specially trained in-house therapeutic practitioners and have been well received by staff who have attended them. Schwartz rounds will continue to run quarterly in 2024-2025 and beyond.</p>
Embed Turnaround project with an expanding Prevention and Diversion Service to work with more children on the cusp of the youth justice system	<p>Turnaround was embedded within the Prevention and Diversion Team with a c£300k Ministry of Justice (MOJ) Grant. This was used to recruit additional front-line practitioners and build reporting and management capacity to ensure the fulfilment of grant requirements. This opened pathways to work with children referred because of concerns over anti-social behaviour.</p>

⁵ [Schwartz Rounds](#)

	<p>By the end of March 2024, 135 children in Cheshire had been supported through the Turnaround project. Eighty-six of whom have successfully completed the programme, with the remaining 49 continuing to receive YJS support.</p> <p>The MOJ have confirmed Turnaround funding will end in March 2025 so YJS will ensure transition planning is in place prior to Q4. This will ensure children are supported into accessing alternative programmes of intervention, including newly commissioned delivery providers Remedi and Queensberry Alternative Provision.</p>
Continue to develop anti-exploitation strategies in partnership with the Police, local authorities, and other partners such as health and education	<p>Cheshire YJS is an active and influential participant in both pan-Cheshire and place-based partnership groups focusing on tackling criminal exploitation. Team Managers and local 'exploitation champions' attend contextual safeguarding operational meetings and share intelligence and contribute to 'mapping' meetings to help local responses. Exploitation of vulnerable children in/on the cusp of the justice system remains a high concern/high priority for the wider partnership and earlier targeted intervention and support for children to get 'upstream' was included in the Cheshire SVS.</p> <p>The YJS leadership team will continue to use our data and insights (e.g. from HNA) to inform and influence the wider partnership. A good example of this is YJS data being instrumental in influencing the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) to use Serious Violence Duty funding to commission the Voluntary Community Sector to provide targeted support. Services are now in place to help children identified by education, early help, and social care as being 'at risk' of exclusion and exploitation, if left unsupported.</p> <p>Organised criminality is dynamic to emerging markets and opportunities and there were some concerning reports from Merseyside that county lines had evolved to become international. A few Merseyside children were trafficked to distribute drugs for a Dubai-based (but Merseyside linked) organised crime group (OCG). Given the proximity and known lines from Merseyside into Cheshire, the YJS Head of Service raised this at the Youth Justice Management Board and at local Serious Organised Crime Strategic groups. At the start of 2024, Cheshire YJS also participated in Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) benchmarking exercises with partners.</p>

Disproportionality review to be completed in line with the Cheshire CJB subgroup methodology	A response to the Lammy report was undertaken by the Disproportionality Sub-group to Cheshire CJB. YJS contributed data and insight to this work (see Section 7.1) and remains a member of the sub-group, which has renewed terms of reference under a new chair.
Explore potential of an early safeguarding diagnostic tool with CACI	This was explored as a tri-partite “Knowledge Transfer Partnership” with Edge Hill University and CACI (YJS software supplier) and an initial grant application to undertake the research and development necessary was made to Innovate UK. It subsequently transpired however YJS would become liable for two-thirds of the cost of employing research associates and because there was no cash in the budget and no obvious return on investment for the children we work with, it was ruled as unviable. CACI are a private organisation and are exploring other avenues for developing predictive analytics that may deliver them a commercial return on investment.

Some other notable achievements in 2023-2024 include: -

- YJS were ‘early adopters’ of the new national Prevention and Diversion assessment tool, with Cheshire contributing to the development of a quality assurance tool at national level with the YJB.
- Our social prescribing model has been cited by the LGA, YJB and NHS England as innovative practice for supporting children and young people in or on the cusp of the justice system.
- Several children embraced an opportunity to visit Chester University to work alongside graphics students and professionals in the co-design of a new youth justice planning template (see Section 4). An example of the kind of child first, participatory practice and co-design the service will be developing over the next 3 years.
- Cheshire YJS helped to facilitate some ‘art therapy’ with a cared for child who was struggling with being under a deprivation of liberty order and her painting won a Koestler arts award (see Section 8).

2. Performance over the previous year

Performance against nationally measured targets continues to be strong. Since rolling out the Divert scheme in 2017 across all Cheshire local authorities, we have seen fewer children entering the CJS.

Total volume and rates per 100,000 are significantly below regional and national averages and Section 11.4 contains a longer-term trend of FTE data, disaggregated by local authority. Figure 5 shows initial sharp reductions in FTE with the low base level being sustained again in 2023 (NB the lowest level of FTE in 2021 was due to the impact of covid/lockdowns).

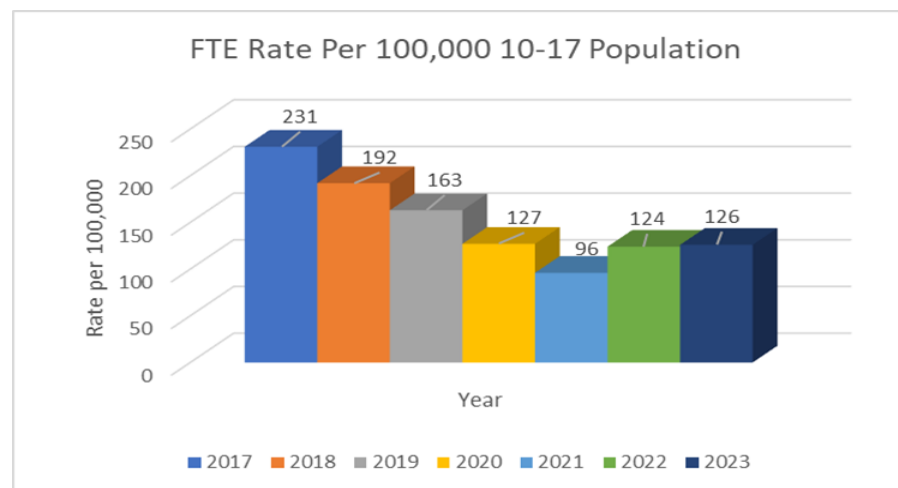


Figure 5. FTEs to the justice system in Cheshire

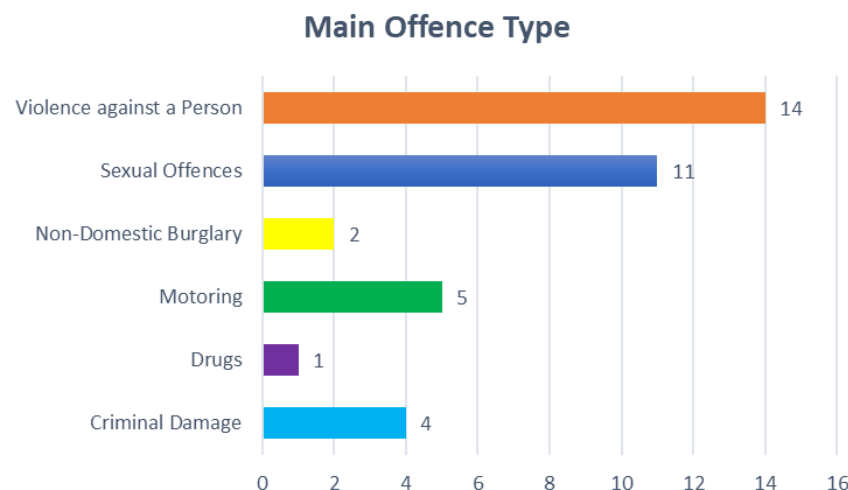


Figure 6. FTE offences in 2023

Figure 6 shows violent or sexual offences represent the bulk of those committed by children entering the justice system for the first time. This is what we would expect and is compatible with 'Child First' youth justice principles and an effective youth diversion scheme that ensures children are dealt with according to risk and need.

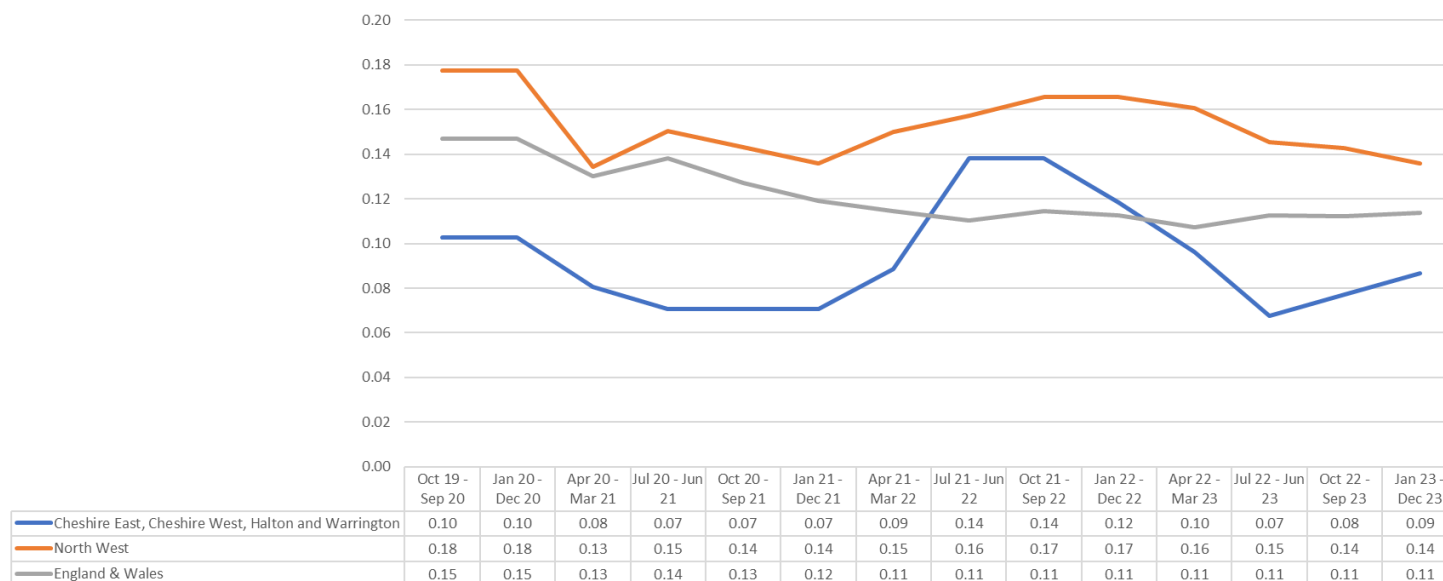


Figure 7. Custody Rate per 1,000 for Cheshire 10-17-Year-olds with regional and national comparisons

Source: National Youth Justice Application Framework (YJAF)

Cheshire also has consistently low numbers of children remanded and sentenced to custody (see Sections 11.9 and 11.10 for 2023-2024 place-based detail). Fewer than five children across the whole of Cheshire have been sentenced to custody in any quarterly period going right back to Q2 of 2019.

It is rare for there to be more than 10 children from the four places in Cheshire combined, serving custodial sentences at any one time. While reoffending rates of those children in the system are slightly higher than regional averages, this is attributable to the fact children sentenced by the courts tend to be those with whom we have already exhausted all diversionary options. They are the children who are often more entrenched in criminality and exploitation so require more intensive intervention and support.

We are also seeing consistently reliable results for those children subjected to out of court disposals, in terms of successful completions and reoffending rates, with fewer than one in 10 children diverted away from formal sanctions going on to reoffend.

As a service, we are committed to focusing our efforts on reducing reoffending by our children. However, as we continue to prevent children entering the system and, running parallel have relatively few children in custody, we recognise re-offending rates are understandably our area of greatest challenge. Figure 8 below provides the latest published re-offending data, taken from the Police National Computer (PNC). However, whilst this serves to give us a national picture, it is important to recognise the following limitations of this PNC data:-

- The re-offending of adults who we no longer work with or have been never known to us
- The re-offending of children from outside areas who have offended in Cheshire but are not or have never been open to Cheshire YJS
- PNC re-offending data is published 2-years behind the current quarter.

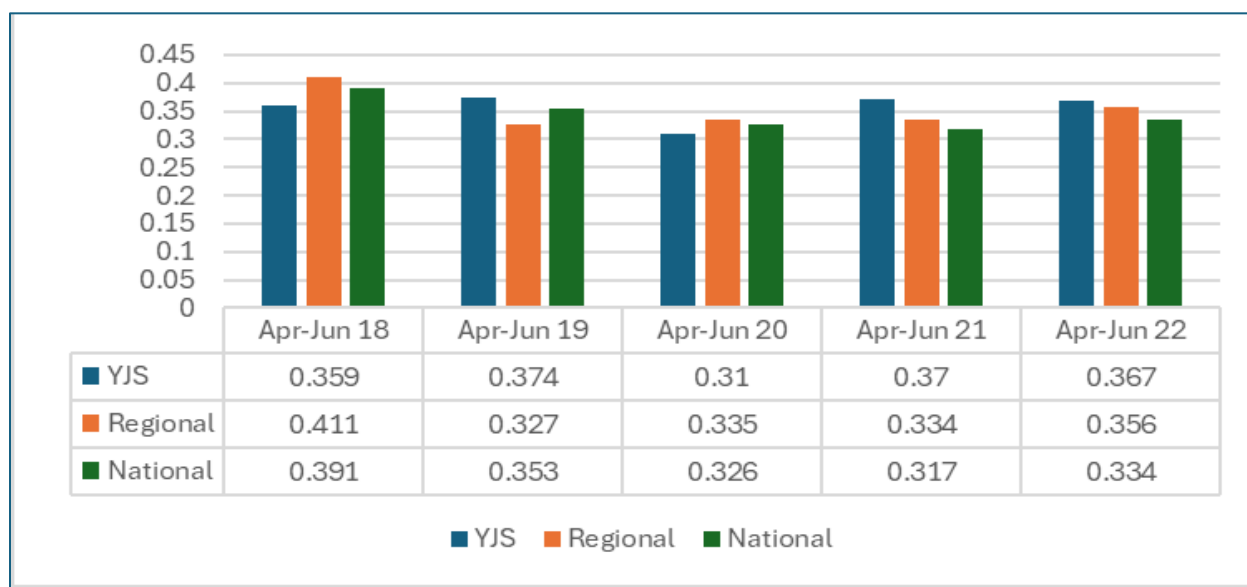


Figure 8. Binary reoffending data for YJS compared with regional and national rates 2018-2022

Source: YJAF via PNC

Desistance from crime for children who experience significant adversity and trauma is not a linear journey. It requires long-term, trusted, relational support from professionals to try and help children achieve a shift toward a more positive self-identity. This is why the vision for the service is underpinned by the three key pillars of Child First, Trauma-Informed and Relational-Based Practice (Figure 1).

The KPI charts in Appendix A1 show performance against a range of other key performance metrics, introduced in 2023 by the national YJB, who have rated YJS as being in Performance Quadrant 2 (Satisfactory).

YJS will be developing a new comprehensive performance reporting and quality assurance framework in 2024 so the Management Board, partners and staff can all see the strengths and areas of challenge across the 10 KPIs. We will be data driven, making full use of the management information system to target our improvement activity in the areas where it is most needed.

2.1 National Standards Audit

Submission of a National Standards (NS) audit is a condition of the YJB national grant and the most recent NS audit was undertaken in October 2023, against NS2: Work in Courts. Cheshire YJS received positive feedback from the YJB Regional Oversight Manager on the quality of both the audit process and its findings.

This NS audit was a comprehensive quality assurance audit of the services delivered before, during and after children's appearances before the three magistrate courts and one crown court in Cheshire. Section A looked at Strategy, Section B on Reports and Section C on Process. Sections B and C involved a deep dive practice audit involving 20 cases.

There were nine areas in Section A 'Strategic performance' with four rated **Outstanding** and five rated as **Good**. Cheshire YJS enjoys a strong partnership with HM Court and Tribunal Service (HMCTS), Magistrates, Police and Crown Prosecution Service. The Head of Service is a member of Cheshire CJB and meets quarterly with youth bench magistrates who sit in Cheshire's three youth courts. A former chair of the Cheshire youth bench and a representative from HMCTS are also members of the Management Board.

For sections B (Reports) and C (Process), the audit revealed the overall quality of work was **Good** or **Outstanding**. One criterion required improvement and this related to the adequate referencing of the impact of the child's offence on their victim, by authors of pre-sentence reports. Improvement action is being addressed through local changes to case management guidance, emphasis on managerial oversight and explicitly evidencing the possible impact on victims (even where victim personal statements are unavailable).

A priority for 2024-2025 will be to review the victim contact and support offer ensuring the service remains fully compliant with the Victims' Code of Practice and the new Victims and Prisoners Act (see Section 11.6).

3. Risks and issues

The main risk to service delivery and the achievement of positive outcomes for children, victims and care givers, relates to the complexity of the pan-Cheshire shared service arrangements. A combination of escalating ICT costs due to national licensing and security compliance issues, as well as inefficiency that comes from having staff employed by authorities other than the one providing their ICT, has rendered the current arrangement unsustainable.

YJS staff currently must navigate four separate systems for corporate information such as finance and human resources. Lack of a sustainable ICT system will inhibit performance management, data collection and case recording and increase costs for each partner authority. In addition, the safety of children and the public could be compromised if these inefficiencies continue to impact on staff time. This results in less time spent with children and young people (and those harmed by children and young people).

The move to a hosted arrangement with Cheshire West and Chester Council as the lead authority, will mean a more productive and efficient organisation. This model will also provide financial transparency and the new legal memorandum of understanding will mitigate the risks associated with provision of ICT that is a cost Halton Borough Council can no longer absorb as a benefit in kind.

Not progressing to a fully hosted model (and agreeing a sustainable funding formula) will, over time, undermine the integrity of the YJS and compromise service delivery for our children, caregivers and victims.

All four councils have now confirmed their support for transitioning to a new hosted model, with each authority paying a management fee. The infrastructure work involved in transitioning the service will be significant and require multiple workstreams overseen by a Transitions Board.

As with any major organisational change and infrastructure project – particularly one involving decommissioning and transfer of ICT systems, there is a risk of service disruption, or the work not being completed within the intended timescale of this fiscal year. The Transitions Board, overseen by the Director for Children and Families in Cheshire West and Chester Council, will be responsible for agreeing any mitigation measures, should they be required.

4. Building on our strengths: Plan for 2024-2025

4.1 Child First

In Cheshire, we are committed to Child First principles. As mentioned earlier, these principles, along with Trauma-Informed and Relationship-Based Practice will inform all practice and development activity. We will continue to apply the principle of “*Would this be good enough for my child?*” and prioritise the best interests of children, recognise their needs, capacities, rights, and potential. As well as being child-focused, our work will be developmentally informed, acknowledge structural barriers and done with children rather than done to them.

YJS has made great strides in this direction of travel in the last couple of years but recognises there is more to do, particularly in relation to meaningful and active participation of children in the justice system.

This is why **Participation** is a strategic, operational and practice priority flowing from this Strategic plan.

The new Service Development Hub will be the engine room to drive forward participation across all areas of YYS. This will not be easy as children sentenced by the courts often feel they have no power and no voice and they have usually experienced significant trauma and adversity. Offending for many children is in part symptomatic of their own childhood abuse or neglect. YYS will hold a Service Development Day in July 2024, with **Participation** as the theme and have invited the leading children’s and social justice charity Peer Power to co-facilitate the session. Through the lived experience of their ‘peer leaders’, Peer Power will help YYS to better harness the power and potential of children and young people and be the catalyst for scaling up some of the co-produced (Child First) activity started in 2023-2024 and outlined below.

In summer 2023, a partnership project with a local community enterprise in Crewe ‘Recycle Cycles’, combined children gaining skills in bike maintenance with designing and painting a large outdoor container (Figure 9a). The inspiration for the design came from a child being encouraged to visualise his pathway toward a brighter future having participated in evening sessions on topics such as, healthy relationships and respect for women, substance misuse and self-esteem. A group of our children worked collaboratively with YYS staff and graphic design students at University of Chester to co-produce Figure 9b. This is now the cover of the planning document, *My Change Plan*, used with all YYS children.



Figure 9a.
Original artwork
created on a
container by YJS
children working
with Recycle
Cycles in Crewe



Figure 9b. Adapted
artwork for *My Change
Plan* made by YJS
children in collaboration
with YJS staff and graphic
design students from
University of Chester

The above artwork is one illustration of the kind of participatory practice Cheshire YJS will be seeking to build on over the coming years. It also exemplifies how we can take a strengths-based approach and co-produce with children. By knowing they have a voice in co-producing their own intervention plans, children will be more motivated to achieve the objectives and successfully complete their work with us.

Our relationship-based model also offers a way to improve the interactions children have with police officers. The Cheshire Youth Commission is facilitated by Leaders Unlocked, a social enterprise that delivers the Youth Commission peer-led model and exists to allow young people across the UK to have a stronger voice in their communities on issues that affect them. During October 2023 half term, YJS arranged two bespoke events with Cheshire Youth Commission enabling the voices of children with lived experience of the system, to be heard by the OPCC and other leaders and to inform policing in Cheshire. Five children open to YJS, participated in a bespoke workshop on relationships with the police. The workshops included interactive situational scenario activities, an animation film and quizzes to elicit rich feedback on justice-involved-children's authentic lived experience.

"It was good to get listened to. I have not had the opportunity of this before in relation to my experiences with the Police. The person running the group seemed to be really interested."
(Child)

Some children felt the Police should receive training around mental health issues, specifically neurodiversity and officers should have more awareness of how best to engage with neurodiverse children. (Cheshire HNA confirmed neurodivergent children are over-represented in the youth justice system). This was one of several recommendations made in the final report to the OPCC as part of the annual “Big Conversation” and YJS will facilitate a similar bespoke session with Leaders Unlocked later in 2024.

“I used to get regularly stopped and searched if I was stimming and under suspicion of drug use when I am actually just autistic.”
(Child)

“I just want to say a huge thank you to you and the team for giving us an opportunity to speak to the amazing young people you work with. They were my favourite sessions of this year”
(Project Manager, Leaders Unlocked)

Figure 10 shows a young person open to YJS helping a traffic officer wash his motorbike. This example of relationship-based practice was arranged by a Divert Worker who was aware of the young person’s interest in motorbikes.



Figure 10. Young person helps a traffic officer to wash his motorbike

5. Resources and services

The YJS operates as a complex shared service arrangement with pooled funding from four local authorities, statutory partners, Cheshire OPCC and the YJB core grant (see Appendix B Budget). Cheshire YJS will pool the YJB core grant with other funding to:

- Ensure we have a well-trained, supported and motivated team of staff, with the specialist skills to engage children, caregivers and victims;
- Continue to contribute towards funding our relationship-based practice model and further developing participatory work with children, care givers and victims;
- Continue to pool funding to develop social prescribing and other interventions with children to improve self-identity, health and wellbeing and reduce the likelihood of re-offending;
- Continue to develop diversionary and participatory interventions to divert children away from formal sanctions (supported by contributions from the OPCC);
- Ensure YJS can continue to provide robust, intensive supervision to children in the community to maintain public and judicial confidence and minimising the use of custody.

6. Board development

The YJS Management Board will continue to meet quarterly and receive reports from YJS and partners to facilitate scrutiny and discussion around key service delivery and performance areas. The Board's key purposes are:

- To determine strategic direction of YJS, ensuring all statutory partners are fully engaged.
- To oversee and monitor the operational work of YJS.
- To ensure YJS is adequately resourced to carry out its statutory function of preventing offending by children and young people.

The leadership, composition and role of the Management Board are critical to the effective delivery of local youth justice services and Cheshire has senior representation from all statutory partners. The YJS Management Board also has long standing representation from HMCTS, the Magistracy, children's safeguarding, and academia.

The main development area for 2024-2025 will be the overseeing of a parallel Transitions Board by the Chair of the YJS Management Board. This will ensure the smooth transition to the new hosted model with Cheshire West and Chester Council becoming lead authority on behalf of the partnership.

7. Workforce development

As a service, and in line with our three pillars vision, we are committed to learning and development. It is vital all staff have the appropriate skills and knowledge, are effective in their roles and equipped to deliver high-quality services to everyone they work with. We also place high value on relevant opportunities to promote personal growth and professional development.

As a pan-Cheshire partnership, we can maximise opportunities arising in each of the four Safeguarding Children Partnerships and local authority areas. In 2023-2024, in response to our HM Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) 2021 inspection report and updated case management guidance, we commissioned and facilitated a broad range of learning and development opportunities. Cheshire YJS were also privileged this year to inputs from leading academics, with international reputations, for research on working with children in the justice system. The table below summarises the main staff development events held, highlighting how we have drawn on expertise from many sources.

Our commitment to the workforce will continue into 2024-2025 and we will seek to further strengthen workforce development through:

- Development of a more centralised approach to identifying training needs across the service
- Developing an enhanced training monitoring system and connecting with Cheshire West Learning and Development Team as we move to a single hosted model.
- Revising the Training Plan to be highly relevant, achievable, and accessible to the whole workforce.
- Continued membership of the Youth Justice Legal Centre, which brings timely and specialist legal advice for professionals and managers and access to a range of in-person training events and remote learning.

Table 1. Summary of key work force development activities in 2023-2024

Title	Course Type	Overview
Relationship Based Practice by Jackie Dwayne Limerick University	Academic Guest Speaker	Youth justice in Ireland is in a fortunate position as on the back of the research from Limerick, they were awarded funding to 2027 to implement RBP (Relationship Based Practice). Our approach has no additional resources and will come via the new development hub to ensure a more centralised approach but still drawing on what is available in local areas. Once children have finished their time with YJS we will be able to signpost them to groups/activities they have been linked to as part of exit plan to help sustain desistance from crime while avoiding dependency on YJS
Presentation on the Lundy Model by Laura Lundy Queen's University Belfast	Academic Guest Speaker	Presentation covering the aspects of the Lundy Model of Child Participation we have adopted within the work of the Service Development Hub (see Section 8).
Child Participation in Youth Justice Research Louise Forde Brunel Law School	Academic Guest Speaker	Whole service presentation on participation in youth justice from Louise Forde again to back up work on participation which will be the theme of the Service Development Day.
YJLC Gravity Matrix Training	Commissioned	Training from Youth Justice Legal Centre to Prevention and Diversion staff and police officers on the application of revised gravity matrix for youth out of court disposals
Case management guidance	In-house	Major internal briefings and training on application of revised case management guidance
Equality and Diversity training	Commissioned	Delivered by Wipers Youth social enterprise. Specifically tailored training for youth justice professionals to improve cultural competency and awareness of disproportionality in the justice system

Having considered the local data analysis and in support of service priorities, the following training is currently planned for 2024-2025:

- Specialist Harmful Sexual Behaviour (AIM3) to broaden the pool of trained practitioners
- Court Skills
- UNITAS courses: Youth Diversion; Child First Effective Practice; Professional Certificate in Effective Practice
- Equality and Diversity for all staff.

8. Evidence-based practice and innovation

YJS will continue to root all intervention and support with children on the evidence base, but Cheshire will also explore new and innovative ways of connecting with children who find it difficult to access mainstream services. Our approach was described recently by an NHS England lead as the best application of social prescribing in a justice context that she had come across. It was also cited by the LGA as one of their *‘innovation in local government’* case studies⁶.

Social prescribing in YJS emerged from the recognition that justice-involved-children often arrive with previously unmet health needs and traditional/clinical models of care had failed to reach them. An example being the socially prescribing of fishing as a mindfulness activity in partnership with the Canal and River Trust’s ‘Let’s Go Fishing’ programme (Figure 11).



Figure 11. ‘Let’s Go Fishing’ Programme at Winsford

⁶ [Cheshire: Using social prescribing to reduce reoffending among young people | Local Government Association](#)

Adopting a psychosocial therapeutic approach, health workers in YJS are socially prescribing creative and flexible activities to help children improve their health and wellbeing. This has proven particularly effective for males who have experienced intra and/or extra familial violence and are often in a state of hyper-vigilance or hyper-arousal. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is often ineffective with this increasingly large sub-set of our children, so the service has tailored the health offer to become far more psychosocial and adaptable to the needs (and interests) of the children we work with. Our health offer is also supportive towards addressing the impact of trauma.



The artwork in Figure 12 was created by a cared for child working with the YJS. “L” had experienced a lot of childhood trauma and was struggling with being in care under a deprivation of liberty for her own safety. She was being supported to make sense of her experiences through art therapy and discovered she had a real talent. YJS supported her to enter this piece for a Koestler arts award and it won a commendation award. On winning the award, she told her YJS worker it was the first certificate she had ever received in her life. This is a perfect illustration of the impact that child first, trauma-informed, and relational practice can have on children who have experienced complex trauma.

**Figure 12. ‘Day in the Life of a Deprivation of Liberty Order’
Koestler commendation award winning artwork 2023**

Cheshire YJS has a well-developed “*Research in Practice*” working group that was recognised by HMIP in 2021 as an exemplar of collaboration between academia and the youth justice sector. As mentioned above the group was able to secure several key researchers to speak to the service about their findings.

One such speaker was Professor Laura Lundy, a leading international authority on the meaningful participation of children and author of The Lundy Model (Figure 13). YJS will be adopting the Lundy Model as our frame of reference in developing Participation across all aspects of service delivery in 2024-2027.

The YJS is in a knowledge-transfer partnership arrangement with two local universities (Chester and Edge Hill University) and two senior lecturers in criminology, with a national profile for research on youth justice will co-chair the YJS Research group from 2024-2025. This collaboration will ensure Cheshire YJS retains a national reputation for evidence-based practice and stays at the leading edge of innovation in the sector.

Although YJS has been fortunate to have a number of key speakers talking to staff about the research behind participation, the Service Development Day in July 2024 will be the catalyst for the development of a participatory model across the service with Peer Power Youth facilitating the session.

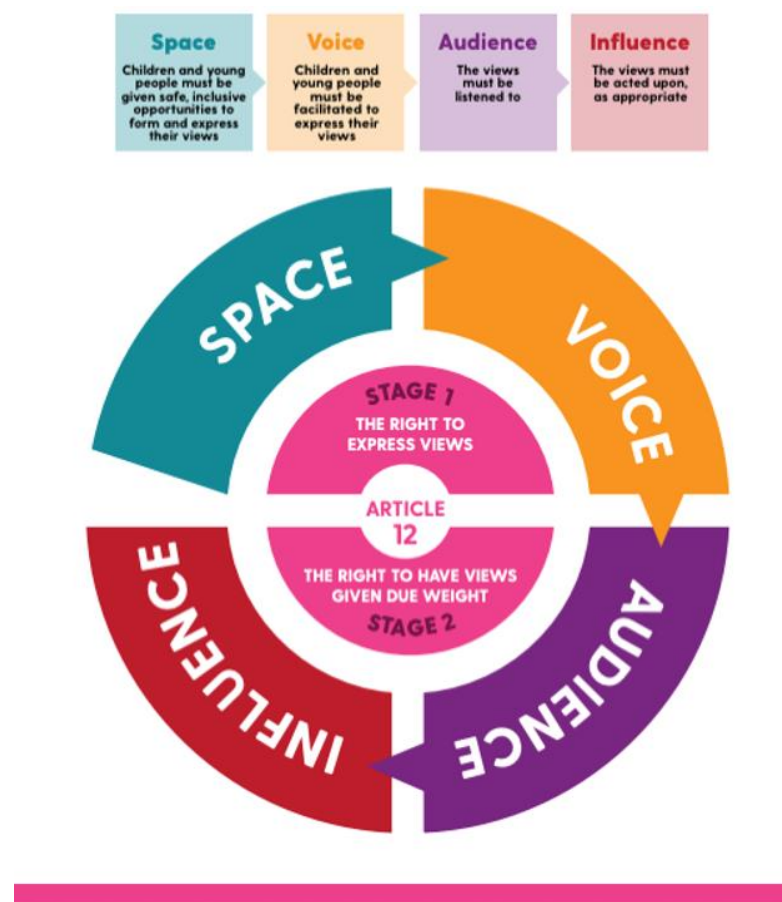


Figure 13. The Lundy Model of Child Participation

We have used previous service development days to launch Trauma-Informed Practice (2019) and Relationship-Based Practice (2022). The Service Development Hub will bring together a range of working groups focusing on various aspects of participation from involving children in staff recruitment to using technology to gain children's views and ideas.

9. Evaluation

The HNA by the Public Health Research Institute at Liverpool John Moores University evaluated and validated the trauma-informed and relationship-based practice approach adopted by Cheshire YJS professionals. The passage below is taken directly from their full technical report, based on a statistically valid research sample of 70% of the children YJS were working with at the time:

“The (Cheshire YJS) offer now provides that key link into mental health, substance use and Speech Language Therapy support, through an equitable healthcare assessment available to all young people entering the YJS. This provided a key opportunity to assess and identify any unmet health needs in these three areas (and wider health and safeguarding needs), which may not have otherwise been identified, and for many was the first time they had access to such healthcare screening. This multi-agency approach not only allowed for quicker identification during the healthcare screening, but it also meant more timely specialist support for families who would have otherwise had long waiting lists to see specialists from CAMHS and SLT. This was identified as an effective way to open the door to this pathway of wider support, recognising that these health needs were associated to the offending behavior and need to be addressed to prevent further re-offendingThe Cheshire YJS model also provides an opportunity for multi-agency working, not only to provide that overarching multi-disciplinary offer for children and young people, but also in terms of how services work together across Cheshire....The HNA highlights the key work from YJS and wider services across Cheshire in support of families to reduce inequalities, improve wellbeing, and reduce offending. This required skilled, experienced staff working in a trauma-informed way, using a child-focused approach.”

10. Priorities for the coming year

Building on what we have achieved in the previous year, a service development plan outlining management activity will sit underneath this higher-level Strategic Youth Justice Plan and will be used to deliver against the new service development priorities for 2024-2025 summarised below:-

We will 'ramp-up' participation in creative ways right across the service and facilitate a culture of collaboration where children, volunteers and community groups are enabled to promote pro-social identity and desistance from crime. This will include co-production or co-design of plans, developing projects to support children to desist from crime and reduce harm to victims/communities.

We will develop a new comprehensive performance reporting and quality assurance framework, ensuring we are data driven and make full use of the management information system to drive practice development

We will refine our internal governance processes to ensure management and back-office functions help facilitate the delivery of high-quality services including enhanced training monitoring and a training needs assessment to inform the staff training plan

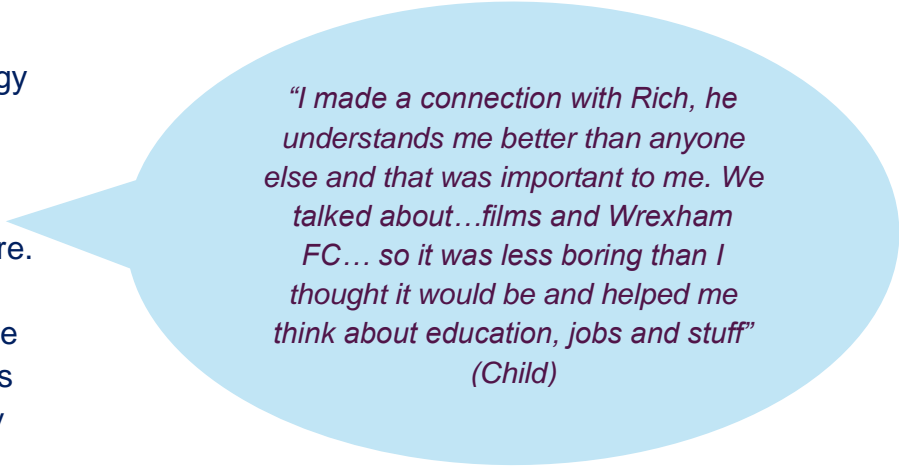
We will benchmark the YJS support offer to victims against the Victims Code of Practice, new Victims' Bill and HMiPs new inspection criteria (refining the role of Restorative Justice workers in YJS if required) identifying and progressing areas for development

In partnership with Cheshire Constabulary, we will review the current joint decision-making arrangements for the use of out of court disposals for our children. We will ensure they incorporate the Child Gravity Matrix and children are diverted to the appropriate service according to their level of risk and need

We will collaborate with partners to deliver against Priority 1 (Prevention) of Cheshire's 2024-2029 SVS by ensuring funding is targeted appropriately to support children at risk of involvement in SV

10.1 Standards for children

Cheshire YJS has developed a “conversational audit” methodology to undertake practice audits where managers visit or speak to children, caregivers and (where appropriate) victims too. This is now a ‘business as usual’ audit methodology for the service and has been adopted by some of our partners in children’s social care. Direct quotes from children, caregivers or partner agency professionals obtained through conversational audit are illustrative of the kind of trauma-informed, relational practice Cheshire YJS is striving to provide to the children we work with. This methodology will feature in this year’s audit on Victims and Restorative Justice. The new participatory model also aims to gather the views and ideas of the children we work with.



*“I made a connection with Rich, he understands me better than anyone else and that was important to me. We talked about...films and Wrexham FC... so it was less boring than I thought it would be and helped me think about education, jobs and stuff”
(Child)*

10.2 New performance framework

Striking the right balance between local place-based and pan-Cheshire performance reporting is a challenge for YJS and disaggregating Cheshire-wide data to place often renders the data invalid because the volumes are so low. But we will be developing a new performance management framework, using a mix of the recently introduced 10 national KPIs (Appendix A1) alongside better use of Child View (YJS case management system) so the Management Board and service really know our children.

10.3 Service development

It is critical for a sub-regional youth justice partnership to work closely with statutory agencies and community organisations at a local level, to properly support children in their own communities. To better facilitate this, YJS have implemented a modest service redesign for 2024-2025 to enable front-line professionals to work more closely and effectively with place-based partners. Figure 14 opposite shows how YJS will remain co-terminus with both police and probation footprints, while aligning closely to the four children's services and community safety partnerships. The Staff Structure in Appendix A2 shows how our Teams align with place.

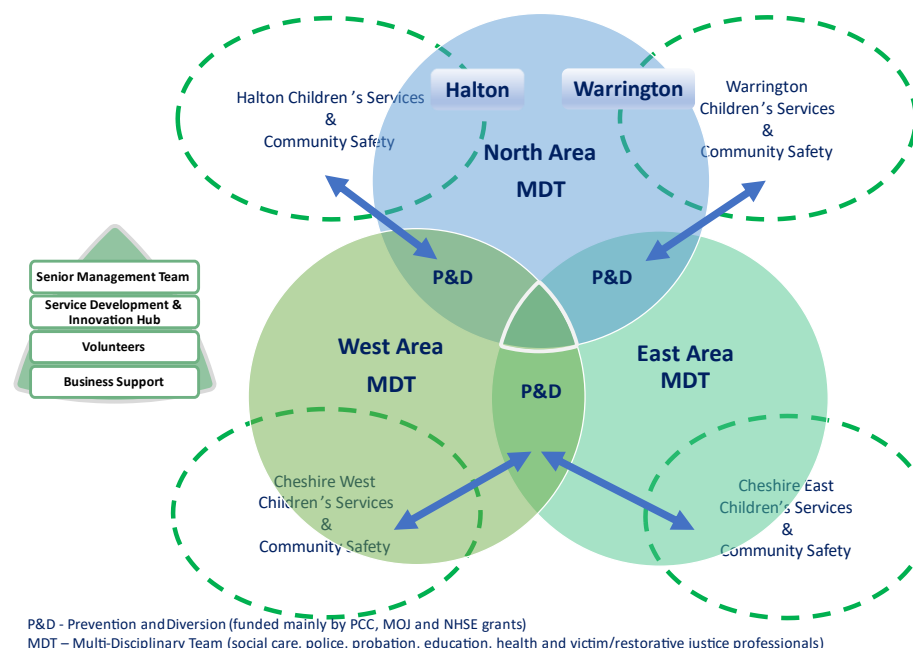


Figure 14. New Area-Based Service Design Model for YJS (from April 2024)

The service redesign aligns with the shift toward restorative and participatory approaches and the importance of supporting children to connect (or reconnect) with their local community. The new structure will empower front-line professionals and locality (area-based) operational managers to develop creative partnerships with the voluntary sector. By harnessing previously untapped human and social capital within communities (such as recruiting more local volunteers and establishing mutually beneficial partnerships with small local charities) we will be better able to help children, and some victims to move on positively beyond an offender (or victim) identity.

The new Service Development Hub will function as the central engine room for innovation within the service and the new leadership team will ensure quality of practice at a pan-Cheshire level, while empowering (through a distributed leadership model) creative area-based partnerships in the places where children, caregivers and victims live.

Cheshire YJS has also begun a review of our internal governance processes to ensure we are as productive as possible with a lean service spanning a large geography and complex network of partners. There are over 100 place-based and sub-regional partnership boards or groups and YJS needs to focus our human resource where it can have the greatest influence and improve outcomes for children in or at risk of entering into the justice system.

11. National priority areas

11.1 Children from groups which are over-represented

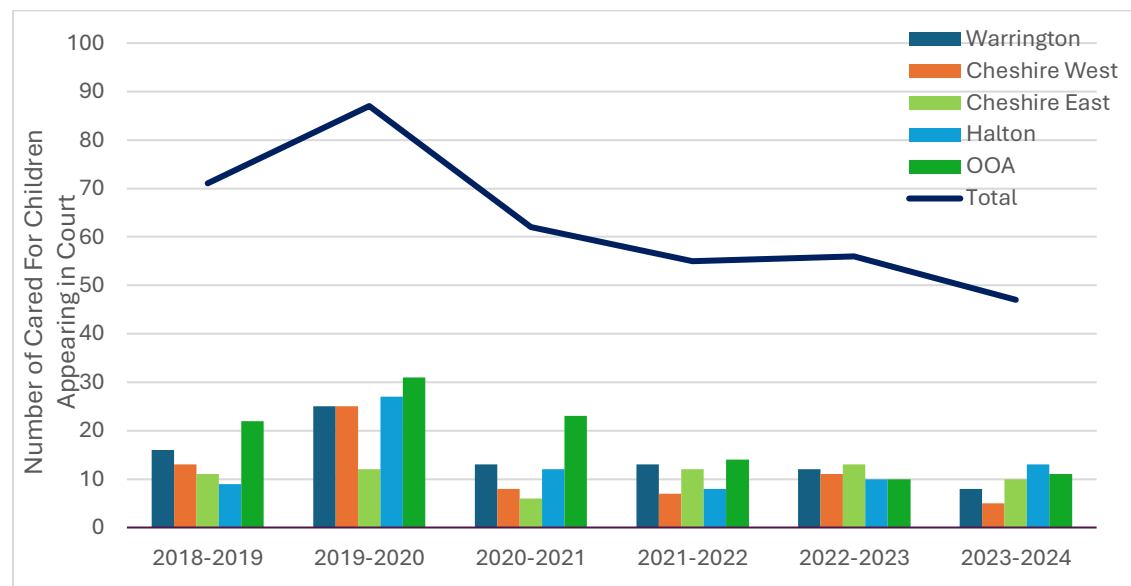


Figure 15. Number of cared for children appearing in Cheshire courts by local authority between April 2018-March 2024

The data above also includes children placed in Cheshire under the care of local authorities outside the county (out of area [OOA]) who receive the same diversionary options.

Sustained lower volumes since the protocol was produced in early 2020 is good evidence of what can be achieved through collective commitment at scale across YJS and Children's services.

A task and finish group are meeting to review the protocol in 2024-2025.

An over-represented group of children in the justice system are cared for children and care leavers. The YJS Management Board's response to data revealing disproportionality in this group was to agree a pan-Cheshire protocol. This aims to minimise the criminalisation of cared for children and care leavers and details a '3D' police and partnership response of *"Discretion, Delay and Diversion"*.

Since the protocol was launched, there has been a clear downward trend of cared for children appearing in court (Figure 15). This shows the impact from a high point in 2019.

The high prevalence of our children struggling with health or neurodevelopmental difficulties prompted the Health Sub-group of the YJS Management Board to commission the Public Health Research Institute at Liverpool John Moore University to look at the health needs of children open to YJS (see Management Board and Leadership).

The HNA revealed a stark over-representation of neurodiversity in our children which has been replicated elsewhere due to wider determinants of health. Public health consultants on the Health Sub-group have used this analysis in a place-based Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and SEND specific Strategic Needs Analysis. The HNA revealed there is a correlated trajectory for children who ‘camouflage’ their SEND through disruptive behavior, experience fixed-term or permanent exclusion and then enter the CJS some time thereafter. In 2024, the Head of Service for YJS will continue to raise awareness at local Health and Wellbeing Boards and be a strong advocate for improved upstream identification and support for children with SEND.

*“Karen understands C’s SEND. The team have been really understanding and flexible around C’s appointments and Karen worked hard to earn his trust. She was approachable and down to earth, and I appreciate the work she is doing with my son”
(Caregiver).*

The alarming racial disparities in the youth justice system nationally are not replicated in Cheshire. Figure 16 and Table 2 below show the most current data available (offences committed in the year ending March 2023 and drawing from 2021 census data). Comparing the youth offending population with Cheshire’s 10-17-year-old population as a whole reveals white children are very slightly overrepresented and ethnic minority groups slightly underrepresented.

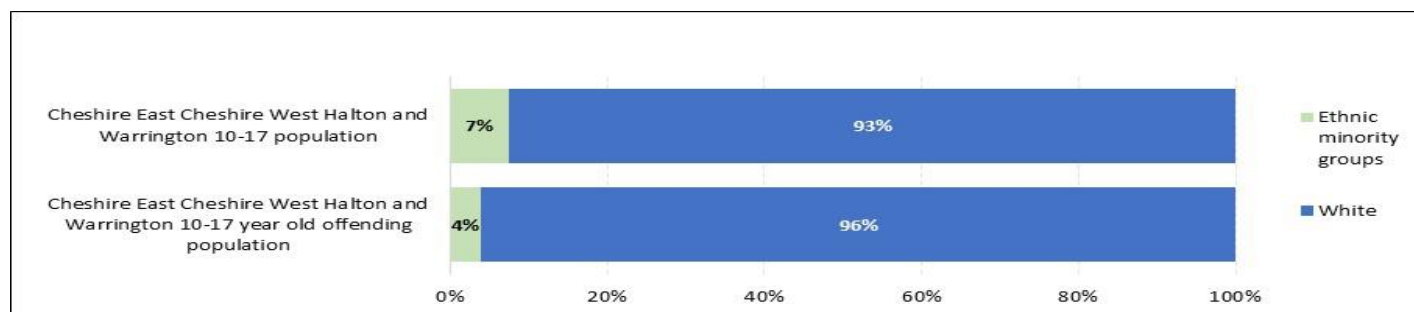


Figure 16. Ethnic minority groups vs white in the 10-17 population and offending population in Cheshire

Table 2. Ethnic minority groups vs white in the 10-17 population in Cheshire East, Cheshire West, Halton and Warrington

Ethnic group	2022/23 Offending Population	Share of total (¹)	2021 Census 10-17 pop'n by ethnic group	Share of total % (²)	% Point Difference	Overrepresented, offending pop'n >10 & statistically significant
Asian	1	0%	2,563	3%	-2%	No
Black	2	1%	561	1%	0%	No
Mixed	6	3%	3,603	4%	-1%	No
Other	0	0%	796	1%	-1%	No
Ethnic minority groups ⁽³⁾	9	4%	7,523	7%	-3%	No
White	218	96%	93,563	93%	3%	Yes

***“Jess and Kevin were
respectful of our
culture (travellers)
and that matters”
(Caregiver)***

One potential area of ‘invisible over-representation’ in Cheshire that YJS has raised with partners at the CJB’s Disproportionality Sub-group, relates to children (or adults) from GRT communities. Anecdotal (and student) research suggests children from these communities are sometimes recorded on police and other criminal justice databases as White British, White Irish or White European.

There is a GRT self-identity classification, but some individuals choose not to identify themselves because of a cultural mistrust of authorities. Therefore, CJS data on arrest, detention, and sentencing in respect of GRT children may not be accurate. The cultural competence of staff is the key aspect here and Cheshire YJS do have an in-service GRT ‘champion’ who is well linked with specialist advocacy and support services. We will ensure our data is as accurate as possible by hearing from the child about their identity.

11.2 Policing

The Chief Superintendent with the portfolio of protecting vulnerable people, sits on the Management Board and all four Children's Safeguarding Partnerships. This valuable connectivity provides useful constructive challenge and support, for example, renewed focus on detention of children overnight in police custody (Section 11.8). Cheshire Constabulary delivered on the recommendations made by HMIP to place fully seconded police officers into YJS and the three officers in Cheshire work well as part of the multi-disciplinary teams. They have participated in both police and YJS-led training and have improved both the flow and response to intelligence in respect of harm to or from children.

The National Police Chief's Council guidance on the role of police officers within youth justice was recently updated⁷ and YJS and Cheshire Constabulary will be reviewing the job descriptions of seconded officers to strengthen focus on victims and prevention and diversion activity. The level of police resources dedicated to (or aligned with) Cheshire YJS will be explored

so the partnership can collectively meet our joint responsibilities for diversion and out of court disposals.

Cheshire Constabulary continue to invest in their Complex-Youths scheme which has dedicated officers delivering targeted prevention and support work with children on the cusp of the justice system. This is a voluntary scheme closely aligned to place-based contextual safeguarding partnership arrangements, with children at risk of criminal exploitation often identified for support. YJS officers and place-based youth officers routinely share intelligence to help safeguard children and disrupt criminal groups.

11.3 Prevention

Unlike many single local authority youth justice teams, YJS is not part of a wider adolescent and family support service providing a broader prevention offer. The funding and delivery model spanning four authorities means we are more of a purist youth justice service that only works with children *after* they have been arrested for an offence. Prevention and targeted youth support forms part of each local authority's early help offer with some sub-regional services commissioned by Cheshire OPCC. YJS will seek to align our diversionary work to continue to divert **away from** formal criminal sanctions when it is safe and appropriate to do so and **into prevention** projects entirely outside the justice

⁷ [NPCC Guidance on Role of Police Officer in Youth Justice Services](#)

system . The principles of avoiding ‘net widening’ and the unintended consequences of ‘labelling’ or entrenching a criminal self-identity for a child are critically important and are evidenced principles underpinning this strategy and continue to apply across Cheshire.

11.4 Diversion

The Head of Service for YJS holds the national portfolio on Diversion for the Association of YOT Managers (AYM) and engages with ministers, national charities and think tanks such as Criminal Justice Innovation in roundtables on best diversionary practice. Cheshire will continue an evidence-based approach to diversion that avoids criminalising children for behaviors symptomatic of trauma, abuse, and unmet need. This not only provides better outcomes and improved prospects for children but because children diverted away from receiving formal sanctions are less likely to re-offend, it also results in fewer victims.

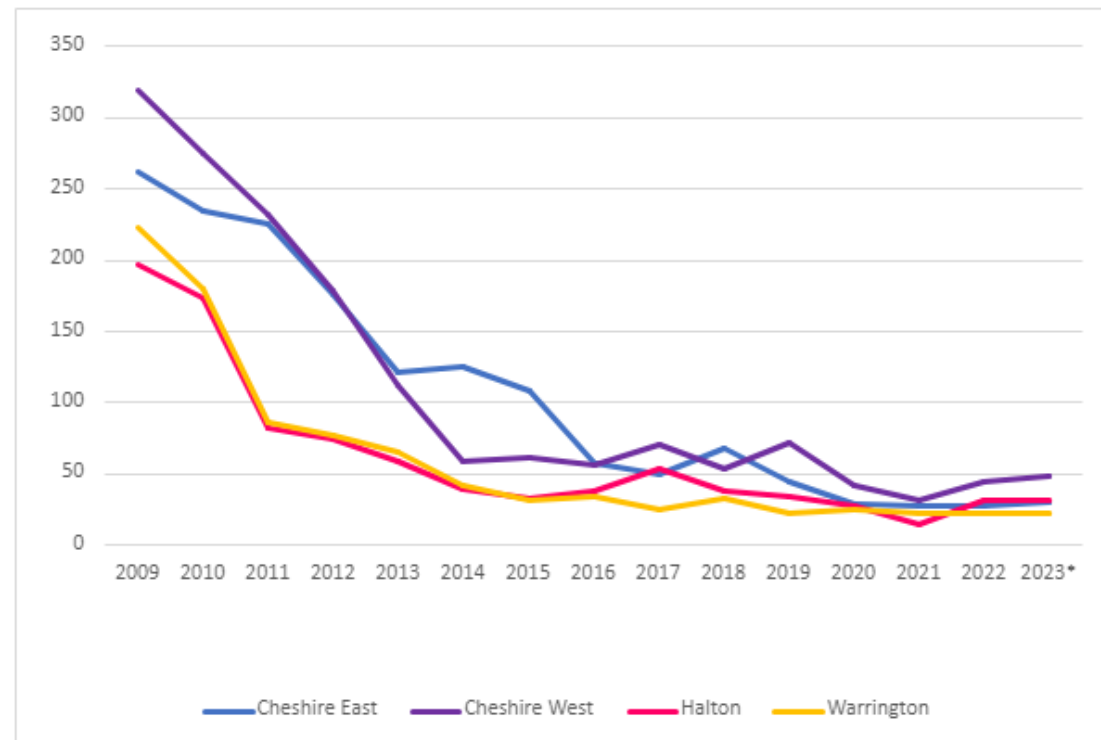


Figure 17. Trends in FTEs in Cheshire by local authority 2009-2023

Figure 17 shows significant reductions in FTEs since the incremental introduction of Divert across Cheshire. The current operating model began in Halton and Warrington in 2010, was introduced into Cheshire West in 2013 and Cheshire East in 2015. FTE numbers have remained low and stable below regional and national averages since 2016 when Cheshire

became a pan-Cheshire shared service, covering the entire policing footprint. This contrasts with many of our geographical and statistical 'Neighbours' that have begun to see an increase in FTEs in recent years.

The helpful 3-year grant investment from the MOJ (Turnaround Programme) will end in March 2025. This investment enabled YJS to get a little further upstream while also enabling us to support children and caregivers who needed longer or more intensive support. We will ensure individual children have transition plans in place where continued support beyond the end of the Turnaround programme is necessary. We will also work with the OPCC as part of the serious violence duty to ensure the new Voluntary and Community Sector providers (Remedi and Queensberry Alternative Provision) are targeting help and support to the right children, in the right ways, at the right time.

11.5 Education

Our HNA chimes with national research in showing a correlation between educational exclusion and subsequent entry to the CJS. Children who get excluded from school tend to be children who have experienced childhood trauma. There is a concerning trajectory (nationally not just in Cheshire) of early childhood exposure to violence and SEND being camouflaged as conduct issues leading to educational exclusion (for some children). Then a sub-set of these excluded children go on to use illicit drugs to self-medicate their trauma and criminal exploitation and criminality follows.

Audits and learning reviews across Cheshire also show the powerful protective effect education can have on children who have suffered childhood trauma. Positive self-identity and belonging are critical to helping children achieve desistance from offending, and the significant role education and training providers play in reducing risk through promoting pro-social identity cannot be overstated. Inclusive, trauma-informed-values-led-educational establishments not only manage risk well within their own environment, but also contribute hugely to reducing risk of harm in their communities.

Most children receiving YJS support are beyond school age, so the emphasis is more on helping them into post-16 training or employment, with flexible and bespoke support offers being most suitable for those children who have typically experienced considerable educational disruption. YJS has dedicated Education, Training and Employment (ETE) specialists for each of the four local authority areas to support children directly or indirectly by brokering tailored support in partnership with the respective local offer. As an inclusive-employment lead for post-16, the educational representative on the Board is a good advocate for justice-involved children and provides both challenge and support to managers in the service.

For a partnership that covers four local authorities, with over 100 high schools and post-16 colleges - the majority of which are academies - YJS and even Directors of Children's Services have limited influence on admissions or exclusions. Promoting inclusion and supporting trauma-informed practice in educational settings is something Children's Trusts have pushed and YJS will continue to advocate for the needs of children. The Head of Service will continue to provide data to inform local joint strategic need analyses and deliver presentations to forums of educational leaders. The KPI data in Appendix A1, shows the percentages of children who are in suitable education or training placements at the end of their intervention with YJS.

11.6 Restorative approaches and victims

Cheshire YJS will continue to work with victims and will deliver the full range of restorative support:

- **Restorative Justice Conferencing** – a structured meeting between the victim and the child
- **Direct Reparation** – repairing any damage caused by the child
- **Shuttle Mediation** – similar to the conferencing model but where both parties do not meet but have someone as the go-between
- **Letter of Apology/explanation** – child is supported to write to the victim
- **Indirect reparation** – work done within the community on placements.

*“Mark ensured my son's issues were heard and a structure was put in place to ensure his safety”
(Caregiver of Victim)*

In 2023-2024, the YJS contacted and offered the above range of restorative approaches to 201 victims of youth crime. Assault is the most frequent offence type committed by children, but a quarter of all offences in 2023-2024 had no direct victim (e.g. drug and knife possession).

Sixteen direct restorative justice conferences between children and victims took place in 2023-2024. These meetings can be incredibly powerful and are handled sensitively by skilled professionals. We will continue to facilitate restorative meetings between children and their victims when it is appropriate to do so.

Cheshire YJS have a range of community partnership projects enabling children to contribute in practical ways to repair harm and develop a sense of pro-social identity. The photographs in Figure 18 show how a victim who did not want to

meet the children who assaulted him, asked if they could do something to improve the local park. This community reparation was arranged in partnership with the 'Friends of Winsford Town Park' community group.

Reviewing victim processes and ensuring the support offer from Cheshire YJS is in line with the new Victims and Prisoners Act is a priority for 2024-2025.



Figure 18. An example of where the victim suggested reparation by improving the local park

11.7 Serious violence, exploitation, and contextual safeguarding

This plan draws from and is closely aligned with the Cheshire SVS, which covers a 5-year period from 2024-2029, with annual reviews to reflect on progress against planned outcomes and update delivery plans against emerging trends.

YJS contributed data and insights to the production of a Strategic Needs Analysis (SNA), to inform the SVS and the Head of Service is a core member of the SV Duty Leadership Group. Cheshire has relatively low levels of SV so does not have the infrastructure of a Violence Reduction Unit (VRU). Lifting an approach from a large metropolitan city would be unlikely to deliver the same successes here so we have had to think differently about our approach. The SNA highlighted Domestic Abuse and Youth Intervention as two clear priority areas for reducing SV in Cheshire and revealed the extent to which SV affects children and young people. Amongst all forms of SV explored, children under 18 appear prominent amongst the victim and offender cohorts for possession of weapon offences and knife crime incidents.

Understandably, public concern about SV increases when people witness or experience it themselves – or when tragic events such as the murder of Brianna Ghey bring considerable media attention to it. Fear of knife crime and serious youth violence are also amplified by social media, with children being exposed to violent content that can distort their perceptions of safety in public spaces. Table 3 below shows in 2023, 28 serious violent offences were committed in Cheshire by children (convicted by the courts). This is a decrease of 19 from 2022 and the rate of serious youth violence (per 10,000 children) was only 2.7 for Cheshire in 2023 (less than 2022 and below both regional and national averages).

Table 3. Serious violence offences committed by children in Cheshire compared regionally and nationally

	Year ending December 2023							
	2020		2021		2022		2023	
	Number of SV offences	Rate of SV offences	Number of SV offences	Rate of SV offences	Number of SV offences	Rate of SV offences	Number of SV offences	Rate of SV offences
YJS region								
Cheshire East, Cheshire West, Halton and Warrington	58	5.9	32	3.2	47	4.5	28	2.7
North West	409	6.0	291	4.1	302	4.2	341	4.7
East Midlands	220	4.9	207	4.6	193	4.2	194	4.1
Eastern	327	5.5	348	5.8	316	5.2	369	6.0
London	1,143	13.8	1,030	12.4	868	10.4	859	10.5
North East	65	2.7	32	1.3	88	3.6	114	4.6
South East	366	4.5	307	3.8	283	3.6	321	4.1
South West	151	3.0	102	2.0	143	2.8	170	3.3
Wales	73	2.6	60	2.1	64	2.2	94	3.2
West Midlands	451	7.8	315	5.4	386	6.5	352	5.8
Yorkshire	259	5.0	250	4.8	263	5.0	255	4.9
England and Wales	3,464	6.3	2,942	3.9	2,906	5.2	3,069	5.5

The data in Figure 19 relates to numbers of arrests for knife crime across Cheshire. It confirms that while the number of children arrested for carrying or using knives increased slightly in 2022, it reduced in 2023 and have remained at broadly low levels for the last 5 years. Apart from two profoundly serious events with tragic outcomes, Cheshire has not seen the significant and sustained increase in knife crime experienced elsewhere in the country.



Volumes of youth knife crime have dropped in the current financial year, following a brief peak in 2022/23

Figure 19. Overall trend of knives and bladed items 2019-March 2024

Chart reproduced with permission from Cheshire Constabulary

The comprehensive needs analysis that informed the Cheshire SVS showed 73% of youth justice children had convictions for violent offences, but also revealed a similar proportion of these children had themselves experienced violent victimisation *prior* to the onset of their own offending. Violence breeds violence and needs to be 'treated' in a similar way to transmittable diseases, which is why the Cheshire SVS has adopted a public health approach.

Contextual safeguarding partnerships are established at place and the YJS is an integral partner of these arrangements in all four areas. Good partnership and intelligence sharing with police (including cross border with Merseyside in particular, which is the major 'exporter' of county lines into Cheshire) ensures the National Referral Mechanism is applied appropriately. There have been several cross-force-operational examples of sensitively managed police investigations to tackle organised crime and protect Cheshire children, who have been exploited to supply drugs for high tier Merseyside OCGs.

YJS managers will continue to contribute to the design and delivery of multi-agency, contextual safeguarding training at place, particularly in relation to child criminal exploitation. Specialist independent experts in county-lines such as St Giles Trust via the joint Cheshire and Merseyside consortium training group have been commissioned. YJS also participates in safeguarding audits, rapid reviews, and independently chaired learning reviews when necessary.

11.8 Detention in police custody

Figure 20 shows the numbers of children detained overnight are extremely low and equates to fewer than five children per month across the three custody suites. This is typically fewer than 4% of children arrested by Cheshire police each month.

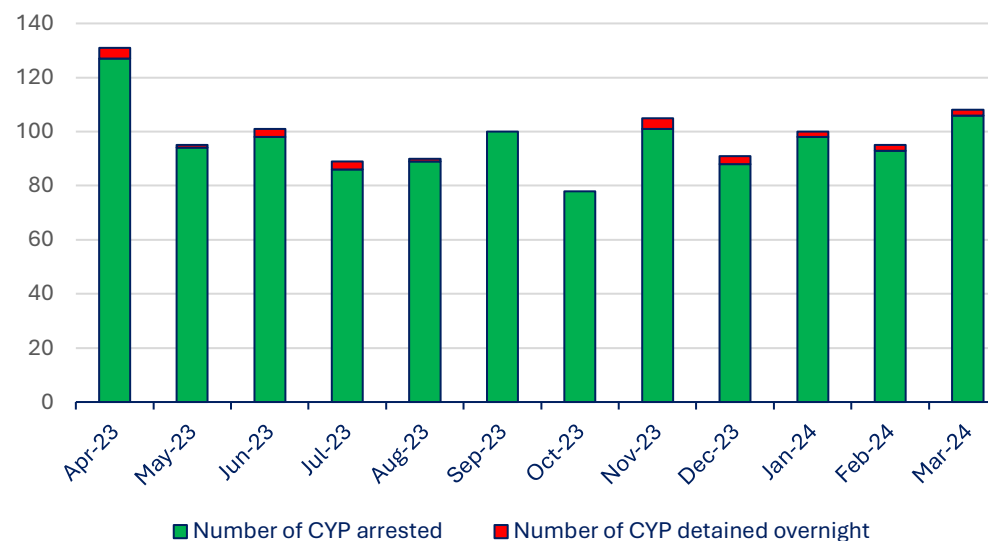


Figure 20. Numbers of children detained overnight in Cheshire compared to number of arrests from April 2023-March 2024

The low and unpredictable demand on local authorities for emergency Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) beds means they have not always been available when required, so occasionally children are detained in police custody as a last resort. Overnight detentions in custody will continue to be a standing agenda item for scrutiny at the YJS Management Board and as a partnership, we are taking decisive action. From 2024, Directors of Children's Services will receive a notification every time a child from their area is detained overnight due to an alternative PACE bed not being available. The police representative on the YJS Management Board is also the senior accountable officer for police on all four children's safeguarding partnerships and has formally raised the paucity of PACE beds at executive partnership Boards. Cheshire and Merseyside Commissioners will be exploring shared PACE beds as part of the Commissioning Workstreams for both Fostering and Residential as there is a lack of sufficiency in both areas. Consideration is being given to Residential and other Safe Spaces, but Foster Care is the preferred option. Whilst numbers of children detained

are low for each individual local authority, collectively a solution could be viable. This workstream is led by a commissioning manager in St Helens Council on behalf of the Cheshire and Merseyside local authority Directors of Children's Services.

11.9 Remands

There were only seven children in total across Cheshire remanded to Youth Detention Accommodation in 2023-2024 (Figure 21). All remands were for serious offences where a community alternative to remand was not viable. Four of the seven remanded were charged with murder or attempted murder and the remainder for section 18 wounding with intent and possession with intent to supply class A drugs. The child remanded for drug offences had an extensive history of offending and several periods in secure welfare placements previously. He had offended while remanded into local authority care and presented a significant risk of harm to other cared for children he had 'introduced' to organised crime.

Cheshire YJS retains the confidence of the courts by ensuring children are assessed promptly for robust packages of bail support as an alternative to remand. We have a proactive partnership with local children's social care and policing regarding remands into local authority care, but, as mentioned in Section 11.8, options are constrained by the paucity of safe, suitable accommodation where risk (to victim or wider public) and the child's own complex needs can be adequately managed. Placement sufficiency for local authorities is a national issue that the Association of Directors of Children's Services and others are very vocal on because accommodation for children facing serious criminal charges is an added complexity (and cost).

Through the current national framework for remands, the MOJ provides local authorities with a small financial contribution toward the costs of remands (Table 4). The allocation is based on historical bed night data*. A consultation on the funding of remands to youth detention accommodation was published in early 2024 and Cheshire YJS responded on behalf of the partnership, highlighting Cheshire's low remand number. Table 4 shows the uncontrollable costs incurred by Cheshire local authorities (particularly for Warrington) due to CJS timescales. Local authorities have no control over length of time from initial charge through to conclusion of trial and a fundamental review and fairer funding formula for remands is required.

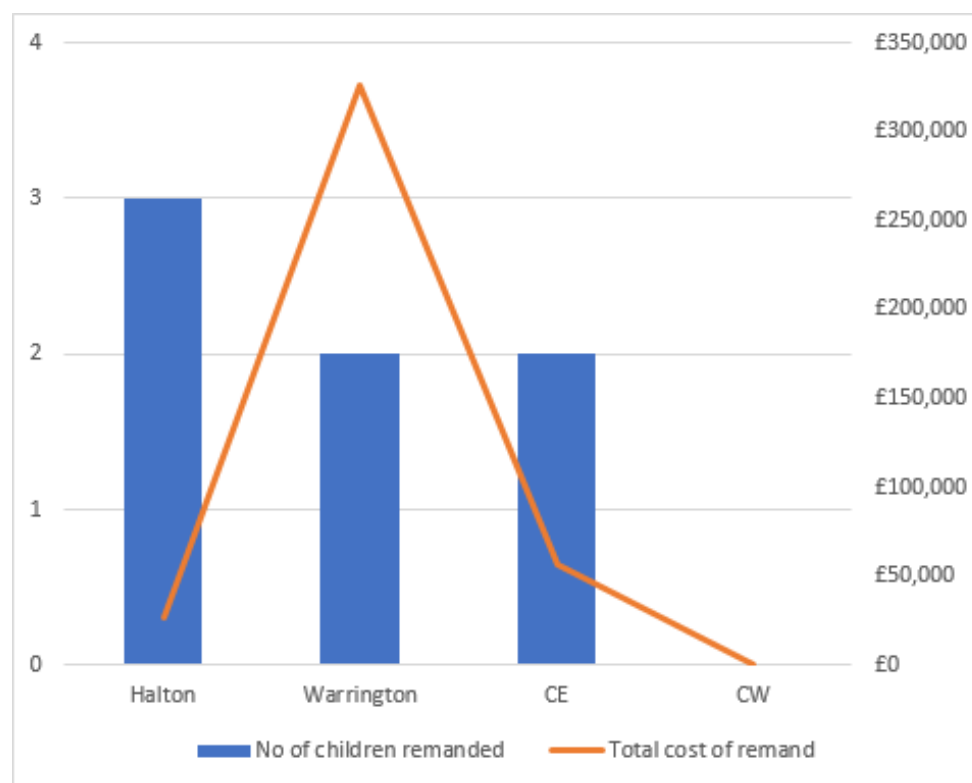


Figure 21. Number of children remanded in Cheshire 2023-2024

Table 4. Remand allocation from the MoJ for Cheshire East, Cheshire West, Halton and Warrington 2023-2024

Local Authority RIC	2023/24 Budget*	2023/24 Actual Spend	2023/24 Remaining/Deficit
Cheshire East	£107,483	£56,088	£51,395
Cheshire West	£18,859	£0	£18,859
Halton	£0	£26,896	-£26,896
Warrington	£11,740	£326,230	-£314,490
Total for YJS	£138,082	£409,214	-£271,132

Table 5 shows the number of bed nights children were remanded into local authority accommodation as a direct alternative to custody (note this is only for those children who were charged with offences that met the secure remand criteria).

The MOJ has committed to producing a national concordat relating to youth remands and is encouraging local Youth Justice partnerships to sign up to it. When the concordat is published, the Head of Service will ensure it is tabled at the YJS Management Board for consideration.

Table 5. Number of bed nights by local authority 2023/2024

Remand to local authority accommodation	2023/24 Bed Nights
Cheshire East	14
Cheshire West	0
Halton	122
Warrington	0
Total Cheshire wide for YJS	136

11.10 Use of custody and constructive resettlement

The number of children in Cheshire who receive a custodial sentence is low, with typically fewer than 10 children across the whole of the county serving custodial sentences at any one time. Use of custody is rightly reserved for those children who have committed serious crimes, usually for serious violent or sexual offences.

Table 6 shows in 2023-2024, custodial sentences were imposed on nine children from Cheshire ranging from four months to 23 years. The 23-year sentence being imposed on the 16-year-old Warrington child sentenced for murder.

All children released from custody before reaching 18 have individual resettlement plans in line with the principles of constructive resettlement. The low number in Cheshire means we do not have a specialist resettlement team but our children do benefit from the continuity of multi-disciplinary support (YJS worker plus health and education professionals) that follows them from court, through their time in custody and after release.

Table 6. Number and duration of custodial sentences imposed on Cheshire children in 2023-2024

Local Authority	Young Offenders Institute	Detention Training Order	Section 250	Section 259
Cheshire East	0	4 Months	27 Months (2yrs 3m) 50 Months (4yrs 2m)	0
Cheshire West	30 Months (2yrs 6m)	0	40 Months (3yrs 3m)	0
Halton	0	8 Months 12 Months	0	0
Warrington	0	0	54 Months (4yrs 6m)	276 Months (23 yrs)
Total for YJS	30 Months (2yrs 6m) (1 child)	24 Months (3 children)	171 Months (14yrs 3m) (4 children)	276 Months (23 yrs) (1 child)

11.11 Working with families



Frontline practitioners are encouraged to adopt a whole family approach in their work. Where relevant and appropriate, practitioners work collaboratively with Early Help, Social Care and other locality-based services to ensure that caregivers have access to help and support where this is needed.

As a service, we are committed to promoting this approach within practice and will be reviewing opportunities to strengthen this area over the coming years.

Caregivers are also a key strand in our work to develop participation.

To have such a breakthrough is really empowering and showcases the benefits of joint working with the family!!
(Social Worker)

“I didn't know what to expect. I felt like we was going to be judged because of what's happened. But that's not what they've been about. Everybody has been fantastic. What's been a really awful experience personally for us, the help and support that's there and things that they've done has been amazing”
(Parent)

Sign off, submission and approval		
Helen Brackenbury Chair of YJS Board Director of Children’s Social Care Cheshire West and Chester Council		27 June 2024
Tom Dooks YJS Head of Service		27 June 2024

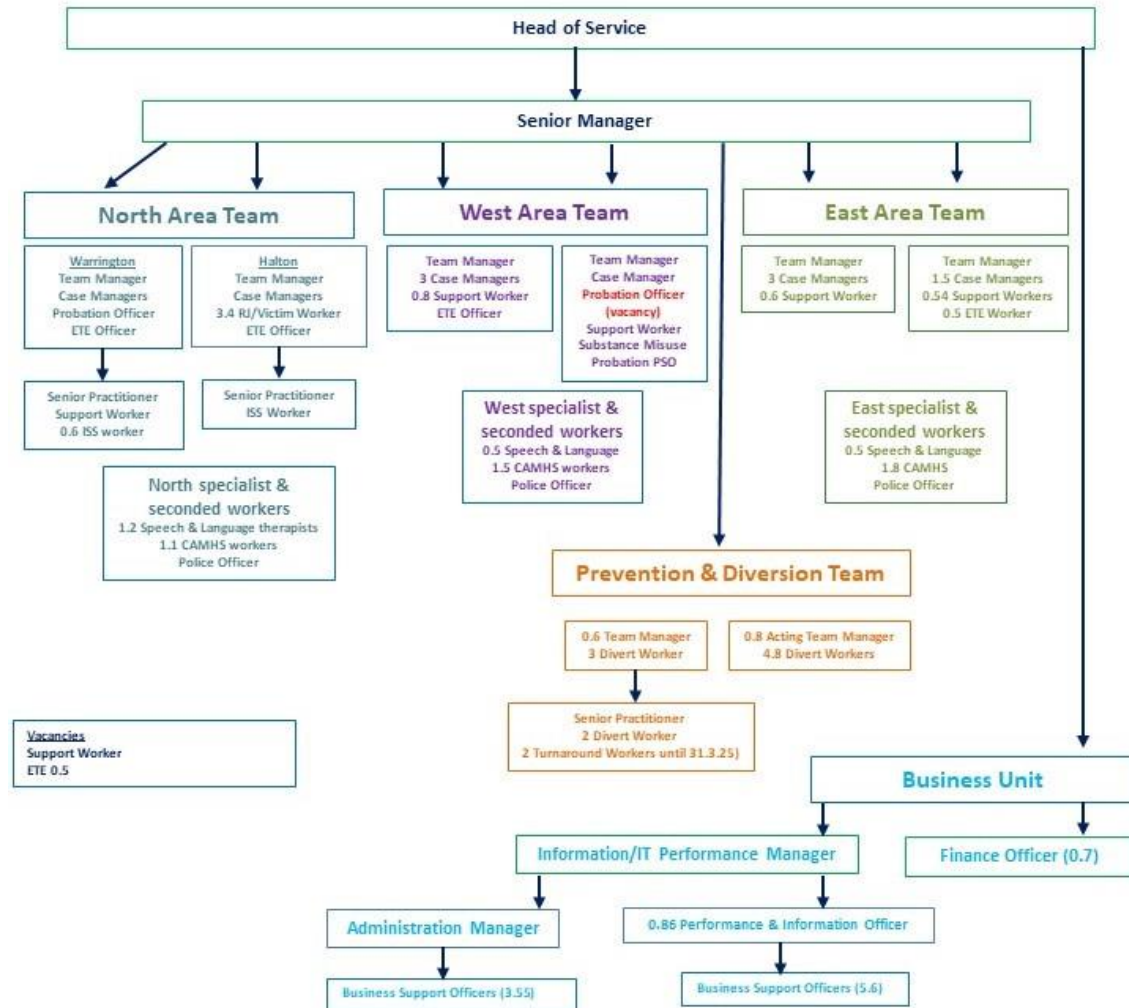
Appendices

Appendix A1: Key Performance Indicators (YJB data)

KPI	Explanation	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
KPI 1 – Accommodation	% of children in the community and being released from custody with suitable accommodation arrangements	100% (48/48)	100% (66/66)	98.9% (93/94)	100% (87/87)
KPI 2 – Education, Training & Employment	% of children in the community and being released from custody attending a suitable ETE arrangement	81.3% (39/48)	75.8% (50/66)	84% (79/74)	68.6% (67/87)
KPI 3 – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities /Additional Learning Needs	% of children who have an identified SEND need (or Additional Learning Need in Wales), are in suitable ETE and have a formal learning plan in place for the current academic year	100% (8/8)	90% (9/10)	92.9% (13/14)	78.6% (13/14)
KPI 4 – Mental healthcare and emotional wellbeing	% of children in the community and being released from custody with a screened OR identified need for an intervention to improve mental health or emotional wellbeing; and of that the % of planned/offered interventions; of that % of children attending interventions.	81.2% (36/48) Screened 55.5% (20/36) Offered 65% (13/20) Attended	51.5% (34/60) Screened 67.6% (23/34) Offered 78.2% (18/23) Attended	48.9% (46/94) Screened 65.2% (30/46) Offered 70% (21/30) Attended	67.8% (59/87) Screened 72.8% (43/59) Offered 93% (40/43) Attended
KPI 5 – Substance misuse	% of children with a screened OR identified need for specialist treatment/intervention to address substance misuse; and of that the % of children with planned or offered intervention/treatment; and of that the % number of children attending intervention/treatment.	16.6% (8/48) Screened 87.5% (7/8) Offered 100% (7/7) Attended	27.2% (18/66) Screened 77.7% (14/18) Offered 85.7% (12/14) Attended	43.1% (14/94) Screened 71.4% (10/14) Offered 100% (10/10) Attended	22.9% (20/87) Screened 75% (15/20) Offered 100% (15/15) Attended

KPI	Explanation	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
KPI 6 – Out of Court Disposals (OOCs)	% of OOC disposal interventions that are completed/not completed.	91.7% (11/12)	90.6% (29/32)	98.2% (56/57)	95.8% (46/48)
KPI 7 – Management board attendance	Monitoring senior partner representation at management boards and monitoring if partners contribute data from their individual services that identify areas of racial and ethnic disproportionality.	5/5	2/5	3/5	5/5
KPI 8 – Wider services	% children who are currently on either an Early Help (EH) plan; on a child protection (CP) plan or classified as Child in need (CIN) or a looked after child (LAC).	31.3% (15/48)	57.6% (38/66)	48.9% (46/94)	50.6% (44/87)
KPI 9 – Serious youth violence	Proportion of children convicted for SYV on the YOT Children.	3.4% (7/206)	7.8% (16/205)	6% (11/182)	4.4% (8/181)
KPI 10 – Victims	Number of victims who consent to be contact by the YOT, and of those, the number of victims: engaged with about Restorative Justice opportunities; asked their view prior to OOC decision-making and planning for statutory court orders; provided information about the progress of the child's case (when requested) and provided with information on appropriate services that support victims (when requested).	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC

Appendix A2. YJS Organisational Structure



Appendix B1: YJS Budget, Costs and Contributions

Agency	Staffing Costs	Payments in kind	Other delegated funds	Total
Youth Justice Board			*1,248,480	1,248,480
Local Authority	49,022	697,599	*1,651,138	2,397,759
Police	184,905			184,905
Police Crime Commissioner			217,928	217,928
Probation	144,638		15,500	160,138
Health	336,689		20,594	357,283
Other			2,500	2,500
Total	715,254	697,599	3,156,140	4,568,993

* Exact contributions may be subject to change

**Appendix B2: Staffing of the YJS by contract type;
No. of full-time equivalent staff**

Type of Contract	Strategic Manager	Operational Manager	Practitioner	Admin	TOTAL
Permanent	2	6.51	37.2	11.83	57.54
Fixed-term		0.8	3.54	1	5.34
Vacant			3		3
Seconded Probation			2		2
Seconded Police			3		3
Seconded Health (Substance Misuse)			0.2		0.2
Seconded Health (Mental Health)			3.9		3.9
Seconded Health (Speech/ language)			2.4		2.4
Total	2	7.31	55.24	12.83	77.38
Disabled (self-classified)	0	0	0	0	0

Appendix B3: Staffing of the YJS by sex and ethnicity; No. of individual people

Ethnicity	Managers Strategic		Managers Operational		Practitioners		Administrative		Referral Order Panel Volunteer		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Asian											0	0
Black						1					0	1
Mixed		1						2	1		2	2
White	1		1	7	5	38		14	9	35	16	94
Any other ethnic group											0	0
Not known											0	0
Total	1	1	1	7	5	39	0	16	10	35	18	97



Dan Price
Police & Crime
Commissioner
for Cheshire

**Probation
Service**



Cheshire and Merseyside



**Cheshire West
and Chester**



WARRINGTON
Borough Council

OPEN

Council

16 October 2024

Supplementary Revenue Estimates (First Financial Review 2024/25)

Report of: Adele Taylor, Interim Director of Finance and Customer Services (s151 Officer)

Report Reference No: C/11/24-25

Ward(s) Affected: Not Applicable

Purpose of Report

- 1 This report seeks approval from Council for supplementary revenue estimates as part of the forecast outturn reporting for the financial year 2024/25. These items were noted by the Finance Sub Committee on 12th September 2024.
- 2 The report supports the Council's vision to be an open Council as set out in the Cheshire East Council Plan 2024-25. In particular, the priorities for being an open and enabling organisation, and ensuring that there is transparency in all aspects of Council decision making.

Executive Summary

- 3 Council is being asked to approve increased expenditure related to six fully funded supplementary revenue estimates. The transactions form a part of the [First Financial Review 2024/25 report](#) presented to Finance Sub Committee on 12th September 2024.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Council is recommended to:

1. Approve the fully funded Supplementary Revenue Estimates over £1,000,000 as detailed in **Appendix 1**

Background

- 4 The budget and policy framework sets out rules for managing the Council's financial affairs and contains the financial limits that apply in various parts of the Constitution. As part of sound financial management and to comply with the Constitution any changes to the budgets agreed by Council in the MTFS require approval in line with the financial limits within the Finance Procedure Rules.

Consultation and Engagement

- 5 As part of the budget setting process the Pre-Budget Consultation provided an opportunity for interested parties to review and comment on the Council's Budget proposals. The budget proposals described in the consultation document were Council-wide proposals and that consultation was invited on the broad budget proposals. Where the implications of individual proposals were much wider for individuals affected by each proposal, further full and proper consultation was undertaken with people who would potentially be affected by individual budget proposals.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 6 The overall process for managing the Council's resources focuses on value for money, good governance and stewardship. The budget and policy framework sets out rules for managing the Council's financial affairs and contains the financial limits that apply in various parts of the Constitution. As part of sound financial management and to comply with the constitution any changes to the budgets agreed by Council in the MTFS require approval in line with the financial limits within the Finance Procedure Rules.
- 7 This report provides strong links between the Council's statutory reporting requirements and the in-year monitoring processes for financial and non-financial management of resources.

Other Options Considered

- 8 Not applicable.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 9 The requirement for Council to approve the supplementary revenue estimates referred to above is in accordance with the Finance Procedure Rules in the Constitution.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 10 The Council's financial resources are agreed by Council and aligned to the achievement of stated outcomes for local residents and communities. Monitoring and managing performance helps to ensure that resources are used effectively, and that business planning and financial decision making are made in the right context.
- 11 The requirement for Council to approve the supplementary revenue estimates referred to above is in accordance with the Finance Procedure Rules.

Policy

- 12 Financial management supports delivery of all Council policies. The 2024/25 outturn position, ongoing considerations for future years, and the impact on general reserves will be fed into the assumptions underpinning the 2025 to 2029 Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 16 Any equality implications that arise from activities funded by the budgets that this report deals with will be covered within the individual reports to Members or Officer Decision Records to which they relate.

Human Resources

- 17 Any HR implications that arise from activities funded by the budgets that this report deals with will be covered within the individual reports to Members or Officer Decision Records to which they relate.

Risk Management

- 18 Financial risks are assessed and reported on a regular basis, and remedial action taken if required. Risks associated with the achievement of the 2024/25 budget and the level of general reserves were factored into the 2025/26 financial scenario, budget, and reserves strategy.

Rural Communities

- 19 The report provides details of service provision across the borough.

Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

- 20 The report includes expenditure relating to grant funding in respect to services to children and young people.

Public Health

- 21 Public health implications that arise from activities that this report deals with will be covered within separate reports to Members or Officer Decision Records as required.

Climate Change

- 22 Climate change implications that arise from activities that this report deals with will be covered within separate reports to Members or Officer Decision Records as required.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Adele Taylor, Interim Director of Finance and Customer Services (s151 Officer) adele.taylor@cheshireeast.gov.uk Paul Goodwin, Head of Finance & Deputy Chief Finance Officer paul.goodwin@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Supplementary Revenue Estimates
Background Papers:	The following are links to key background documents: First Financial Review 2024/25 report Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2024-2028

Appendix 1: Supplementary Revenue Estimates

Table 1 – Council Decision

Supplementary Revenue Estimate Requests for Allocation of Additional Grant Funding (Specific Purpose) over £1,000,000

Committee	Type of Grant	£000	Details
Children and Families – Schools	Teachers Pay Additional Grant (Specific Purpose)	1,645	This grant is from the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). In July 2023, alongside the increase for last financial year, an additional £900 million was announced in 2024 to 2025 to support schools with the 2023 teachers' pay award. The ESFA will pay the teachers' pay additional grant (TPAG) funding to local authorities for mainstream maintained schools.
Children and Families – Schools	Teachers Pension Grant (Specific Purpose)	2,393	This grant is from the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). The Teachers' Pension Employer Contribution Grant (TPECG) supports schools and local authorities with the cost of the increase in employer contributions to the teachers' pension scheme. Local authorities must follow the terms and conditions set out in the conditions of grant.
Children and Families – Children's Services	Household Support Fund (Specific Purpose)	2,200	This grant is from the Department for Work and Pensions. This is an extension to the Household Support Fund (HSF) and will cover the period from April 2024 to September 2024. The HSF is to provide crisis support to financially vulnerable households most in need.
Economy and Growth	Homelessness Prevention Grant (Specific Purpose)	1,054	<p>This grant is from the Department for Levelling-Up and Communities (DLUHC). The purpose of the grant is to provide support to local authorities in England towards expenditure lawfully incurred or to be incurred by them in supporting local authorities to discharge their homelessness duties under homelessness legislation. The grant is ring-fenced for 2023-2024 and is to be spent in adherence with the following principles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To fully enforce the Homelessness Reduction Act and contribute to ending rough sleeping by increasing activity to prevent single homelessness. 2. Reduce family temporary accommodation numbers through maximising family homelessness prevention and reduce the use of unsuitable B&Bs for families. <p>This grant is from the Home Office (HO). Available where an individual or family has settled in the borough, to provide ongoing integration support.</p>

Committee	Type of Grant	£000	Details
Highways and Transport	Bus Service Improvement Plan+ (BSIP+) Phase 2 (Specific Purpose)	1,188	This a grant from the Department for Transport DfT). This is a continuation of the Bus Service Improvement funding and allows Local Authorities to support existing bus services and/or create new services with the overall aim of ensuring long term sustainability of this provision.This is the second phase of allocations.
Highways and Transport	Bus Service Improvement Plan+ (BSIP+) Phase 3 (Specific Purpose)	2,268	This a grant from the Department for Transport DfT). This is a continuation of the Bus Service Improvement funding and allows Local Authorities to support existing bus services and/or create new services with the overall aim of ensuring long term sustainability of this provision.This is the third phase of allocations.

COUNCIL – 16 OCTOBER 2024**NOTICES OF MOTION****Submitted to Council in Accordance with the Council Procedural Rules****1 Winter Fuel Allowance****Proposed by Councillor A Kolker and Seconded by Councillor A Gage**

This Council is dismayed at the Labour Government's recent decision, in the absence of a full impact assessment, to restrict the Winter Fuel Payment to only those pensioners in receipt of Pension Credit or similar benefit, with immediate effect this winter.

This means that many vulnerable Cheshire East pensioners this year, will lose between £200 and £300 that they have relied upon to keep their homes warm and hot food prepared.

Nationally, Age UK has identified that up to two million pensioners who badly need this money, will now not receive it.

In addition, as many as 800,000 pensioners who are eligible for Pension Credit, do not claim it and will therefore remain ineligible for the Winter Fuel Allowance.

As elected members, we have already received letters of concern from affected, older residents, including, for example, a petition from fifty members of the Congleton Widows Group.

Vulnerable Cheshire East Pensioners on limited means, but either not claiming Pension Credit or with incomes just above the Pension Credit threshold, will face desperate choices this winter; to "heat or eat" - decisions that pose a significant threat to health and life.

This Council therefore resolves:

- That Group Leaders write jointly to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, expressing this Council's deep concerns regarding the impact of this decision on Cheshire East's most vulnerable residents and asking that the Winter Fuel Allowance is reinstated with immediate effect. This to remain in place, pending the results of a full impact assessment and the evaluation of an alternative scheme that will protect the most vulnerable and middle-income pensioners at risk during Winter months.
- To bring forward a refreshed Council-led, local awareness campaign, via digital, targeted mail and via related services and venues (for example; GP surgeries, Community facilities, places of worship), to support all those eligible, to apply for Pension Credit, before 21st December 2024. This date is critical if they are to register for Winter Fuel Allowance this Winter and so avoid fuel poverty.

- That the Leader and Deputy Leader of Council write to all Members of Parliament representing Cheshire East constituencies, explaining this Council's concerns and to request their support in raising them in Westminster, on behalf of Cheshire East's most vulnerable pensioners

[Age UK responds to the Chancellor's announcement to means test the Winter Fuel Payment.](#)

2 Council's Governance Framework

Proposer by Councillor J Clowes and Seconded by Councillor S Gardiner

This Council notes the concerns raised in the LGA Peer Challenge Report (March 2024), related to the Council's systems of governance and specifically highlighted in:

Recommendation 8: Urgently review the Council's decision-making framework: The Council needs to streamline current decision-making arrangements to avoid siloed working across committees, ensure that Committees are working through effective work programmes, and reduce confusion and lost capacity caused by the current system.

This Council recognises that changes to the committee system are necessary to address this recommendation and related issues, as highlighted in the report.

It is therefore proposed that this Council gives authority to the Constitution Working Group to:

1. Consider and recommend to Corporate Policy Committee, no later than 31 March 2025, those modifications to the committee system that will address, at pace, the issues of financial management and governance as raised in the LGA Peer Challenge Report; and
2. Consider and recommend to Corporate Policy Committee, no later than 30th September 2025, potential substantive changes to the Council's Governance Framework, that will facilitate improved capacity and effectiveness throughout the longer-term period of transformation.

[LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Final Report 2021 \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](#)

3 The Council's Governance Arrangements

Proposed by Councillor N Mannion

At the Council's Annual General Meeting on 22 May 2019, Council resolved to express its commitment to implementing a change of its decision-making governance arrangements, comprising the cessation of the Leader and Cabinet model of governance, and the implementation of a full committee model of governance.

Following much preparatory work, on 19 November 2020, Council resolved amongst other things, to cease operating the Leader and Cabinet model of governance, and to implement a committee system model of governance, this to take effect from the Annual Council Meeting on 12 May 2021. Since then, the Council has operated committee system arrangements.

The committee system has now been in operation for over three years, and it is appropriate and timely for members to consider the benefits or otherwise of this system of governance.

Between 24-28 March 2024, the Local Government Association undertook a Corporate Peer Challenge of the Council, which concentrated upon a number of issues, including the Council's governance arrangements.

The LGA's report included observations and comments upon the Council's governance arrangements, together with a recommendation, which are set out in the Appendix to this Notice of Motion.

Notice of Motion

Council calls for a full report to be prepared and presented to the Corporate Policy Committee on or before 6 February 2025, which will:

- Include information from Members of their experience of the current committee system.
- Set out details of how any change in the Council's governance arrangements might be made, the implications of such a change, and the timescale within which such a change might be implemented.
- Provide details upon any other pertinent matters, such as financial implications and the potential impact of such a change upon the speed and effectiveness of decision-making.

[LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Final Report 2021 \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](https://cheshireeast.gov.uk)

4 Broadcasting and Recording Equipment

Proposed by Councillor L Wardlaw and Seconded by Councillor R Chadwick

Will this Council commit to improving its broadcasting and recording equipment in the interest of openness, fairness and a wider access to democracy.

It is now over a year since Cheshire East Council has been made aware of the poor sound quality of its broadcasts and recordings, and yet the problem remains unresolved. The recurrent failure of its' live broadcasting and the delays in recordings being available is unacceptable. We have made a commitment to deliver this service to our residents, but we fail at every meeting held. The situation is anti-democratic, unprofessional, and unacceptable.

Democracy is not well served when it cannot be easily accessed. The current service is inadequate. An improved offer is needed and I ask that this be considered as a priority.

5 Agreed Framework for Delivery of Services at a Local Level

Proposed by Councillor M Gorman and Seconded by Councillor K Edwards

The Council is about to embark on the devolution journey.

It is also entering a new realm of co-operation with our Parish and Town Councils, where increased co-operation and shared working needs to be explored in a planned and systematic way to secure the ongoing provision of services at local level in a co-operative partnership.

We therefore urge that as part of the Council's Transformation Programme Cheshire East Council approaches our local town and parish council partners to discuss developing an agreed framework to support the delivery of appropriate services at the local level. There are already good examples of such partnership arrangements in place in parts of Cheshire East.

Such a framework should have at its heart a balanced and equitable relationship, for the benefit of both councils and of local residents.

Schedule of Urgent Decisions Made by the Chief Executive following consultation with Members

Date	Summary of decision	Decision on behalf of
30/7/2024	<p>Relocation of the Archives and Local Studies Service from Chester to Crewe</p> <p>Decision</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acceptance of the grant increase of £1.95m from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for the 'Cheshire's Archives: a story shared' project. 2. Approval of an increase to the capital expenditure budget of £294,000 to be funded from capital receipts from the sale of the premises in Chester. 	Council
12/9/2024	<p>Appointment of Interim Director of Governance and Compliance and Interim Monitoring Officer</p> <p>Decision</p> <p>That, with immediate effect, Janet Witkowski (currently Head of Legal Services) be appointed as the Council's Interim Director of Governance and Compliance and Interim Monitoring Officer, at the same salary grade as would apply to a permanent appointee, pending a permanent appointment and until such time as a permanent appointee takes up the roles, and shall have all of the powers of the Director of Governance and Compliance under the Council's Constitution, and the statutory powers of the Monitoring Officer under Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.</p>	Council

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 1, 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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