

Corporate Policy Committee

Agenda

Date:	Thursday, 13th June, 2024
Time:	10.00 am
Venue:	Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

The agenda is divided into 2 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 will be uploaded to the Council's website

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

1. **Apologies for Absence**

To note any apologies for absence from Members.

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 - 12)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 March 2024.

For requests for further information

Contact: Nikki Bishop, Democratic Services Officer

Tel: 01270 686462

E-Mail: nikki.bishop@cheshireeast.gov.uk

4. **Public Speaking/Open Session**

In accordance with paragraph 2.24 of the Committee Procedure Rules and Appendix on Public Speaking, set out in the [Constitution](#), a total period of 15 minutes is allocated for members of the public to put questions to the Committee on any matter relating to this agenda. Each member of the public will be allowed up to two minutes to speak; the Chair will have discretion to vary this 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.

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.

5. **Cheshire East Plan 2024-25** (Pages 13 - 46)

To receive an update on the Cheshire East Council Corporate Plan 2021-25 for the year 2024/25.

6. **Devolution - Update and Next Steps** (Pages 47 - 60)

To receive an update on Devolution and consider next steps.

7. **Annual Complaints and Compliments Report 2023-24** (Pages 61 - 128)

To receive an update on complaints, compliments, and customer contact for 2023-24.

8. **Final Outturn 2023/24** (Pages 129 - 146)

To receive a report on the final outturn for Corporate Services for the financial year 2023/24.

9. **Performance Report – Q4 2023/24** (Pages 147 - 202)

To consider the report which sets out organisational performance against the priorities and vision set out within the Council's Corporate Plan 2021-25.

10. **Service Budgets 2024/25 (Corporate Policy Committee)** (Pages 203 - 228)

To receive the report setting out the allocation of the approved budgets for 2024/25 to the Corporate Policy Committee.

11. **Appointments to Sub-Committees, Working Groups, Panels, Boards and Joint Committees** (Pages 229 - 254)

To consider a report on appointments to sub-committees, working groups, panels, boards and joint committees for the 2024-25 municipal year.

12. **Work Programme** (Pages 255 - 258)

To consider the Work Programme and determine any required amendments.

13. **Minutes of Sub-Committees** (Pages 259 - 266)

To receive the minutes of the Finance Sub-Committee meeting held on 22 March 2024.

14. **Reporting of Urgent Decisions** (Pages 267 - 270)

To note the urgent decision taken by the Chief Executive on behalf of the Committee.

15. **Strategic Risk Register Assurance Report Q4 2023-24** (Pages 271 - 322)

To consider an update on the activity of the Council's Strategic Risk Register for Quarter 3 2023/24.

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

The reports relating to the remaining items on the agenda have 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 items 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

17. **Strategic Risk Register Assurance Report Q4 2023-24** (Pages 323 - 340)

To consider part of the Strategic Risk Register report relating to ANSA, Orbitas and Tatton Park Enterprises.

Membership: Councillors C Bulman, D Clark, J Clowes, S Corcoran (Chair), M Goldsmith, M Gorman (Vice-Chair), A Harrison, N Mannion, C O'Leary, J Pearson, J Rhodes, J Saunders and M Warren

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CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Corporate Policy Committee**
held on Thursday, 21st March, 2024 in Committee Suite 1, 2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor S Corcoran (Chair)
Councillor M Gorman (Vice-Chair)

Councillors C Bulman, D Clark, J Clowes, M Goldsmith, A Harrison,
C O'Leary, J Pearson, J Rhodes, M Warren, L Crane (for Cllr Mannion) and
L Wardlaw (for Cllr Saunders)

OFFICERS

David Brown, Director of Governance and Compliance
Alex Thompson, Director of Finance and Customer Services
Paul Mountford, Democratic Services
Janet Witkowski, Head of Legal Services
Brian Reed, Head of Democratic Services and Governance
Phil Christian, Acting Head of Business Change
Michael Todd, Acting Internal Audit Manager

APOLOGIES

Councillors N Mannion and J Saunders

91 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

92 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 13th February 2024 be approved
as a correct record.

93 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

There were no public speakers.

**94 OFFICER BOARDS, PEER CHALLENGE AND DECISION-MAKING
REVIEW UPDATE**

The Committee considered a report which set out the preliminary activities
required to enable the development of the future transformation
programme: the creation and implementation of Council-wide officer
boards; a Local Government Association (LGA) review of decision-making
accountability; and an LGA peer challenge.

Prior to the meeting, a briefing note was circulated to members of the Committee which provided clarification of certain aspects of the recommendations in the report.

Officers confirmed that there would be opportunities for member involvement with, and scrutiny of, the outcomes of the reviews and the actions arising.

RESOLVED (by majority)

That

1. the Committee authorises the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair, to take all necessary steps to respond to any recommendation of the Decision-Making Accountability review, and the Committee notes the commencement of the Review;
2. the Committee authorises the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair, to take all necessary steps in preparation for the Peer Challenge and to take all necessary steps to respond to any recommendation of the Challenge, and the Committee notes the progress of the Council's submission to the Local Government Association; and
3. the Committee notes the creation and operation of the Officer Boards.

95 CHESHIRE EAST APPROACH TO TRANSFORMATION

The Committee considered a report which set out the proposed transformational approach the Council would take to deliver the Cheshire East Council Plan, support the Medium-Term Financial Strategy budget savings of £100m over the next 4 years, and implement the overarching Policy and Strategy Framework.

Officers gave a presentation on the transformation programme at the meeting.

The Chair commented that he would expect there to be extensive briefing of members on the progress of the transformation programme, with members being involved in any major changes. Any significant matters would be taken to the relevant scrutiny committee, with the Corporate Policy Committee having oversight of the process as a whole.

In response to questions from members, the Director of Finance and Customer Services advised that:

- Zero-based budgeting would be undertaken within specific service areas where this was judged to be appropriate. Benchmarking would

be undertaken to identify those areas which were potentially suitable for a zero-based budgeting approach.

- With regard to the overspend on Dedicated Schools Grant, the interest payments on the total deficit were factored into the forecast budget deficit but not the outstanding DSG deficit itself, which would continue to be treated separately. No assumptions were being made regarding the possible mitigation of the interest payments.

RESOLVED (unanimously)

That the Committee

1. approves the transformation approach for the Council;
2. delegates to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair, authority to take all necessary steps to implement a whole organisation transformation programme as outlined in sections 11-19, 24-30 of the report;
3. agrees that committee and all-member briefings be provided on progress against key milestones of the programme;
4. notes the S151 Officer's section 25 report which states that the Council must transform to create sustainable services;
5. notes the acceptance of the Exceptional Financial Support and recognises the conditions of that support, namely a transformation plan to be provided to DLUHC by 27th August 2024;
6. notes the acceptance of an LGA (Local Government Association) grant by the Chief Executive and Chief Financial Officer in accordance with the rules on Supplementary Revenue Estimates set out within the Council's constitution;
7. notes the progress to date on the formation of the transformation programme by the Chief Executive and approves the procurement of Phase 1 and Phase 2 required to facilitate the programme; and
8. notes the progress of the other activities that are underway that are needed in support of the transformation programme, which include the Decision-Making Accountability work and the LGA's Corporate Peer Challenge review.

96 REVIEW OF COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on progress with delivering the MTFS saving to reduce the cost of democracy, and which proposed a number of recommendations to Council to improve the future functionality of the committee system.

Members expressed support for the retention of the Scrutiny Committee.

It was felt that the chair of a committee should have discretion to allow a report for noting if they felt there was something about which the committee needed to be informed.

The Head of Democratic Services and Governance undertook to provide a written response to a question from members on how much of the planned budget savings of £135,000 in relation to the cost of Democracy had been achieved to date.

RESOLVED (unanimously)

That Council be recommended that

1. the Scrutiny Committee be retained;
2. the functions of the School Governor Nomination Panel be delegated to the Executive Director of Children and Families in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Children and Families Committee;
3. the Cared for Children and Care Leavers Committee remain in place;
4. the General Appeals Sub-Committee remain in place;
5. the General Licensing Sub-Committee and Licensing Act Sub-Committee be amalgamated to form one sub-committee;
6. normally, only Directors, Regulatory or Statutory Officers (as required by good practice) should attend committee meetings;
7. working Groups and Boards be supported by the relevant service area and not Democratic Services;
8. reports “for noting” should not normally be placed on agendas, unless there is a statutory requirement to do so, or where they relate to Performance Monitoring, Finance, Risk or LGO complaints. Instead, they be placed on the Members’ Bulletin, stored on the Councillors hub and made available to the public on the Council’s Open Data and Transparency Webpage; and
9. the Director of Governance and Compliance be empowered to make any necessary changes to the Constitution to reflect the resolutions of full Council.

97 PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Committee considered a report which proposed changes to the Constitution, as recommended by the Constitution Working Group, for

recommendation to Council, and reported certain other amendments made by the Monitoring Officer under delegated powers. The proposed changes related to notices of motion, committee terms of reference and delegations to the Executive Director Place.

RESOLVED (by majority)

That the Committee

1. recommends that Council approve:

- (a) the amendments to the provisions regarding notices of motion in Chapter 3 Part 1 Section 1 of the Council's Constitution as set out in paragraph 9 of the report.
- (b) the amendments to the provisions regarding rescission of earlier resolution in Chapter 3 Part 1 Section 1 of the Council's Constitution as set out in paragraph 9 of the report.
- (c) the amendments to committee terms of reference for matters that cover more than one committee in Chapter 2 Part 2 of the Council's Constitution as set out in paragraph 10 of the report.
- (d) the amendments to the Rules of Debate for Motions and Amendments in Chapter 3 Part 1 Section 1 of the Council's Constitution as set out in paragraph 11 of the report.
- (e) the amendments to the application of the 3 day rule for notices of motion of in Chapter 3 Part 1 Section 2 the Council's Constitution as set out in paragraph 12 of the report.

2. notes the proposed amendments to be made by the Monitoring Officer to the delegations to the Executive Director Place in Chapter 2 Part 5 of the Council's Constitution as set out in paragraph 13 of the report.

98 APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

The Committee considered appointments to a number of outside organisations from which Councillor Craig Browne was standing down.

RESOLVED (unanimously)

That

- 1 Councillor M Gorman be appointed as the Council's representative on Alderley Park Holdings Ltd;
- 2 Councillor M Gorman be appointed as the Council's representative on Transport for the North Partnership Board;

- 3 Councillor S Corcoran be nominated for the sub-regional representative on Transport for the North Rail Committee; and
- 4 Councillor M Warren be appointed as a Council's representative on the County Councils Network.

99 **COUNCIL NOMINATIONS TO THE BOARD OF PEAK AND PLAINS HOUSING TRUST**

The Committee considered a request from Peaks and Plains Housing Trust to remove the Council's opportunity to nominate a Member to sit on the Peaks and Plains Housing Trust Board.

RESOLVED (by majority)

That the Committee

1. approves the removal from the Stock Transfer Agreement dated 17th July 2006 of the clause giving Cheshire East Borough Council the opportunity to nominate a member to sit on the Board of Peaks and Plains Housing Trust, via a Deed of Variation; and
2. delegates authority to the Executive Director Place, in consultation with the Chair of the Corporate Policy Committee, to deal with other such requests from any remaining Stock Transfer Organisations.

100 **EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION - ANNUAL REVIEW**

The Committee considered an update on progress with the delivery of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021-2025.

Councillor J Clowes commented that Councillor S Gardiner as the Council's Diversity Champion had expressed the wish to be more actively involved with the Strategy in future.

RESOLVED (unanimously)

That the Committee

1. notes the progress in delivering the equality, diversity and inclusion strategy 2021-2025; and
2. notes that an updated Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy will be received following the update to the Cheshire East Plan.

101 **PERFORMANCE REPORT - Q3 2023/24**

The Committee considered a report which provided an oversight of organisational performance against the priorities and vision set out within the Council's Corporate Plan 2021-25.

In response to a question by members, the Acting Head of Business Change undertook to provide a written response on the following:

- An apparent discrepancy between paragraphs 15 and 16 of the report in relation to the number of staff vacancies, the response to include the whole numbers behind the percentages quoted in the report; and
- The cost per unit of installing new electric charging points.

Officers were also asked to consider bringing a report to a future meeting which focussed on staffing issues.

RESOLVED (by majority)

That the Committee notes the organisational performance in Q3 of 2023/24.

102 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee noted the items currently scheduled for its next meeting in June.

The Director of Governance and Compliance commented that, in light of discussions earlier in the meeting, items would be added to the work programme on transformation, staffing issues and MTFS savings proposals.

The work programme for 2024-25 would be presented for approval to the Committee's first meeting of the new municipal year.

RESOLVED

That the work programme be noted.

103 **MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the following sub-committee meetings be received and noted:

Finance Sub-Committee – 31st January 2024
General Appeals Sub-Committee – 5th March 2024

104 **STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER - ASSURANCE REPORT Q3
2023/24**

The Committee considered an update report on the activity of the Council's Strategic Risk Register for Quarter 3 2023/24. The report now included the equivalent level risk registers for the Council's wholly-owned companies: Orbitas, Tatton Park Enterprises and ANSA.

RESOLVED (by majority)

That the Committee notes the position with the Council's Strategic Risk Register, and those of the wholly-owned companies, for Quarter 3 2023/24 in respect of the content, description, scoring and risk management activity outlined.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 12.20 pm

Councillor S Corcoran (Chair)

OPEN

Corporate Policy Committee

13 June 2024

Cheshire East Plan 2024-25

Report of: Rob Polkinghorne, Chief Executive

Report Reference No: CPC/10/24-25

Ward(s) Affected: All wards

Purpose of Report

- 1 This report presents an update to the Cheshire East Council Corporate Plan 2021-25 for the year 2024/25.
- 2 Corporate Policy Committee are also asked to consider the development of a new strategic plan for the Council and the borough, to follow the current plan.

Executive Summary

- 3 The draft Cheshire East Plan 2024-25 presents an overview of work delivered in the first three years of the Corporate Plan 2021-25, and priority actions planned towards delivering the vision, aims and priorities of the Corporate Plan for the final 12 months of that plan's duration.
- 4 The new draft document is intended to provide a simpler view of the structure of the council's strategic vision, aims, priorities and priority actions. This provides a model we can follow in the design and development of future strategic plans.
- 5 The new draft document also takes into account the financial context in which the Council is now operating and the need for whole organisation transformation and improvement.
- 6 Should the committee, and the Council, approve the updated plan for the final year of the current Corporate Plan period (2021-2025), we can then continue to develop a new draft strategic plan for following period.

- 7 This may prompt further engagement activity, building on engagement activity undertaken over the last year, to inform and help shape the Council's strategic vision, aims and priorities for the future.
- 8 There is also the opportunity to develop and introduce a new strategic outcomes framework to support understanding about the organisation's work towards its strategic vision, aims and priorities for the period of the plan. This would also support day-to-day decision-making around prioritisation of activity and areas of focus.
- 9 There will also be opportunities to review how the council's vision, aims, strategic priorities and outcomes are built into various aspects of business and performance management and reporting.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corporate Policy Committee is recommended to:

1. Approve the development of a new strategic plan (corporate plan) for Cheshire East Council to follow the current plan.

The Corporate Policy Committee recommends to Full Council:

2. The Cheshire East Plan 2024-25 (Appendix 1).

Background

- 10 The Cheshire East Council Corporate Plan 2021-25 is the council's overarching strategic document, setting out the vision, aims and priorities for the council. The current plan was approved in February 2021 and covers the period April 2021 to March 2025. By setting out a clear set of commitments and actions, a corporate plan enables residents to hold the council to account for its performance and allows everyone to see the ambitions for the borough.
- 11 In February 2024 Corporate Policy Committee resolved that a new Cheshire East Plan would be finalised following the approval of Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2024-28 (MTFS).
- 12 The MTFS, approved by Council in February 2024, recognises the need for whole-organisation transformation in order to reduce expenditure and redesign services as quickly as possible forecasting the requirement for budget savings of £100m over the next 4 years.

- 13 The Council has also applied for exceptional financial support from central government. The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has approved, in principle, exceptional financial support in the form of a capitalisation direction up to the value of £17.6m. A condition of this support is that the Council submits a transformation plan to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) by August 2024.
- 14 In recent months, the Council has also been supported by a Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge. This review will result in a set of recommendations from the peer team, and the Council will develop an action plan to deliver against those recommendations.
- 15 The draft Cheshire East Plan 2024-25 and, subject to committee approval, the development of a new plan to follow, should be considered in the context of the Council's financial position and the organisational transformation and improvement work already underway and being developed through the transformation programme and corporate peer challenge.

Consultation and Engagement

- 16 Extensive engagement activity with a range of stakeholders, including general public, councillors, staff and partners was undertaken through 2023/24 to explore understanding of the Council's vision, aims and priorities, and to inform those priorities in future.
- 17 Should the committee approve development of a new strategic plan to follow the existing plan, further public and stakeholder engagement is advised to build on the findings of this earlier work.
- 18 Any engagement activity should seek to understand the expectations and priorities of the general population of the borough for the borough and for the Council itself, and how the priorities that are ultimately approved may impact on them. However, we should ensure that we effectively engage with seldom-heard populations in our communities, businesses and our partners, to establish a well-rounded view to inform the Council's vision, aims, priorities and outcomes for the borough for the next four years.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 19 It is being proposed that we provide a final year update to the existing Corporate Plan 2021-25, to provide greater clarity about the Council's vision, aims, priorities and priority activities for the final year of the plan in the context of the financial challenge and the required transformation

and improvement. It will also allow sufficient time to develop a new plan for the following period.

- 20 The new plan will work alongside both the MTFS and the Council transformation plan. Put simply, the new plan will set out what the Council is aiming to deliver for the borough (vision, aims, priorities and outcomes). The MTFS sets out how the council's financial resources will be allocated to deliver that vision. The transformation plan will set out how we will reshape the council and its operations to deliver the vision with the available resources.
- 21 Development of a new plan will provide the opportunity to review vision, aims and priorities and to consider the outcomes the council is working to deliver for the borough, its residents, communities and businesses, and how we measure and monitor delivery. It will also provide opportunities to engage with residents and other stakeholders around vision and priorities for the borough.

Other Options Considered

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing	The council's work programme would continue to be shaped by the original Corporate Plan 2021-25.	<p>The financial context in which the council is operating – both in the organisation itself and the wider context - has changed significantly since 2021.</p> <p>If we do not update and clarify the key deliverable activities that we will undertake in this final year of the Corporate Plan in response to the current financial context we risk prioritising the wrong things.</p>
Develop an entirely new plan now.	During the period of development for an entirely new plan, there may be confusion about the guiding vision, aims	It is important that the Council's activities and policies are shaped by clear and unambiguous

	<p>and priorities that shape the council's activities.</p> <p>Also, we would also be effectively cutting short the timeline for delivery of the priorities and activities set out in the Corporate Plan 2021-25 by one year.</p>	<p>priorities that have been agreed by Council.</p> <p>If we were to embark on creating an entirely new plan now, and not update the existing plan, we would risk introducing a period of ambiguity about the council's key priorities. This may impact on strategic focus and direction.</p>
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Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 22 The Cheshire East Plan will be produced in accordance with legislative requirements and will be ultimately subject to approval by Full Council.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 23 The recommendations in this report are presented in the context of the MTFS 2024-28. There is no variation to or impact on the MTFS 2024-28.
- 24 As described in paragraph 19, development of a new plan for the following period will be undertaken alongside development of future iterations of the MTFS giving the opportunity to build in any proposals that, if approved, may result in variation for future years.

Policy

- 25 The development of the Cheshire East Plan 2024-25 supports the policy framework cited within the Council's constitution.
- 26 The document sets out the Council's agreed vision, aims and priorities, and provides examples of the work that has already been delivered towards that vision and key activities that the council plans to deliver in the final year of the Corporate Plan 2021-25.
- 27 As such it supports all Corporate Plan aims and priorities:

Aim 1 - An open and enabling organisation	Aim 2 - A council which empowers and cares about people	Aim 3 - A thriving and sustainable place
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<p>P1.1) Ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision making</p> <p>P1.2) Listen, learn and respond to our residents, promoting opportunities for a two-way conversation</p> <p>P1.3) Support a sustainable financial future for the council, through service development, improvement and transformation</p> <p>P1.4) Look at opportunities to bring more income into the borough</p> <p>P1.5) Support and develop our workforce to be confident, motivated, innovative, resilient and empowered</p> <p>P1.6) Promote and develop the services of the council through regular communication and engagement with all residents</p>	<p>P2.1) Work together with residents and partners to support people and communities to be strong and resilient</p> <p>P2.2) Reduce health inequalities across the borough</p> <p>P2.3) Protect and support our communities and safeguard children, adults at risk and families from abuse, neglect and exploitation</p> <p>P2.4) Be the best Corporate Parents to our children in care</p> <p>P2.5) Support all children to have the best start in life</p> <p>P2.6) Increase opportunities for all children and young adults with additional needs</p> <p>P2.7) Ensure all children have a high quality, enjoyable education that enables them to achieve their full potential</p> <p>P2.8) Reduce the reliance on long term care by improving services closer to home and providing more extra care facilities, including dementia services</p>	<p>P3.1) A great place for people to live, work and visit</p> <p>P3.2) Welcoming, safe and clean neighbourhoods</p> <p>P3.3) Reduce impact on the environment</p> <p>P3.4) A transport network that is safe and promotes active travel</p> <p>P3.5) Thriving urban and rural economies with opportunities for all</p> <p>P3.6) Be a carbon neutral council by 2027</p>
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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 28 An updated Equality Impact Assessment will be completed to inform the development of a new Cheshire East Plan
- 29 As mentioned in paragraph 17, a key consideration in developing the new Cheshire East Plan will be to ensure that the views of all groups, including seldom-heard populations and those with protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010, are taken into account.

We need to be confident that we understand their priorities and the potential impact of decisions on different groups.

Human Resources

- 30 The workforce will be engaged throughout the development of the new plan and to build improved operational understanding of the current plan.
- 31 This will include ensuring awareness of any priority or proposal for activity that directly impacts on organisational structure or workforce strategy.

Risk Management

- 32 The delivery of the current plan and delivery of any new strategic plan for the council will be informed by the current and forecast strategic risk environment.

Rural Communities

- 33 The draft plan includes specific activities relating to rural communities.
- 34 The process will ensure that it is accessible to those living in rural communities to ensure their views are taken into account in developing the plan.

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

- 35 Children and Young People's groups, and their representatives, will be included as stakeholders in the co-creation of the new plan.

Public Health

- 36 The process of developing the new Plan will ensure that public health priorities are supported and reflected in the plan. The plan will have due regard to the Marmot principles and the priority to reduce health inequalities across Cheshire East.

Climate Change

- 37 The draft Cheshire East plan 2024-25 has been developed to reflect local priorities, including continuing the message that Cheshire East Council has one of the most ambitious net zero targets in the country. The plan will support achievement of net zero for the council and for the Borough.

- 38 Climate change and the Council's net-zero targets (for the organisation and for the borough) will be considered in the development of any new strategic plan for the borough.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Michael Moore, Head of Communications Michael.moore@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Draft Cheshire East Plan 2024-25
Background Papers:	None

Cheshire East Council

Cheshire East plan 2024-25



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Open

Fair

Green

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Foreword

In 2021 Cheshire East Council set out its vision for an **Open, Fairer and Greener Cheshire East** in the council's Corporate Plan 2021-25. The plan detailed priorities and activities to drive towards that vision.

At that time, we were emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, which had a significant impact on the way we live our lives and people's expectations of local public services.

In the following years, a cost-of-living crisis has developed and councils across the country have been subject to escalating financial pressure, resulting from very high inflation and interest rates seen through 2023.

This updated plan reviews progress against the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan 2021-25 and updates on activities to deliver the plan in the context of the council's current financial position and the updated context in which it operates.

We can be proud of the progress we have made and our delivery against the priorities – this includes the council's move to an open committee system of decision-making, delivery of the Family Hubs, our work to support the Homes for Ukraine and Afghan resettlement schemes, the opening of Congleton Link Road, Poynton Relief Road and numerous active and sustainable travel routes, and the refurbishment of Congleton Leisure Centre.

However, our work towards our priorities has also been affected by a number of significant factors since we originally set out our plan.

This includes:

- Cancellation of HS2 Phase 2b
- National economy and impacts on the long-term financial viability of major regeneration and infrastructure projects
- Increasing costs, demand and complexity of need for our adult social care and children's services

We remain ambitious for the borough and for the council's role in delivering for people in Cheshire East. But we also must be realistic about what we are able to deliver in our work towards our vision.

The council's financial position has changed significantly since we set out the original plan. We are, at time of writing, forecasting a £100million shortfall in funding against forecast costs and demand. We must re-prioritise and redesign our services and support to ensure that we, working with partners and local communities, are providing the best value for Cheshire East residents. We have also applied and secured agreement in principle for Exceptional Financial Support from central government. A condition of this support is to submit a transformation plan to DLUHC.

We are undoubtedly embarking on a period of significant change for the organisation, to ensure financial sustainability and to protect essential services and support for local people. There are many opportunities ahead to use new technologies and to radically rethink what a council can do for the borough it serves, and how we can put people at the heart of our plans.

Cheshire East is a thriving borough with significant potential – people want to live, work, visit and invest here. They have high expectations in terms of quality of life and life opportunities. There are many strengths we can build upon - we have great employment and education, exciting and high value science and technology industries, an important agricultural economy, we are well positioned and well connected and there are great cultural, heritage and leisure facilities.

However, health inequalities across the borough are stark, with a 12-year gap in life expectancy between different areas. As a local council we have significant influence over the many economic and environmental factors that impact on people's physical and mental health. To promote fairness, we need to work across the whole organisation to tackle these wider determinants of health.

In May 2019 Cheshire East Council set out its vision to be a carbon neutral organisation by 2025, the most ambitious target in the country. It is a measure of the financial challenges facing the Council that it has been agreed to relax that target to 2027 – still one of the most ambitious targets in the country.

Councillor Sam Corcoran, Leader of the Council

Councillor Michael Gorman, Deputy Leader of the Council

Rob Polkinghorne, Chief Executive

Introduction - Welcome to Cheshire East

Cheshire East Council

The council is the third largest unitary authority in the Northwest and the seventeenth largest in the country. Cheshire East sits in the historical county of Cheshire (created in its current form by the local government reorganisations of 1974) alongside Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and Warrington.

The council is responsible for providing approximately 500 local public services across an area of over 1,100km² for more than 398,800 residents, across a mix of rural and urban environments.

In November 2020, the Council resolved to implement a committee system for decision making, with the new arrangements taking effect in May 2021, with seven service committees replacing the previous cabinet model.

Cheshire East Council, like councils across the country, has been experiencing unprecedented financial pressures. This results, in part, from increased demand and costs for special educational needs. The borough has seen significant growth in the number of pupils with additional needs and limited in-borough specialist provision for SEND, which have not been met by increased high-needs funding. This has led to a significant deficit.

There is also continued uncertainty following the government's announcement, in October 2023, of the cancellation of HS2 north of Birmingham.

This is in addition to the financial pressures being experienced by councils across the country – increased demand and complexity of need for adult social care and children's services, and high inflation and interest rates over the last year affecting service delivery and borrowing costs.

The council approved a budget for 2024/25 in February 2024. These plans include spending money from reserves to cover the impacts of additional financial pressures. However, this means that the council's general fund reserve is now insufficient to adequately protect the council against future risks.

Over the next four-years we are forecasting a funding gap of £100m.

In February 2024, the Secretary of State agreed, in principle, exceptional support in the form of a capitalisation direction. It provides the council with the facility to spread the cost of any additional emerging pressures, up to £17.6m, to future years, effectively providing an alternative to reserves should the need arise. This reduces (*but does not eliminate*) the risk of a Section114 (S114) notice.

Reducing these financial risks will enable investment in providing the required organisational capacity and resources in 2024/25 for a **council-wide transformational change programme** to create sustainability in the medium-term.

Securing financial stability and sustainability are key priorities for the council at this time. This updated plan reflects the re-prioritisation required in the context of this financial challenge.

Cheshire East the place and people

Cheshire East is a great place that is full of potential. We have strong employment opportunities, attractive places to live and high standards of education.

The area has excellent national and international communications by rail including the Crewe Junction and the West-Coast mainline, by road on the M6 and M56 and by air from Manchester Airport on its northern edge.

The borough is made up of a number of small to medium sized towns, the largest of which are Crewe and Macclesfield. There are twelve towns with populations over 10,000, along with a large rural hinterland.

Cheshire East is a thriving area with a strong emphasis on industry, commerce and agriculture and sits at the heart of a region that has one of the strongest science and technology clusters in the UK. Local businesses include global employers, delivering supply chain opportunities for the borough's high number of small to medium enterprises (SME's) and high-quality jobs for our residents.

The borough has a higher-than-average older population. The over 65 population projection is estimated to rise by approximately 20% from 2021 to 2030.

Despite a good overall quality of life, there are some areas where the experience is different. The **health inequalities** across the borough are stark.

Our residents have a longer life expectancy than the national average. However, life expectancy varies widely across the borough. For females there is a 14-year difference in life expectancy between the highest and lowest wards, for males the figure is slightly less at 11 years.

The index of multiple deprivation 2019 ranked Cheshire East 228th out of 317 local authority areas, making it overall one of the least deprived areas of England. However, there are local areas within the borough which rank among most deprived areas nationally - the majority of these areas are located in Crewe, with small pockets in Congleton and Macclesfield.

Employment rates and household income levels are higher than average. However, there is a considerable range of average household income levels at ward level, from £18,000 in Crewe St Barnabas to £56,000 in Prestbury.

Cheshire East is becoming a more diverse borough due to its connections to Manchester, Birmingham and London. It is also the home of choice for many immigrant communities; towns in Cheshire East are home to varied communities from Eastern Europe, East Timor, Syria, India, Bangladesh and the Caribbean to name but a few.

The Council recognises that promoting equality, diversity and inclusion will improve public services for everyone. We want Cheshire East to be an area of equal opportunity where everyone has a fair chance and people from all backgrounds take part in community life. Our aim therefore is to make equality, diversity and inclusion an integral part of the way the Council works by putting it at the centre of everything we do.

We have active and vibrant communities in the borough, a strong town and parish councils' network, pro-active town partnerships such as Congleton and Sandbach, neighbourhood action groups from Macclesfield to Crewe, a strong volunteer force.

Our place-based neighbourhood partnership and collaborative arrangements bring together a range of partners including the Voluntary, Community and Faith sector, public sector, private sector and local residents. As a partnership they collaboratively create and tailor projects to suit the communities needs building on existing assets.

Cheshire East has been a key lead, as well as the accountable body, for the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). In partnership with the LEP, and its partner local authorities (Cheshire West and Chester Council, and Warrington Borough Council), the Council has worked proactively to optimise the benefits of sub regional working in a positive and collaborative way. The Council has also supported the creation of Business Improvement Districts in both Wilmslow and Crewe.

The council has a leading role in the Cheshire East Place health and care partnership, as part of Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care System. Key areas of cross sector working include such things as the Integrated Care Partnership which will explore how commissioning activities can be developed, focusing on population health. The 8 Care Communities partnerships across health and social care understand local health inequalities and are identifying solutions to keep people fit and well.

Our ongoing partnership operations with Cheshire Police and Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service are making Cheshire East a safer borough.

Vision

An open, fairer, greener Cheshire East

Aims

Aim 1 - An open and enabling organisation

We will provide strong community leadership and work transparently with our residents, businesses and partners to deliver our ambition in Cheshire East.

Aim 2 - A council which empowers and cares about people

We aim to reduce inequalities, promote fairness and opportunity for all and support our most vulnerable residents.

Aim 3 - A thriving and sustainable place

We will lead our communities to protect and enhance our environment, tackle the climate emergency and drive sustainable development.

Priorities

P1.1) Ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision making

P1.2) Listen, learn and respond to our residents, promoting opportunities for a two-way conversation

P1.3) Support a sustainable financial future for the council, through service development, improvement and transformation

P1.4) Look at opportunities to bring more income into the borough

P1.5) Support and develop our workforce to be confident, motivated, innovative, resilient and empowered

P1.6) Promote and develop the services of the council through regular communication and engagement with all residents

P2.1) Work together with residents and partners to support people and communities to be strong and resilient

P2.2) Reduce health inequalities across the borough

P2.3) Protect and support our communities and safeguard children, adults at risk and families from abuse, neglect and exploitation

P2.4) Be the best Corporate Parents to our children in care

P2.5) Support all children to have the best start in life

P2.6) Increase opportunities for all children and young adults with additional needs

P2.7) Ensure all children have a high quality, enjoyable education that enables them to achieve their full potential

P2.8) Reduce the reliance on long term care by improving services closer to home and providing more extra care facilities, including dementia services

P3.1) A great place for people to live, work and visit

P3.2) Welcoming, safe and clean neighbourhoods

P3.3) Reduce impact on the environment

P3.4) A transport network that is safe and promotes active travel

P3.5) Thriving urban and rural economies with opportunities for all

P3.6) Be a carbon neutral council by 2027

Delivering together for Cheshire East – an overview of key corporate plan achievements

Aim 1 - An open and enabling organisation

P1.1) Ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision making

Implementation of committee system – The Council now makes decisions through committees which have responsibilities for various Council functions. The committees and their responsibilities can be found in the Council's Constitution (add link). Each committee is composed of elected Councillors with representation across all of the Council's political groups, in line with legislation.

Committee and Council meetings are open to the public to attend and are audio-streamed via the Council's website. Members of the public are entitled to speak at meetings. All reports to committees and Council are published at least five clear working days in advance of meetings and can be viewed on the Council website.

Collaboration with Town and Parish Councils – Town and Parish Council network established in 2022/23 – three expert network sessions delivered to date covering climate change, green spaces review and leisure services review. The councils are also engaged each year in the annual budget setting process. We have provided a monthly e-newsletter to Town and Parish Councils since October 2023.

Open data site – Insight Cheshire East – Data published on the site includes air quality data, procurement information including contracts register and expenditure exceeding £500. During 2023/24, Q3 there were 34,131 views on Insight Cheshire East, with an average of 375 per day.

Financial, performance and risk reports are provided every quarter to committees' public meetings with six-monthly compliments and complaints reporting.

P1.2) Listen, learn and respond to our residents, promoting opportunities for a two-way conversation

Budget consultation – during the period of the Corporate Plan 2021-25 we have seen significantly increased public and stakeholder participation in annual budget setting process. In the most recent year, (budget

consultation for 2024/25) we saw 2,829 consultation engagements, including 1,351 survey completions.

Public consultation in development of key strategies, policy and service development through public consultation and engagement, including Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Parking review, Digital Inclusion Plan, Carbon Neutral Action Plan and more.

Customer experience strategy and customer charter - developed and implemented, including a better understanding of our performance against customer contact measures, a review of our special contact measures policy, an improved adult social care complaints policy and customer journey mapping, with an approach to understanding and improving the experience our customers have when they contact us and training for managers.

Direct engagement - The council has undertaken direct engagement exercises with residents, including establishing a people panel to generate ideas around how the council can support residents in the cost-of-living crisis. The council has also spoken with residents about their ideas for priorities for the council and borough.

Work to support Armed Forces and veterans - The council has been awarded the silver standard for the Ministry of Defence's employer recognition scheme (Armed Forces Covenant), and it now working towards the gold award.

The Council supports the annual Crewe Armed Forces Day, supporting local veterans and serving members of the armed forces.

We have created a veterans' staff network to identify and help veterans and serving families within the Council.

The Council's Veterans Officer continues to work with groups such as the RBL to organise Armed forces events across the borough. This includes continued support of the 8 Veteran Breakfast clubs all throughout the borough.

P1.3) Support a sustainable financial future for the council, through service development, improvement and transformation

In 2023/24 the council addressed and in-year budget gap of £18.7m (at Q2). The council, like others, was subject to financial pressures including high levels of inflation and interest rates driving increased costs and increased demand for a number of services.

The council implemented in-year emergency measures, including recruitment and vacancy management, non-essential spend direction, review of contracts and fees and charges. The council reduced the in-year gap and used reserves to balance at year end.

The council has set a budget for 2024/25, however this is reliant on timely delivery of a number of challenging budget proposals, and organisational transformation and risk of s114 remains high. The council successfully applied to government for exceptional financial support and has secured agreement in principle to be able to capitalise revenue costs to the value of £17.6m if necessary to balance in-year.

The council has a good record of council tax collection with a rate maintained at around 99% over the last 5 years.

P1.4) Look at opportunities to bring more income into the borough

The Council secures funding from a range of sources to support delivery of services and projects in Cheshire East. This includes Government funding for strategic infrastructure projects, Towns Fund, Future High Streets Fund, school building, green initiatives and others.

P1.5) Support and develop our workforce to be confident, motivated, innovative, resilient and empowered

We have worked to deliver our Workforce Strategy objectives, including a range of activity to support workforce wellbeing, introduced an employee deal, established programmes of staff development and training and supported recruitment in a very challenging market for many roles.

P1.6) Promote and develop the services of the council through regular communication and engagement with all residents

A Communications Strategy for Residents was approved in 2022/23, setting out aims and outlines priorities for communications activity that will support the delivery of the corporate plan. It also sets out the principles we will follow when communicating.

The council delivers a comprehensive programme of communications activity across a range of channels to keep residents informed about their council and council services and are aware of council decisions and how to influence them.

Aim 2 - An organisation which empowers and cares about people

P2.1) Work together with residents and partners to support people and communities to be strong and resilient

The Live Well for Longer Plan was previously approved by the Adults and Health Committee and has now been adopted by the Cheshire East Place Partnership for Health and Social Care as our Framework for co-production. The Live Well for Longer Plan is based on our TOGETHER in Cheshire East principles to ensure that we are able to develop our services together with local people.

Engagement with young people – We work with young people and their representatives through a number of groups, including ‘My Voice’, ‘Jigsaw’, Youth Council, and parent career forum in developing services – for example, Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People Service.

Gypsy and Traveller transit site - Work has started on the Gypsy and Traveller transit site, which will provide a safe place for the travelling community to stay whilst in the area, reducing the level of unauthorised encampments. To open 2024. Work is underway with local schools and GP surgeries to raise cultural awareness and a training programme is being developed for Adult Social Workers who work with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families, to improve knowledge, skills and responses to assessed need.

Social value - As a council, we want to make a positive impact on people and places in Cheshire East. We call this impact social value.

We look at social value across 3 themes:

- social - creating healthier, safer, and more resilient communities
- economic - promoting local skills and employment growth, supporting inclusive diverse and responsible businesses
- environmental - supporting environmental sustainability

ICB, Cheshire East place and care communities – Cheshire East Place partners have co-designed a draft 'Blueprint for 2030', setting out a vision for healthy households, healthy neighbourhoods and health and care services. This recognises the need to address the root causes of poor health and wellbeing.

Care Communities - Care Communities continue to work across community partnerships, identifying local priorities and delivering projects to address areas of need:

- 20 projects are supporting marginalised/hard to reach communities.
- 25 projects are addressing Health Inequalities.
- 21 projects are supporting isolated residents.
- Seven community organisations have increased the volunteer programmes.
- Seven projects are directly supporting our most vulnerable residents.
- Cheshire East has partnered with a range of churches, community centres and other settings to enable them to become Connected Communities Centres/Venues. These buildings host a range of activities and support services closer to where people live. There are 34 Connected Communities Centres and Venues across Cheshire East.

Homes for Ukraine and Afghan resettlement schemes –

- Continued integration & development support within the ARAP (Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy) scheme for Afghan families.
- 12 families resettled into Cheshire East.
- 282 Ukrainian guests with sponsors matched with 165 households (all in education, training or work.)

- A further 284 Ukrainian guests living independently in either social housing, or private rented sector accommodation.

"We saw the pictures on television and felt we had to do something to help. We made contact with Kate and her mum through video calls and began the process of DBS checks before meeting them at Liverpool Airport. They seemed so relieved to be here. They have been through such a traumatic time. They are a great asset to the family. My daughter Alice has a new friend and there is plenty of space in the house. They have their own bedroom and bathroom. We love having them here." - Homes for Ukraine host, Clare.



P2.2) Reduce health inequalities across the borough

The council is a key partner in the Cheshire East Plan health and care partnership, working to deliver the Cheshire East Joint health and Wellbeing Strategy. Key priorities include:

- Smoking cessation
- Substance abuse
- Cardio-vascular health
- Fighting obesity

Five joint strategic needs assessment (JSNA) reviews have been completed this year, through collaboration with partners on poverty, smoking, substance misuse, falls and Crewe

A refreshed 'Tartan Rug' has been published, demonstrating variation in health and wellbeing need across the Cheshire East area.

Lifestyle on prescription - resource has been launched and is now being shared and socialised with health and care professionals across Cheshire East. This includes promotion of the Green Spaces for Wellbeing initiative.

Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Board has endorsed the Mental Health Partnership Board 5-year plan and the Suicide and Self Harm Prevention Plan.

We have also worked closely with Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust to who provide the Cheshire East Living Well bus which provides immunisations, health checks and wider wellbeing guidance at the heart of communities.

P2.3) Protect and support our communities and safeguard children, adults at risk and families from abuse, neglect and exploitation

The council plays a key role in both Cheshire East Safeguarding Children Partnership and Cheshire East Safeguarding Adults Board.

In 2022, partnership arrangements for protecting children at risk of exploitation were inspected. This inspection found both strengths and areas for improvement in partnership arrangements. Since then, we have strengthened our multi-agency arrangements for children at risk of exploitation and, due to improvements made, additional monitoring has been lifted.

The Council is a key partner in the Cheshire East Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership. New responsibilities were set out in the [Domestic Abuse Act](#) which was signed into law in April 2021. We received funding from the government to support this new Act. This has been focused on helping victims and their children into safe accommodation using a [Whole Housing Approach](#), meaning that services are strengthened to spot the signs of abuse and support families earlier.

P2.4) Be the best Corporate Parents to our children in care

"It was 27 years ago when our daughters were aged four and two that we applied and were approved as foster carers for children between the ages of 0-18.

"We have seen about ten young people through to independence and most of them we are still in regular contact with, alongside their partners. They are still very much a part of our family as our own daughters are.

"The best thing about fostering is seeing the children we've cared for grow up and start to get on with their lives, making plans, being successful in their relationships, learning to be great parents and more – and we get to celebrate it all with them!

"Fostering has enriched and enhanced our lives not just as a couple, but as a whole family. We really enjoy spending time with the young people we have cared for in the past and those who we continue to care for." - Kerry and Graham Christopher from Nantwich.



P2.5) Support all children to have the best start in life

Family hubs and digital family hub – We have now opened five Family Hubs and an online family hub resource. Family Hubs support children and young people from birth up until the age of 19 (or 25 for those with special educational needs and disabilities), and their families.

Physical Family Hubs are now open in:

- Oakenclough Family Hub
- Oak Tree Family Hub
- Monks Coppenhall Family Hub
- Ash Grove Family Hub
- Congleton Family Hub

“We are absolutely delighted to have the SEND family hub at the heart of Crewe and in such close proximity to Springfield.

“The hub is going to offer much needed support for young people and families within the locality. It was a pleasure for the Springfield choir to spread their joy at the opening event.

“We are really looking forward to working together with the hub in the future.” - Lisa Hodgkison, executive headteacher at Springfield School



Free childcare provision - The number of children taking up the 3 and 4-year-old offer remains consistently high, ensuring where possible children are accessing support from an early age to achieve their full potential.

Crewe Youth Zone - Delivered by the charity OnSide in partnership with Cheshire East Council, this project will in activities and access support from skilled youth workers.

The Youth Zone is proposed for Oak Street, and it is expected that a decision on the planning application for the facility will be made soon.

An additional boxing and recreation facility for young people is proposed for Mirion Street, which is being delivered by Crewe Youth Club, South Cheshire Amateur Boxing Club and Cheshire East Council.

It is expected that a planning application for this facility will be submitted in spring.

P2.6) Increase opportunities for all children and young adults with additional needs

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities – The Council is continuing to work with Department for Education (DfE) and Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) on funding and transformation of services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). We are taking a number of steps to address the forecast deficit and to ensure that children with SEND get the right support at the right time, in the right place. This includes development of a management plan to transform SEND services in the borough, applications to divert additional educational funding to high needs services and a capital bid to fund additional specialist SEND places in Cheshire East.

In-borough SEND provision – schools – In February 2024, we formally opened the newly expanded Springfield School site in Wilmslow, creating up to 80 much-needed local school spaces for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Supported internship promotion – We have continued to promote supported internships for interns with a disability to businesses across the borough. Most recently, this has included a business engagement event to mark National Supported Internships Day in 2024.

“I enjoy the role as a job coach because it’s such a rewarding thing to see the progress of the intern from the start of the journey all the way to see their confidence grow in themselves.” - Emma Beckley, supported internships job coach.



P2.7) Ensure all children have a high quality, enjoyable education that enables them to achieve their full potential

School places offered – The number of parents receiving first choice offers for school places remains high, with 93% (primary) and 94% (secondary) of parents receiving a first choice offer in 2024.

Good and outstanding schools – Standards of education in Cheshire East remain high, with 94% of primary schools and 91% primary schools judged as good or outstanding (2023/24 Q2).

NEETs – 1.7% of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) (Years 12+13), against a national benchmark of 2.8%.

P2.8) Reduce the reliance on long term care by improving services closer to home and providing more extra care facilities, including dementia services

Home First – helps people to be better supported in their own home and reducing hospital readmissions.

This initiative, which aligns with the NHS's long-term plan, aims to empower people to receive the right level of care and treatment for their health conditions within the comfort and familiarity of their own homes.

Shared lives initiative – In 2023 we launched a recruitment campaign to attract more Shared Lives carers.

Shared Lives is where carers share their home and family life with an adult who needs help or support to live well. The carer provides support and companionship to the individual, and they can also help with everyday tasks such as cooking, cleaning, and shopping.

Our **Extra Care strategy** was agreed at Adults and Health Committee in November 2023. We have seen a growth in domiciliary care capacity, in line with our strategy for people to receive care at home, with an 18% increase in the number of hours delivered by commissioned care providers

The Adults and Health committee endorsed the adoption of a new **Cheshire East Falls Prevention Strategy** for 2023-2026. The strategy has been co-produced by a multi-agency partnership steering group and refined via a formal consultation process that took place in quarter 4 of 2022/23.

Aim 3 - A thriving and sustainable place

P3.1) A great place for people to live, work and visit

Affordable housing - We continue to work in partnership with our Registered Housing Providers to increase the supply of affordable homes across Cheshire East. To date 451 new homes have been completed, which exceeds the affordable housing requirement of 355 per annum.

Congleton Leisure Centre – Re-opened following a major refurbishment in summer of 2023. Congleton Leisure Centre is the latest in the borough to undergo a large-scale refurbishment, which has completely transformed its exterior design and the interior activities space and facilities, taking the borough's leisure offer to a new level. Children from The Quinta Primary School were first to test the water in the new big pool at Congleton Leisure Centre, following a civic opening by the Mayor of Cheshire East, who was joined by Olympian Ann Brightwell MBE.

"It's been great for the school to become so closely involved with this project and I am sure many of them, and their families, will be taking advantage of the amazing facilities the centre has to offer." - Alison Cope, Head of PE, The Quinta School, Congleton



The Learn to Swim scheme has grown to 9,700 swimmers participating in weekly lessons and **leisure memberships** have exceeded 20,000 for the first time, with over 2.5 million individual visits to our leisure centre sites

Empty homes – We continue to work with owners of empty properties to try and bring properties back into use. The level of long-term empty homes continues to be maintained at below 1% (0.92%) of the total number of residential properties.

Planning modernisation programme - The modernisation plan has progressed on four main areas of focus. The new IT system has been delayed, but more recent positive engagement should see implementation in the summer; the staffing restructure is underway with a focus on retention and recruitment to fill vacancies; the backlog of applications has slowly reduced with focused effort on the oldest applications; and various customer improvements have been put in place including new validation checklists and information updates to the Council's website. Great progress had been made addressing the recommendations of the s106 audit, with updates to system and process and collaboration with other Services which will result in a much more effective and efficient service going forward. Many of the above changes coupled with progression of an updated pre-application process will see a significant service reset after the summer responding to Government planning reforms aligned with a more focused service improvement plan.

Planning - Significant strategic developments have received planning consent including further housing, employment and retail schemes at North Congleton, expansion and redevelopment of sites in Crewe for key existing employers, and further market and affordable housing schemes in Macclesfield. Proactive approaches have been incorporated to maximise design and environmental quality in place making, alongside a continued focus on biodiversity net gain. An increase in enforcement notices (50+ in 2023/24) also demonstrates the priority to also protect the natural and built environment.

An Issues Paper highlighting 10 key topic areas and a call for sites has been commenced to enable the process of the new Local Plan to begin early next year. A number of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) have been prepared and now adopted over the year providing detailed technical information and guidance to support Local Plan policies.

Sustainable Drainage (SUDS), Developer Contributions and Environmental Protection are now all in place.

Economic strengths - the economy in Cheshire East remains strong and resilient, bolstered by global employers in science and manufacturing and over 19,000 small to medium enterprises. Businesses continue to commit to investing in Cheshire East, with Bentley Motors recently announcing their commitment to deliver a fleet of luxury electric vehicles in Crewe. While Cheshire East's employment count has not fully recovered from the pandemic when comparing to competing regions it should be noted that Cheshire East still performs strongly in comparison to the Northwest. Manufacturing proves to be a strong point for Cheshire East as it accounts for 10.2% of all employment in the area which is significantly higher than the England average of 7.3%. Furthermore, the manufacturing industry in Cheshire East contributes a Gross Value Added of 31.7% to Cheshire East's GDP, which is 20% more than the UK average of 11.2% in 2021.

Visitor economy - The value of the Visitor Economy for Cheshire East has recovered well since the Covid pandemic decimated the sector in 2020. The most up to date STEAM tourism economic impact modelling data shows an increase of 60% on 2020 figures and over 44% on 2021 figures. This provided a total of £879m of value to the Cheshire East economy in 2022, with almost 13 million visitors enjoying Cheshire East last year.

P3.2) Welcoming, safe and clean neighbourhoods

Safer Cheshire East Partnership Plan refreshed in 2022, focusing on:

- Violence against women and girls
- Exploitation of adults and children
- Cybercrime
- Serious and Organised Crime
- Domestic Abuse
- Knife Crime
- Road Safety

CCTV investment - The CCTV wireless project is progressing on a town-by-town basis across the Borough in conjunction with our contracted provider. The project, which is set to complete by the end of the calendar year, will improve performance and security and greater functionality capitalising on technological advances.

Air Quality - Air Quality Annual Status Reports have been submitted to and approved by Defra each year. Projects within the Air Quality Action Plan are ongoing in conjunction with a range of internal and external partners and progress is reported to the Air Quality Steering Group on a quarterly basis. A new continuous monitor has been commissioned and we are now measuring concentrations of Particulate Matter as well as Nitrogen Dioxide.

Food Safety - The commercial services team outturn for 2023-2024 was an achievement of 96.5% of all programmed A-D related food hygiene inspections; this figure includes inspections that were overdue following the reduced inspection requirements mandated by the Food Standards Agency during the Covid-19 pandemic and to the end of March 2023. This means that we start 2024-2025 in an excellent position to meet the requirements of the annual programme for the year. Of those premises that did receive a direct inspection, 97.7% are awarded 3 or above in the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme putting Cheshire East on a par with national standards.

Licensing - The Councils updated 'Taxi' Licensing Policy was approved in November 2022 leading to a significant change in processes and requirements for licence holders. One such change was the requirement for all drivers to undertake safeguarding training and with the support of colleagues in the Cheshire East Safeguarding Team and the benefit of external funding we delivered 23 free of charge training sessions to over 500 drivers. Additional support has been provided through two trade meetings with plans for further engagement sessions in 2024-2025 alongside our newly developed Taxi and Private Hire Newsletter aimed at addressing general enquiries, changes to legislation and good practice.

Trading Standards - Trading Standards continue to protect residents of the Borough from unscrupulous traders and scams. Between 2021-2024 the Banking Protocol supported by Trading Standards and the Police dealt with 160 referrals where staff in financial institutions flag instances where they believe a customer is being forced to hand over money in unusual circumstances. The average saving for each Cheshire East resident referral was £8200. In addition, the Older Persons Scams Awareness and Aftercare project, a partnership between Cheshire East Trading Standards and Age UK won the Chartered Trading Standards Institute Hero Award in 2023 and for two years running the Trading Standards Service won a national award in recognitions of its efforts to raise awareness of the dangers of using loan sharks.

Cleaner Crewe – Four years ago, many of the alleyways in Crewe were in a poor state of repair and the communities living in these areas were not able to enjoy the immediate locality of their homes.

Now, following on from the introduction of the Cleaner Crewe project, alleyways have gone from being filled with fly-tipped rubbish to being places residents can be proud of. The Council's support and direct involvement in the Cleaner Crewe Project completed on 31/03/2024. A detailed report was produced in relation to lessons learnt, how further support could be resourced in the future and also highlighted the continued success of the "Friends of Crewe South 1 Alleyways" committee. The Committee continues to meet on a regular basis and has actively sought various different grants and funding streams to continue to with engagement activities, clean ups events and sustainable activities and infrastructure to provide the best chance of those alleyways that have kept clean and well managed to stay that way, and also to engage future Alley Champions across the original "pilot area". Throughout April and May 2024 the residents, supported by local business, ward and town council members, other agencies and volunteers, have continued with clean up events, labelling of their plant pots and benches, and also some bank holiday street events.

The project itself was shortlisted in September 2022 for APSE 'Best Community & Neighbourhood Initiative' and also won first place in the LARAC Conference Celebration Awards in October 2022 for 'Best Partnership Award'.

As a result of the project, a clear model has been created as to what would be required should this be duplicated elsewhere in the borough and Crewe Town Council are currently reviewing what support they would also consider providing for the future in relation to similar issues and potential continued support of the original project area.

Pocket Parks – Four parks – McLaren Street, Derby Docks, School Crescent and Queen Street – will all see improvements that will allow these sites to be more accessible for residents and to create 'pocket parks'. McLaren Street 'pocket park' was the first of the parks to re-open in April 2024.

Green Spaces for Wellbeing - The innovative green spaces for wellbeing programme was launched in 2022.

"The alley regeneration project has been welcomed by Walthall Street and Westminster Street residents. Our alley was filthy and dangerous underfoot. We met our neighbours, they came out to chat and showed gratitude for the clean-up. Children were able to come out to play, this was lovely to see during the summer. Plants were added in containers, and residents looked after them. We saw a reduction in fly-tipping and dog fouling." - Denise Randle, a resident in Walthall Street, Crewe



Working in partnership, Cheshire East Council, the NHS, Ansa, Everybody Leisure and the voluntary sector, launched the 'Green Spaces for Wellbeing' programme to support people with long term health conditions and/or mental health needs to engage with nature-based activities.

Green flag awards - We have retained the prestigious National Green Flag Award for the quality, condition and overall cleanliness of its parks and open spaces in 11 of our towns, with three sites – Tatton Park, Congleton Park and Queens Park – also retaining their Green Heritage Site status.

P3.3) Reduce impact on the environment

Waste Strategy and recycling rates - Our municipal waste management strategy sets out how we intend to reduce, reuse, recycle, recover and

dispose of municipal waste between 2014 and 2030. Our strategy sets out key aims and objectives for the management of waste. The Strategy seeks to identify key drivers and ensure the aspirations of the Council are still relevant in the changing waste industry following government consultations covering the following:

- Waste and recycling: making recycling collections consistent in England. Simpler Recycling – Food waste collections.
- Packaging waste: changing the UK producer responsibility system for packaging waste
- Introducing a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for drinks containers (bottles and cans)

The collection, treatment, and disposal of municipal waste in Cheshire East is underpinned by 18 high level strategic objectives that have been established by the Council. To read the whole strategy please go to : [Municipal Waste Management Strategy Review 2020 \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](https://cheshireeast.gov.uk/municipal-waste-management-strategy-review-2020)

The latest official figures (2022 – 23) show that our recycling rate is 52%

Tree planting - 30ha of tree planting has taken place and a further 15ha is currently in progress giving a total of 45ha against the total of 120ha required by the Carbon Action Plan. Work is underway to plan a pipeline of sites to complete the planting required over the next two planting seasons.

P3.4) A transport network that is safe and promotes active travel

Poynton Relief Road - opened March 2023. The road relieves Poynton village of high volumes of traffic travelling between the Macclesfield and Poynton areas to Stockport, the airport, Manchester and the wider area.

Congleton Link Road opened April 2021, improving connectivity between Macclesfield, Congleton, the surrounding area and the M6. It has also reduced congestion and improved air quality in Congleton and released land creating the potential for jobs in the local economy.

The North West Crewe highways package that improves safe access to the hospital and enables economic growth remains on programme for completion in Spring 2024.

EV charging points - funding secured to meet the Council's aim to install 250 public EV points in the borough. This includes money from the Government's Residential On-street Charge Point scheme (ORCS) and the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) scheme. A contract has been let to deliver c.15 sites through ORCS during 2024. Procurement of a charge point operator for LEVI delivery has begun.

Parking review – a Borough-wide review of Council-operated car parks was completed on a town-by-town basis with the outcomes agreed at Highways Committee in January 2024. This review will rationalise parking charges and provisions to support town centres, encourage sustainable travel choices and improve the efficiency of the Council's car park estate. The new Multi Storey Car Park in Crewe town centre is being integrated into the town's parking offer, alongside a number of car park closures to enable regeneration sites at Oak Street, Lyceum Square and the Library/Archive Centre.

Walking and cycling routes:

- Manchester Road scheme between Handforth and Wilmslow has secured funding from Active Travel England to provide a safe Active Travel Corridor,
- Mill Street Corridor/Southern Gateway, in Crewe will link the town centre to the railway station, plans have been finalised and works to construct these facilities are being procured.
- Flag Lane Link: a highways and cycle scheme improving connectivity into the town centre from the west of Crewe. The main part of this scheme completed in summer 2023 and is now operational, including a new contraflow cycle lane giving priority access to cyclists and pedestrians.
- The final leg of Middlewood Way was opened with completion of the Black Lane Scheme in Macclesfield. The scheme received nearly £600k funding from Sustrans to create a safe link between Hurdsfield and the towns railway station.

Bus services - are benefitting from investment through the Bus Service Improvement Plan funding supported by the Council's own resources. In 2023/24 spending has focussed on Route 38 which links Crewe-Sandbach- Congleton and Macclesfield, where investment in bus stops/stations, passenger information and facilities is intended to complement the introduction of a new fleet of modern vehicles.

Flexilink and Go-Too have continued to provide demand-responsive transport services to residents. Flexilink operations have been extended to service Disley whilst Go-Too is our Rural Mobility Funded scheme serving areas to the south and west of Nantwich. The council is consulting on options to better integrate these 2 services and connect into the commercial bus network.

The national £2 bus fare cap covers almost all scheduled bus services in Cheshire East (exceptions being where the fare is less than £2 already). The fare cap has been important in getting more people to use buses following the pandemic, with most local service now seeing fare-paying passenger numbers at or above pre-pandemic levels. The fare cap will continue until (at least) December 2024.

P3.5) Thriving urban and rural economies with opportunities for all

£100m regeneration programme for Crewe - focused on delivering around 20 projects, including those funded by the Government's £14.1m Future High Streets Fund and £22.9m Towns Fund, which include new/improved active travel routes and public spaces, youth and community facilities, commercial floorspace (see TADIC below) and support to reuse vacant properties.

Crewe bus station and multi-storey car park - at the heart of the town's regeneration plans, a new bus station opened in May 2024, featuring an enclosed passenger concourse, with WC amenities. Located in the same structure, a new 389 space MSCP, with 20+ EV charging points and solar PV, will provide new capacity and allow some other town centre car parks to be released to support wider regeneration plans.

Technology and Digital Innovation Campus (TADIC): plans have advanced for the creation of new co-working space at the former Municipal Building offices (NB not the historic civic amenities). Contractors have been appointed to undertake works commencing 2024 and completing early 2025, whilst marketing of the opportunity for a tenant/operator is underway. Separately, although no longer expected to be co-working space, plans to improve and safeguard Christ Church have been developed.

Sustainable Energy Network: Investment in energy improvements being implemented including to Lifestyle Centre, Lyceum Theatre and Delamere House to deliver carbon reduction and enable future heat network.

Cheshire Archives and History Centre - The shared service 'Archives - A Story Shared' programme, including the building of the new History Centre in Crewe, was successful in achieving a £4.4 million grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The project is now at final building design stage with ongoing community engagement programmes. specifications being agreed for tendering.

Crewe Market Hall opened in May 2021 - it has become an anchor retail, leisure, and entertainment venue in the town.

The Ly² project at Lyceum Square launched in July 2023, providing a new public entertainment and performance space at the heart of Crewe town centre, adjacent to the Lyceum Theatre and Market Hall. The project includes stages, a giant video screen, new artwork, seating and planting areas to provide an attractive setting for visitors.

Macclesfield town centre, public realm and changing places – Building on the successful delivery of the Castle Street public realm improvement scheme and the Avanti funded Treacle TART (Treacle Town Art Trail) s copy work is now progressing on developing designs for further 'light touch' public realm improvements across Macclesfield's pedestrian core.

A Changing Places Grant and a significant financial contribution from Macclesfield Town Council were also utilised in 23/24 to upgrade toilets at Macclesfield Indoor Market, formerly only accessible to market traders, to be upgraded and enlarged to provide modern facilities suitable for public use, including accessible changing places toilet and baby changing facilities.

Work has also started on design work and costings for the refurbishment of Macclesfield Indoor Market, and it is hoped that these can be delivered in 2024/25, although the project is extremely challenging given central government restrictions on the funding.

Town centre vitality reports and Business Improvement Districts - Town Centre Vitality Reports were finalised in 2022 for the nine key service centres in Cheshire East. These plans identify key opportunities to support town centre vitality in these centres as and when funding can be secured whether by the Council, Town Councils or others wishing to support the vitality of our town centres. Since the approval of these plans, a number of Town Councils, with support from CEC, have taken steps to develop new town centre Business Improvement Districts to generate more funding and

capacity for town centre projects and stronger business networks. Following the establishment of the boroughs' first Business Improvement District in Wilmslow Town Centre in November 2022. 2023/24 has seen a successful ballot for a second BID covering central Crewe and its commencement on 1 April 2024.

Rural Action Plan - Rural England Prosperity grant funding to support Cheshire East based rural businesses has supported small scale investment in micro and small rural enterprises and the development and promotion of the rural visitor economy. A review of the various cross cutting elements of the Rural Action Plan 2022-2026 is taking place during 2024 to identify progress to date and future priorities.

Connecting Cheshire - the Connecting Partnership is continuing to manage a number of Digital Connectivity projects covering the wider Cheshire region with the aim to improve connection speeds for residents and businesses. The partnership also has recently launched the latest programme of Digital 'Masterclasses' for locally based SMEs that are designed to provide support and assistance in ensuring that their business can benefit from current digital productivity improvements.

P3.6) Be a carbon neutral council by 2027

Solar farm, Leighton - Work is almost complete on the council's first solar farm. Once complete the 4.1MW farm will provide the majority of the electricity required by the council's compost plant at Leighton, Crewe with some residual electricity being sold to the grid.

Green vehicles in the council's fleet - EV charging units have been installed across the council estate and 16 vans are currently on order, once delivered these will bring our total EV fleet to 19 vehicles.

Solar Together promotion – Working with Cheshire West, and Warrington Borough Councils, the first Solar Together scheme in Cheshire and Warrington has seen more than 6,000 registrations from local residents keen to install solar photovoltaic (PV) systems in their homes and has won a Green Expo Award for Innovation in Energy.

Decarbonising heat/energy for the council's buildings – 14 air source heat pumps have been installed on council's estate. Seventeen solar installations have been completed on council buildings, providing approximately 1GWh per year.

Aim 1 - An open and enabling organisation

We will provide strong community leadership and work transparently with our residents, businesses and partners to deliver our ambition in Cheshire East.

Member Champion: TBC; **Officer Champion:** TBC

Priorities

- P1.1) Ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision making
- P1.2) Listen, learn and respond to our residents, promoting opportunities for a two-way conversation
- P1.3) Support a sustainable financial future for the council, through service development, improvement and transformation
- P1.4) Look at opportunities to bring more income into the borough
- P1.5) Support and develop our workforce to be confident, motivated, innovative, resilient and empowered
- P1.6) Promote and develop the services of the council through regular communication and engagement with all residents

Where we are now

Over the last 12 months, the council has seen a significant escalation in financial pressures, including inflation and interest rates and increase in demand and complexity of need. It has applied to central government for Exceptional Financial Support and the DfE Safety Valve programme. The council has recently undertaken a LGA Corporate Peer Challenge which will result in a number of recommendations.

Opportunities and strengths

- Digital technologies and artificial intelligence
- A workforce and elected members with a will for transformation and improvement.

Challenges

The council's financial position and low levels of reserves means that it is at an increased risk of s114. The council also has limited capacity for the required change, improvement and transformation. Understanding about the council's priorities, services, decision-making and opportunities for residents to be involved can all be improved.

Drivers for change

The key drivers for change for this aim are:

- Financial sustainability
- Digital opportunities and artificial intelligence
- Refreshing the relationship with residents

What we will do - Priority actions for 2024/25			Lead Officer	Committee
P1.1	A1.1.1	Introduce a new decision-making framework to streamline the current arrangements and improve quality and clarity of reports.	Head of Democratic Services	CPC
	A1.1.2	Improve understanding of effective scrutiny in a committee system of decision-making	Head of Democratic Services	CPC
	A1.1.3	Member training to clarify roles and responsibilities for decision-making within the committee system	Head of Democratic Services	CPC
	A1.1.4	A clear and transparent budget setting process, where opportunities to inform and influence decision-making are clearly understood by stakeholders	Head of Finance	CPC
P1.2	A1.2.1	Review and embed consultation and engagement approach across the organisation to put resident and customer voice at the heart of evidence base for decisions, including establishing a 'people panel' to embed citizen voice into key decisions and policy development	Head of Communications	CPC
	A1.2.2	Review equality, diversity and inclusion strategy and EIAs to embed the voices of seldom-heard audiences and those with protected characteristics at the heart of decision-making and service redesign across the organisation.	Head of Business Change	CPC
	A1.2.3	Review and refresh the aims and priorities in the Customer Experience Strategy as part of a wider review of customer experience and resident engagement.	Head of Customer Services	CPC
	A1.2.4	Achieve the Armed Forces Covenant Gold Award	Head of Communities and Integration	E+C
P1.3	A1.3.1	Embark on a whole organisation transformation and improvement programme – The primary aim in the short term must be to ensure that the Council is financially stable and delivering support to those who need it most.	Director of Transformation	CPC
	A1.3.2	Review commissioning approach across all directorates	Head of Integrated Commissioning	A+H/C+F
	A1.3.3	Deliver the savings set out in MTFS 2024-28 proposals within the agreed timescales to contribute to a balanced the budget and build sustainable reserves	Head of Finance	CPC
	A1.3.4	We will refresh the council's Digital Strategy and delivery programme. The Digital Strategy identifies forty-seven digital projects and emphasises a digital-by-design approach to offering services to customers.	Head of ICT	CPC
P1.4	A1.4.1	Comprehensive review of each existing ASDV including review of governance, management, business planning and performance management arrangements.	Director of Environment	FSC
P1.5	A1.5.1	Review Workforce Strategy and update for 2025 onwards.	Head of HR	CPC
	A1.5.2	Complete the office moves related WorkplaCE programme, making more efficient use of the council's office estate and technology to support modern ways of working	Executive Director – Place	CPC, E+G
	A1.5.3	Review and update the Brighter Future culture programme	Head of HR	CPC
	A1.5.4	Complete the DMA review of senior capacity and extend DMA across the organisation as part of service re-design	Head of HR	CPC
P1.6	A1.6.1	Review and refresh communications and engagement strategy and resourcing as part of a wider review of customer experience and resident engagement.	Head of Communications	CPC
	A1.6.2	Establish a range of subscriber e-newsletters and digital content to share key updates and council services, support and decisions with a range of stakeholders – to extend reach of messages	Head of Communications	CPC
	A1.6.3	Review and update the approach, across the organisation, to employee communications and workforce engagement	Head of Communications	CPC

Aim 2 - A council which empowers and cares about people

We aim to reduce inequalities, promote fairness and opportunity for all and support our most vulnerable residents.

Member Champion: TBC; **Officer Champion:** TBC

Priorities

- P2.1) Work together with residents and partners to support people and communities to be strong and resilient
- P2.2) Reduce health inequalities across the borough
- P2.3) Protect and support our communities and safeguard children, adults at risk and families from abuse, neglect and exploitation
- P2.4) Be the best Corporate Parents to our children in care
- P2.5) Support all children to have the best start in life
- P2.6) Increase opportunities for all children and young adults with additional needs
- P2.7) Ensure all children have a high quality, enjoyable education that enables them to achieve their full potential
- P2.8) Reduce the reliance on long term care by improving services closer to home and providing more extra care facilities, including dementia services

Where we are now

Cheshire East is a prosperous place, but it has pockets of deprivation in income, health and life chances. Standards of education and achievement for our young people are generally high, but some children with additional needs may not achieve their potential. We have an older-than-average, aging population and adults accessing care services have increasingly complex needs.

Opportunities and strengths

- Expand the use of technology-enabled care.
- An extensive and active VCFSE sector
- High standards of education generally
- Fairer charging for services.
- New Leighton hospital campus

Challenges

- Greater than expected growth in both cost and demand pressures for care services.
- Health inequalities, including life expectancy.
- Dedicated Schools Grant, high needs funding, deficit.
- Social care and social worker recruitment
- Fragile care market
- Digital connectivity and exclusion

Drivers for change

- Demand and complexity of need exceeding available funding.
- Technology
- Health and care system integration

Priority	What we will do - Priority actions for 2024/25		Lead Officer	Committee
P2.1	A2.1.1	Support VCFSE to build upon the People Helping People initiative and work collaboratively through 'Growing our communities'.	Head of Communities and Integration	A+H
	A2.1.2	Complete construction of the Traveller transit site	TBC	TBC
	A2.1.3	Support and contribute to the achievements of the borough's eight care communities and neighbourhood partnerships	Head of Communities and Integration	A+H
P2.2	A2.2.1	Focus delivery of targeted activity to reduce alcohol and substance misuse, smoking, domestic abuse and violence and increase healthy eating and physical exercise in areas that experience worse health outcomes.	Director of Public Health	A+H
	A2.2.2	Continue to deliver activity to deliver the Cheshire East Harm and Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2023-2025	Director of Public Health	A+H
	A2.2.3	Continue to deliver activity to deliver the Living Well in Crewe plan	Director of Public Health	A+H
	A2.2.4	Continue to deliver activity to deliver the Cheshire East Place Mental Health Plan 2024-2029	Director of Public Health	A+H
P2.3	A2.3.1	Continue to embed our Signs of Safety practice model	TBC	TBC
	A2.3.2	Update the Cheshire East Safeguarding Adults Board Strategic Plan	Head of Adult Safeguarding	A+H
	A2.3.3	Update the Cheshire East Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy	TBC	C+F
P2.4	A2.4.1	Attract more foster carers to support Cheshire East children through the Foster4 collaboration	Head of Provider Services	C+F
	A2.4.2	Prioritise care experienced adults as part of our recovery work to improve employment and training opportunities.	TBC	TBC
	A2.4.3	Deliver the priorities of the Cared for children and care leavers strategy 2022-26	Head of Cared for Children and Care Leavers	C+F
P2.5	A2.5.1	Continue to develop services and support offered through Family Hub model and promote the Parenting Journey	Head of Early Years	C+F
	A2.5.2	Continue work to build Crewe Youth Zone	TBC	C+F
	A2.5.3	Continue to deliver the Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People programme	TBC	C+F
P2.6	A2.6.1	Establish and deliver against the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) management plan	Strategic lead for SEND and inclusion	C+F
	A2.6.2	Capital programme to increase in-borough provision	Head of Education	C+F
	A2.6.3	Grow organisational capacity to support transformation of SEND support (MTFS 24)	Strategic lead for SEND and inclusion	C+F
P2.7	A2.7.1	Deliver the Kingsbourne Academy primary school in Nantwich	Head of Education	C+F
	A2.7.2	Process primary and secondary applications efficiently, offering parental choice places for as many pupils as possible.	Head of Education	C+F
P2.8	A2.8.1	Investment in Adult Social Care (MTFS 8)	TBC	A+H

Priority	What we will do - Priority actions for 2024/25		Lead Officer	Committee
	A2.8.2	Continue to develop and promote the Shared Lives service	TBC	A+H
	A2.8.3	Use technology to digitally enable people to support themselves the Digital Inclusion Plan 2023 - 2026 (cheshireeast.gov.uk)	TBC	TBC
	A2.8.4	Deliver the objectives of the All Age Carers Strategy 2021-25	TBC	A+H

Aim 3 - A thriving and sustainable place

We will lead our communities to protect and enhance our environment, tackle the climate emergency and drive sustainable development.

Member Champion: TBC; **Officer Champion:** TBC

Priorities

- P3.1) A great place for people to live, work and visit
- P3.2) Welcoming, safe and clean neighbourhoods
- P3.3) Reduce impact on the environment
- P3.4) A transport network that is safe and promotes active travel
- P3.5) Thriving urban and rural economies with opportunities for all
- P3.6) Be a carbon neutral council by 2027

Where we are now

Cheshire East is a thriving area with a strong emphasis on industry, commerce and agriculture and sits at the heart of a region that has one of the strongest science and technology clusters in the UK. The strength of the science sector in Cheshire East is manifested through research and education facilities, such as Jodrell Bank Observatory and leading businesses such as AstraZeneca, Recipharm and the Waters Corporation. Cheshire East is the home to a number of major employers, including Bentley Motors, AO.com and Barclays.

The borough has built and natural heritage that is highly valued by residents, and, along with proximity Greater Manchester and Liverpool and 360° connectivity, makes it a place people want to live.

Economic ambition for the borough was in part built around HS2 Phase 2b and a hub station at Crewe, and the anticipated benefits to inward investment, employment and connectivity that would bring. We now need to refresh our economic and transport strategies in the light of this decision.

Opportunities and strengths

- Handforth Garden Village
- Sub-regional working
- Economic performance exceeds both the regional and national average
- Visitor economy
- Cheshire East boasts one of the strongest GVA's outside of the south east
- Large-scale global employers offering high quality jobs for residents
- The Council has substantial landholdings and property ownerships across the Borough which it can use to influence positive change.

Challenges

- HS2 Phase 2b cancelled
- Funding for highways maintenance
- Limited public transport options
- Demand for planning services

Drivers for change

- Climate change and threats to environment and biodiversity
- Health inequalities
- A growing and ageing population

Priority	What we will do - Priority actions for 2024/25		Lead Officer	Committee
P3.1	A3.1.1	Develop and begin consultation upon 'New style' Local Plan Strategy	Head of Planning	E+C
	A3.1.2	Deliver the Planning Service Improvement Plan	Head of Planning	E+C
	A3.1.3	Deliver cultural development activities, including continued activity towards the Cheshire Archives – a Story Shared project (MTFS 56)	Head of Rural and Cultural Economy	E+G
	A3.1.4	Update the Statement of Licensing Policy	Head of Regulatory Services	Council
P3.2	A3.2.1	Monitor the continued successful delivery of the Cleaner Crewe project.	Head of Neighbourhood Services	E+C
	A3.2.2	Update and deliver the Air Quality Strategy, following consultation.	Head of Regulatory Services	E+C
	A3.2.3	Update the Safer Cheshire East Partnership Plan	TBC	TBC
P3.3	A3.3.1	Continue implementation and monitoring of the Green Spaces Maintenance Policy	Head of Environmental Services	E+C
	A3.3.2	Update the Cheshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy	Head of Planning	E+C
	A3.3.3	Finalise and implement the Biodiversity Net Gain Supplementary Planning Document	Head of Planning	E+C
P3.4	A3.4.1	Complete Bus Service Review and refresh Bus Service Improvement Plan	Head of Strategic Transport and Parking	H+T
	A3.4.2	Deliver an integrated borough-wide demand-responsive transport service (Go-Too and Flexilink)	Head of Strategic Transport and Parking	H+T
	A3.4.3	Secure further funding for active travel routes	Head of Strategic Transport and Parking	H+T
	A3.4.4	Update business cases for Middlewich Eastern Bypass and A500 dualling	Head of Strategic Infrastructure	H+T
P3.5	A3.4.1	Deliver the Cheshire East Rural Action Plan 2022-26	Head of Rural and Cultural Economy	E+G
	A3.5.2	Continue to deliver Connected Cheshire digital infrastructure	Head of Economic Development	E+G
	A3.5.3	Continue to pursue a compensation package following scrapping of HS2 Phase 2	Programme Director HS2	E+G
	A3.5.4	Develop a clear Place Marketing Approach	Head of Economic Development	E+G
	A3.5.5	Enable the delivery of Handforth Garden Village	Head of Economic Development	E+G
P3.6	A3.6.1	Deliver actions to achieve the objectives of the Carbon Neutral Action Plan 2027 (updated timescale)	Head of Environmental Services	E+C
	A3.6.2	Update the borough-wide Carbon-Neutrality Action Plan 2045 following public consultation	Head of Environmental Services	E+C

How we will report progress

Corporate Policy Committee will receive reports for each Quarter following approval and adoption of the plan, providing updates on delivery of the priority actions detailed under each aim.

In addition, a summary will be provided for other activities that have been identified that contribute to the priorities, aims and vision to give a rounded view of delivery.

The committee will also receive updates on the development of a new strategic plan for the council and the borough for the period 2025-2029.

OPEN

Corporate Policy Committee

13 June 2024

Devolution – Update and Next Steps

Report of: Peter Skates, Acting Executive Director of Place

Report Reference No: CPC/19/24-25

Ward(s) Affected: All

Purpose of Report

- 1 The purpose of the report is to provide members with an update on the current state of play, progress nationally with regard to the devolution agenda and to seek agreement for the Council to engage proactively with Government, in order to assess and understand what sub regional options on devolved powers are achievable, with any proposal being reported back to Committee for review and consideration.

Executive Summary

- 2 In February 2022, the Government published the Levelling Up White Paper. This set out a new devolution framework, extending devolution beyond metropolitan areas for the first time.
- 3 The framework sets out a flexible, three level approach to devolution recognising that a one-size fits all model would not be suitable, with different powers and functions for each devolution level.
- 4 The three levels set out in the devolution framework in Feb 2022 are:
- 5 Level 3 – a single institution or County Council with a directly elected mayor across a functional economic area or whole county area;
- 6 Level 2 – A single institution or County Council without a directly elected mayor, across a functional economic area or whole county area;
- 7 Level 1 – Local authorities working together across a functional economic area or whole county area e.g. through a joint committee.

- 8 In June 2022, the Government published the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill. This expanded on the devolution framework set out in the white paper and enables the creation of County Combined Authorities through new devolution deals.
- 9 In November 2023, Government announced a further 'Level 4 ' with a devolution framework for Mayoral Combined authorities such as Greater Manchester , and the West Midlands.
- 10 This paper sets out the background for sub regional working and devolution as promoted by the Levelling Up White Paper, the benefits that could support Cheshire East, as well as the opportunity costs of not considering a future proposal.
- 11 The paper seeks Committee's authority to engage with Government, to assess a beneficial proposal for Cheshire East, and the wider sub region of Cheshire & Warrington, and to bring back a decision report to Corporate Policy Committee for scrutiny and approval.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corporate Policy Committee is recommended to:

1. Authorise engagement by the Council with Government to discuss and explore the potential options and structure of a proposal that would be achievable under future sub regional working and a devolution platform.
2. Note that any final offer of a proposal from Government will be reported back to Committee for consideration, review and scrutiny.

Background

Legislation and direction

- 12 In February 2022, the Government published the Levelling Up White Paper. This set out a new devolution framework, extending devolution beyond metropolitan areas for the first time. The framework sets out a flexible, three level approach to devolution recognising that a one-size fits all model would not be suitable, with different powers and functions for each devolution level. In June 2022, the Government published the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill. This expanded on the devolution

framework set out in the white paper and enables the creation of County Combined Authorities through new devolution deals.

- 13 The three levels set out in the devolution framework in Feb 2022 are:
- 14 Level 3 – a single institution or County Council with a directly elected mayor across a functional economic area or whole county area;
- 15 Level 2 – A single institution or County Council without a directly elected mayor, across a functional economic area or whole county area;
- 16 Level 1 – Local authorities working together across a functional economic area or whole county area e.g. through a joint committee.
- 17 In terms of a focus for local devolution, the government set out a number of key Functions, namely;
 - (a) Strategic role in delivering services
 - (b) Supporting local businesses
 - (c) Local Control of sustainable transport
 - (d) Investment spending
 - (e) Giving adults the skills for the labour market
 - (f) Local control of infrastructure decisions
 - (g) Keeping the public safe and healthy
 - (h) Financing local initiatives for residents and businesses
- 18 Each function will have areas of focus to be considered, as shown in the table below, and the scope of benefit and opportunity will be assessed against the structure of the devolution deal and which ‘Level’ is appropriate.
- 19 The more requirement for local devolved powers will equate to a higher level of a deal.
- 20 In November 2023, Government announced a further ‘Level 4 ‘ with an improved devolution framework for Mayoral Combined authorities such as Greater Manchester, and the West Midlands. These are also described trailblazer deals.
- 21 At the time of the White paper (2022) the following table was produced and is indicative of the method of evaluating an appropriate level of devolution platform.

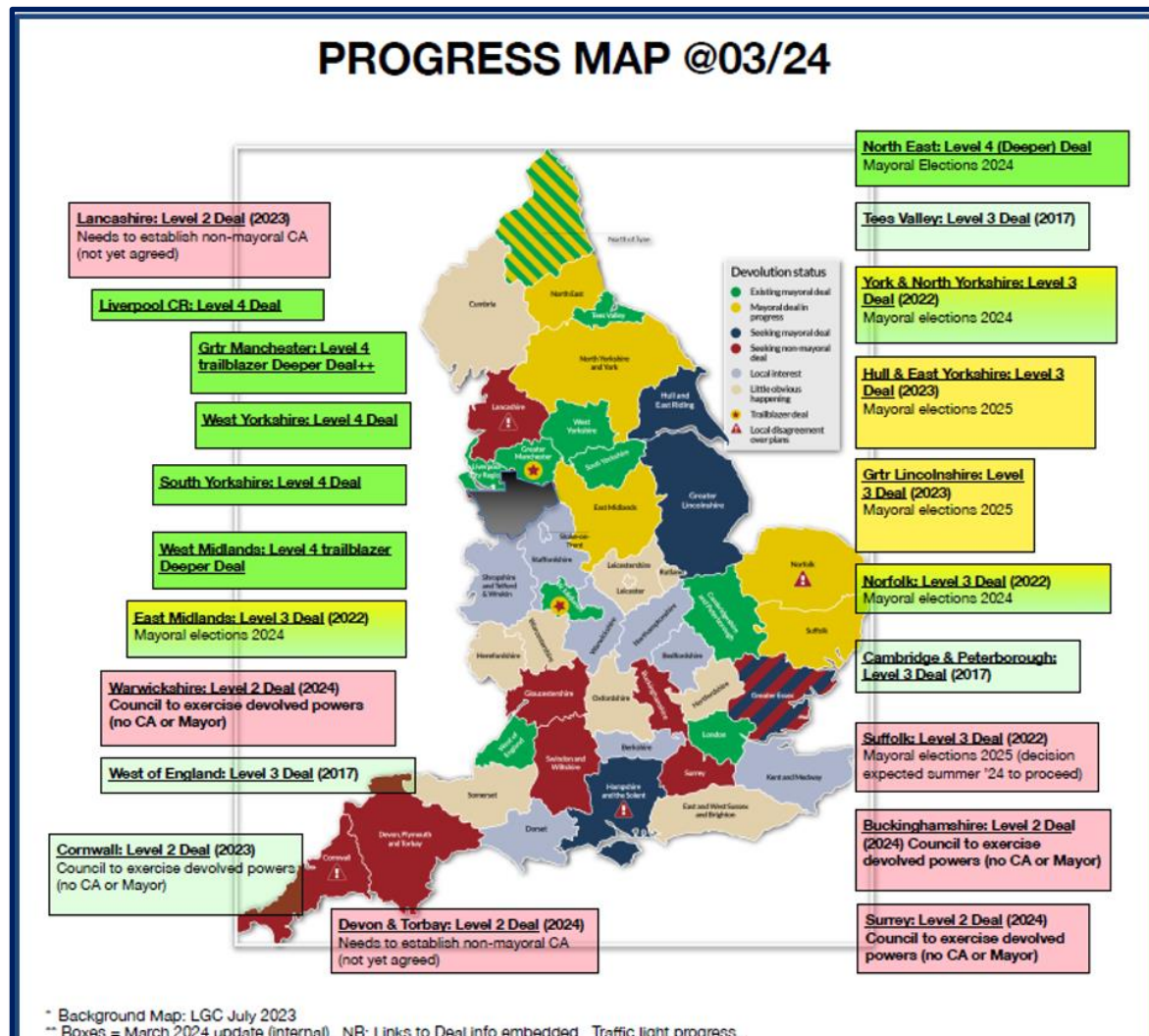
(NB : references to LEP no longer relevant)

Function	Detail	L1	L2	L3
Strategic role in delivering services	Host for Government functions best delivered at a strategic level involving more than one local authority e.g. Local Nature Recovery Strategies	✓	✓	✓
	Opportunity to pool services at a strategic level	✓	✓	✓
	Opportunity to adopt innovative local proposals to deliver action on climate change and the UK's Net Zero targets	✓	✓	✓
Supporting local businesses	LEP functions including hosting strategic business voice		✓	✓
Local control of sustainable transport	Control of appropriate local transport functions e.g. local transport plans*		✓	✓
	Defined key route network*			✓
	Priority for new rail partnerships with Great British Railways – influencing local rail offer, e.g. services and stations			✓
	Ability to introduce bus franchising		✓	✓
	Consolidation of existing core local transport funding for local road maintenance and smaller upgrades into a multi-year integrated settlement			✓
Investment spending	UKSPF planning and delivery at a strategic level		✓	✓
	Long-term investment fund, with an agreed annual allocation			✓
Giving adults the skills for the labour market	Devolution of Adult Education functions and the core Adult Education Budget		✓	✓
	Providing input into Local Skills Improvement Plans		✓	✓
	Role in designing and delivering future contracted employment programmes			✓
Local control of infrastructure decisions	Ability to establish Mayoral Development Corporations (with consent of host local planning authority)			✓
	Devolution of locally-led brownfield funding			✓
	Strategic partnerships with Homes England across the Affordable Housing Programme and brownfield funding			✓
	Homes England compulsory purchase powers (held concurrently)		✓	✓
Keeping the public safe and healthy	Mayoral control of Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) functions where boundaries align*			✓
	Clear defined role in local resilience*		✓	✓
	Where desired offer MCAs a duty for improving the public's health (concurrently with local authorities)			✓
Financing local initiatives for residents and business	Ability to introduce mayoral precepting on council tax*			✓
	Ability to introduce supplement on business rates (increases subject to ballot)			✓

National update : Current position

- 22 The Levelling Up White Paper in 2022 also named ten areas which would be invited to start formal negotiations.
- 23 Cornwall; Derbyshire and Derby; Devon, Plymouth and Torbay; Durham; Hull and East Yorkshire; Leicestershire; Norfolk; Nottinghamshire and Nottingham; and Suffolk were invited to agree new County Deals. York and North Yorkshire were invited to agree a mayoral combined authority (MCA) and the North East were invited to negotiate and agree an expanded MCA deal.
- 24 In June 2022, the Government published the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill. This expanded on the devolution framework set out in the white paper and enabled the creation of County Combined Authorities through new devolution deals.

- 25 Since then, the majority of England's Council's have been or are engaging with government on the proposals for devolved local government.
- 26 The list of deals progressed or under consideration is illustrated below :



- 27 Recognising the level of discussions concluded or ongoing with government cross England, there is a danger that Cheshire East, and therefore Cheshire & Warrington are being left behind, and there is a need to engage fully with Government to understand the opportunity, and the benefits financially and in terms of local control and decision making.

LEP Transition.

- 28 In August 2023 the UK Government confirmed that the functions currently carried out by LEPs would become the responsibility of Local Authorities and therefore Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) functions would become the responsibility of Local Authorities from 1st April 2024.

- 29 A report was considered and approved by Corporate Policy Committee on 13th February 2024 that the Council should increase its shareholding in the company which is controlled by the three Councils across Cheshire and Warrington i.e. Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester and Warrington Borough Councils.
- 30 A new Joint Committee should be formed between the Councils with a new Board appointed alongside the creation of a new Business Advisory Board.
- 31 The decision of Corporate Policy Committee as further approved at Full Council on 27th February 2024.
- 32 Subsequently, the company was renamed as Enterprise Cheshire & Warrington, and the Joint Committee held its inaugural meeting on the 8th April 2024.
- 33 The structure of Enterprise Cheshire & Warrington, together with the Joint Committee, although having a subregional focus, it does not have any key decision making functions on any matters that would form part of a devolution settlement, nor any sub regional matter that would directly impact on any of the local authorities.
- 34 Therefore Enterprise Cheshire & Warrington cannot directly be the platform for future devolution, and that would potentially require the formation of another body, such as a Combined Authority.

What is a Combined Authority ?

- 35 Combined authorities are corporate bodies formed of two or more council areas, established with or without an elected mayor. They enable groups of two or more councils to take decisions across boundaries on issues which extend beyond the interests of any one individual local authority.
- 36 They are a legal body set up using secondary legislation (Combined Authority Orders) but are locally owned and must be initiated by the councils involved. Further detail can be found in the LGA's publication [Combined authorities: a plain English guide](#).
- 37 The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill also sets out proposals regarding a County Combined Authority (CCA). These CCAs will be very similar to existing combined authorities, but can only be made up of county or unitary councils.
- 38 A combined authority is legally required to establish at least one Overview and Scrutiny Committee and an Audit Committee. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has the power to 'call-in' decisions that have been

made but not implemented and can ask that these decisions be reviewed. The committee can also require members or officers of the Combined Authority to come before it and answer questions; any such request must be complied with.

- 39 For clarity, Members of the Combined Authority couldn't vote on something which involved budget/policy at Cheshire East as this would be Council decision.
- 40 In a circumstance where may be a Elected Leader or Mayor, they would have no power to agree anything without consent of the Local Authority Leaders, and therefore their respective Committee/Cabinet.

Why Consider Devolution?



- 41 Looking forward, both major political parties are supporting an approach to devolution.
- 42 Following the general election, if a Conservative Government is re-elected, the policy on devolution is likely to be continued and accelerated.
- 43 Labour's policy document indicates that if elected it will "Turbocharge mayors with access to new powers over transport, skills, housing, planning, employment support and energy supported by integrated long term funding settlements". It also says that if elected a Labour Government would "Work to expand devolution further and faster, with local authorities coming together to take on new powers to boost their economies.
- 44 Devolution is structured to enable the transfer of powers and funds to local functioning economic areas, and to empower sub regional areas to take control and drive forward their local economies.
- 45 The opportunity now exists for officers to engage with government, alongside counterparts in Cheshire West & Chester Council and Warrington Borough Council, as well as support from colleagues at Enterprise Cheshire & Warrington

- 46 Looking at the variety of deals that have been negotiated over the past years, a devolution proposal could enable £20M-£30M funding per annum for up to 30 years.
- 47 The plethora of established deals already in place or being concluded, give officers a benchmark and a template for discussions with Government officials.
- 48 With any new government changes may evolve, and we await to see if the existing template is maintained or varied. By being in discussion with Government will mean we can adapt to any resulting approach.
- 49 The key areas of focus, discussion, negotiation would be :

Financial

- Single Investment Fund (SIF):(Cap/Rev %) (£30m per year)
- 100% Business rates retention
- Identified investments (inc. 5 year transport settlement and innovation)
- Investment/Innovation Zones (inc. £80m over 5 years)
- Support for Catapult (alternative fuels)
- Additional precept
- Innovative use of Pension Funds.
- Devolve Brownfield Land Release Fund
- Devolve Adult Education Budget (AEB)
- Devolve Apprenticeship Levy
- Devolve Environment Land Management Scheme (ELMS)

Devolved powers

- Transport: additional powers for local network
- Shared Homes England strategy for all of the sub region
- Development (Development Corporation)
- Land Assembly across public bodies
- Bespoke requirements for HMG schemes (including
- Net zero permitted development rules)
- Innovation Zone: ability to use funding flexibly to
- Provide incentives

Supporting next steps

Revenue support for at pace capacity/development
Departmental support to develop

- 50 Other opportunities could include:

- Investment zones – Alderley Park , Bentley, Hurdsfield
- Strategic Housing partnership with Homes England
- Further access to decarbonisation funding.

- 51 In understanding the potential benefits, it is also important to consider the 'opportunity cost' if Cheshire East, along with its partner local authorities, do not engage proactively.
- 52 In the past 3 years, Cheshire East has developed and submitted bids for significant investment in Macclesfield and Crewe under the process for 'Levelling Up' Funding. The Council was unsuccessful in receiving an award in Rounds 1 & 2. Subsequently, it didn't receive an allocation under Round 3. Combined Authorities and those areas engaged in advanced devolution discussions received a significant portion of funding and allocations.
- 53 In Autumn 2022, the Council submitted a bid for Investment Zones which included supporting Life Sciences. However, as a result of a subsequent change to the government's approach and policy, Investment Zones were then refocused and identified for the Mayoral Combined Authorities in Liverpool and Greater Manchester. The proximity of the Greater Manchester Investment Zone is likely to provide a negative competitive impact on those existing facilities in the Cheshire East borough.

Why Cheshire & Warrington

- 54 Current government policy sets a minimum population of 500,000 for a devolution settlement. None of three local authorities in Cheshire & Warrington are large enough to fulfil this requirement on their own.
- 55 Guidance from April 2024, government expects functions to be delivered over sensible functional economic areas or whole county geographies as a minimum. Where multiple upper tier local authorities operate across a whole county or function economic area, no upper tier local authority should be left out – there must be no gap in service provision across the area.
- 56 Additionally, government will not provide funding to areas that intend to deliver these functions at a lower-level geography (i.e., below whole county or functional economic area).
- 57 Government expects the delivery of government programmes – such as Growth Hubs and Careers Hubs – to be coterminous with the delivery of business representation and economic planning functions. This geography should be sustainable and maximise efficiency, with effective service delivery as well as enhanced democratic engagement.
- 58 Government guidance identifies that they will not support plans that lead to a fragmentation of approach or where it leads to unsustainable support services to business.

- 59 It is therefore implied, that as a single local authority cannot meet the 500,000 population criteria, then two local authorities would be the minimum , and that any decision to exclude one local authority would have to be with a majority agreement of local authorities.
- 60 If any of the three authorities wanted to join either Greater Manchester or Liverpool City Region, the Government would have to re-negotiate the devolution deal with the whole of the city region and change (secondary) legislation to permit the relevant Cheshire & Warrington authority to join that city region.
- 61 Furthering the application of Government guidance, the most sustainable and functional geographic / economic area would be the three local authorities of Cheshire East, Cheshire West & Chester, and Warrington.

Next Steps

- 62 Following an agreement of this report at Committee, the intention is to engage collaboratively with colleagues at Cheshire West & Chester and Warrington, and seek further discussions with government officials from Department of Levelling Up, Homes & Communities (DLUHC) with a view to shaping the structure of a proposal that will seek to optimise the benefits for Cheshire East, and the wider sub region.
- 63 Following receipt of the final proposal from Government, the proposal will form a report to Corporate Policy Committee for consideration, review, and scrutiny.
- 64 Corporate Policy Committee will then be able to consider the detail fully, and therefore evaluate :
- Financial benefits to Cheshire East and partner local authorities.
 - Extent of devolved powers and control.
 - Roadmap and timetable for any proposed change.

Set against government devolution requirements;

- Geographical / Functional Economic area.
 - Combined Authority structure.
 - Mayoral or Non Mayoral.
- 65 The timetable for discussions may take an extended number of months, which may be further extended with the pending general election and the formation of a new government.

Consultation and Engagement

- 66 Corporate Policy Committee considered a report on Sub Regional Working on 11th July 2023. Subsequently, All Member update presentations were held on 11th September 2023 and 14th September 2023. Relating to this report, a further All Member Briefing was held on the 11th June 2024.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 67 The reason the recommendation is to enable engagement with Government officials to explore the options achievable under a devolution framework.

Other Options Considered

- 68 The option not to engage with Government would mean that Cheshire East is likely to not establish what future allocations of funding and areas of increased regional control are available , and therefore potentially miss out or be excluded from future opportunities.

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing - not establish what future allocations of funding and areas of increased regional control are available , and therefore potentially miss out or be excluded from future opportunities.	Other areas may benefit from increased areas of funding and control. A funding gap and deficit could arise between Cheshire East and adjoining 'devolved' areas.	The current Government and main opposition parties support devolution. The risk of losing funding established for devolved areas is likely.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 69 There are no direct legal implications for this report, as it seeks authority to engage with Government, and bring back to Committee any final proposal for consideration, review, and scrutiny. Legal implications of any proposal will be assessed at that time.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 70 There are no direct financial implications for this report, as it seeks authority to engage with Government, and bring back to Committee any

final proposal for consideration, review, and scrutiny. Financial implications of any proposal will be assessed at that time.

Policy

- 71 There are no direct policy implications for this report, as it seeks authority to engage with Government, and bring back to Committee any final proposal for consideration, review, and scrutiny. The council will seek to engage with government recognising the objectives of the Corporate plan and council policies. Policy compliance of any proposal will be assessed at that time.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 72 There are no direct Equality implications for this report, as it seeks authority to engage with Government, and bring back to Committee any final proposal for consideration, review, and scrutiny. Equality and inclusiveness of any proposal will be assessed at that time.

Human Resources

- 73 There are no direct HR implications for this report, as it seeks authority to engage with Government, and bring back to Committee any final proposal for consideration, review, and scrutiny. Staffing impact and resources required for any proposal will be assessed at that time.

Risk Management

- 74 There are key risk implications for this report, as it seeks authority to engage with Government, and bring back to Committee any final proposal for consideration, review, and scrutiny. Risk profile and management of any proposal will be assessed at that time.

Rural Communities

- 75 Supporting the Rural economy and Rural communities will be a key focus for Cheshire East and the sub region in any discussions with Government.

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

- 76 Supporting the wellbeing and education of our Children and Young People will be a focus in any discussions for Cheshire East , and the sub region. A skills development programme will provide future support and opportunity.

Public Health

- 77 There are no direct public health implications for this report, as it seeks authority to engage with Government, and bring back to Committee any final proposal for consideration, review, and scrutiny. Public Health support and opportunities of any proposal will be assessed at that time.

Climate Change

- 78 Supporting Net Zero and responding to Climate Change will be a focus for Cheshire East and the sub region in any discussions with Government.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Peter Skates Acting Executive Director - Place peter.skates@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	n/a

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OPEN**Corporate Policy Committee****13 June 2024****Annual Complaints and Compliments 2023-2024**

Report of: Adele Taylor, Interim Director of Finance and Customer Services**Report Reference No: CPC/25/24-25****Ward(s) Affected: All****Purpose of Report**

- 1 This report provides a summary and analysis of complaints and compliments received by the Council during the period 1st April 2023 to 31 March 2024.
- 2 The report highlights any areas of concern and examples of good practice. It provides assurance that matters raised as complaints by customers are being addressed; that action has been taken to rectify issues and that information arising from complaints has informed service improvements. Responsibility for services rests with the relevant service committee and members may wish to seek additional assurances from those service committees.
- 3 The report supports the strategic aims and objectives in the Council's Corporate Plan 2021-25 to become an open and enabling Council and specifically supports the objectives of the Council's Customer Experience Strategy.

Executive Summary

- 4 The Council provides the facility for customers to report compliments and complaints in relation to council services in an accessible and consistent way. Improvements have been made to the processes for these customer engagements following the approval of the Customer Experience Strategy by the Corporate Policy Committee in March 2021. As part of this approval the Committee continues to receive updated performance information on progress.
- 5 The Council provides in the region of 500 different services across a population of almost 400,000 residents. These range from place-based

services, such as waste collection and highways management which are universal, to individual services such as social care and housing.

- 6 The Council received 3,051 complaints and 824 compliments in between April 2023 and March 2024 (see Appendix 8 for examples of compliments received). The figures for this report were run on the 22nd of March 2024.
- 7 In 2023/24, there was an increase of 16% in received complaints compared with 2022/23. There was a 15% decrease in compliments received compared to the previous year. Of the 3,051 complaints received in 2023/24, 225 were rejected, withdrawn or not pursued; and the remaining 2,826 were processed as official complaints.
- 8 Of the 2,826 processed complaints, 164 were Stage 2 complaints. There were 2 Stage 3 complaints in 2023/24.
- 9 The Council has a two-stage complaints procedure. Most complaints are resolved at Stage 1 where a complaint is investigated and responded to by a manager from the service being complained about. The council's Customer Charter sets a standard of 10 or 20 days to respond to a complaint (depending on the stage and whether statutory or non-statutory). The customer will generally receive a written response within 10 working days, unless the matter has been resolved and the customer has been contacted directly by the service via telephone or email.
- 10 If the customer remains unhappy following the Stage 1 response and outcome, they can request that the complaint is considered at Stage 2. At this stage a review of the complaint is carried out by a manager who has not previously been involved with the complaint. It should be noted that the statutory complaints process for Children's Social Care has the option to go to Stage 3 if required.
- 11 Customer feedback is very important in the future development of services and this report provides data and activities related to feedback in the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024, focusing on those services which received a comparatively high volume of complaints (compared with other services in the same committee); or where complaint volumes have significantly increased for a service. The Customer Services Team has continued to increase engagement with service leads throughout this period in line with the strategy. This has led to process changes, increased awareness, and insight as well as additional training.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corporate Policy Committee is recommended to:

- 1 Note the Committee complaints and compliments data, and the briefing material in this report relating to 2023/24.
- 2 Note the issues raised and improvements made in respect to the management of complaints across the Council contained within the briefing material in this report.
- 3 Note the Council's compliance with the Corporate Complaints Policy, and with the recommendations of the Ombudsman.

Background

- 12 The Council has a Corporate Complaints Policy covering all complaints about Council services other than Adults & Health and Children's Social Care complaints, which each have a separate statutory complaints process.
- 13 The policy provides for members of the public to contact the Council in several different ways. Most complaints are received either by email, via the Customer Contact Centre or are self-logged via the Council's website. Appendix 9 shows the volume of telephone contact with the Council for each committee, as well as the specific contact count for customer feedback.
- 14 The Local Government Act 1974 established the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. It empowers the Ombudsman to investigate complaints against councils and adult social care providers and to provide advice and guidance on good administrative practice. Once a complainant has exhausted the Council's complaints procedure, their next recourse, should they remain dissatisfied with the Council's response, is to contact the Ombudsman.
- 15 The Ombudsman will assess the merits of each case escalated to them and seek clarification from the Council as necessary before making the decision to investigate a complaint. Once the Ombudsman decides to investigate, they will try to ascertain if maladministration/Fault has occurred and whether there has been any resulting injustice to the complainant because of the maladministration/Fault.
- 16 In instances where maladministration/Fault with Injustice is found, the Ombudsman will usually make non-legally binding recommendations

which they consider to be appropriate and reasonable. Although not legally binding, refusal to accept the Ombudsman's recommendation(s) will trigger a Public Report. A Public Report is a detailed account of the complaint, outlining the failures by the Council in the investigation.

- 17 All complaints are a useful indicator of performance and provide the Council with an opportunity to review the quality of service provided and to make improvements. The Customer Relations Team within Customer Services reports the volume, outcome and time taken to resolve complaints to each Directorate on a quarterly basis. The volume of compliments, overall customer contact and, where appropriate, areas of concern and potential for service improvements are also reported.
- 18 During January 2024, we launched a complaints customer satisfaction survey, to gauge how customers who had made a complaint felt about the response they had received. The results from Quarter 4 (mid-January to end of March) are in Appendix 10. However, we do not yet have adequate meaningful data to start making improvements and changes to both the complaints service and the back-office departments – this will be done in the coming quarters.
- 19 Colleagues from several services have attended the in-house Customer Experience Training for Managers; and the feedback from the trainees via the training evaluation survey has been very positive.
- 20 At the start of Quarter 2, the Complaints Team introduced a 'themes tracker' to assist in understanding the root of complaints. This is referenced in the Briefing section below.
- 21 Data provided within this report relates to the 'static' SLAs – which are set out by the Charter. Two services (SEND and Development Management) currently have temporary Stage 1 complaint SLAs of 20 working days rather than 10 working days; and on occasion, services may agree a different SLA with the complainant / correspondent. Appendix 5 gives details of the static SLA data; Appendix 6 gives the 'non-static' SLA data – SLAs which have been agreed between the complainant and the responder which may fall outside the Charter's SLAs.
- 22 The Adult Social Care Complaints policy has been reviewed; and one of the main changes is that the Stage 2 option has been removed. Relatively few adult social care complaints were escalated to Stage 2, with the majority being resolved at Stage 1. Instead, further work at Stage 1 – including the offer of a meeting and a further written response – will be completed where deemed necessary to provide further clarification to the complainant. They will then be referred to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman if they remain dissatisfied. In

anticipation of the new policy being implemented, as of October the 1st 2023, we ceased escalating any complaints to a formal Stage 2 review. The new policy was published on the 8th of March 2024.

- 23 The LGSCO published the results of their consultation on their Complaints Handling Code on the 8th of February 2024. The Ombudsman believes that a single code that applies to all councils in England will make it easier for customers to know what to expect in terms of how their complaint is going to be dealt with; and that it will improve complaints handling and standards, resulting in better services. The published code is advisory only, though in 2025/26 they intend to start applying the code to their casework. The Corporate Complaints Policy is currently being revised; and the LGSCO code will be used as a foundation.

Briefing

Adults and Health

- 24 Adults and Health received 146 complaints in 2023/24, 5% of the total received by the council. Of these, 30 complaints were rejected, withdrawn, or not pursued; the remaining 116 were processed as official complaints.
- 25 2023/24 saw a 14% decrease in received complaints compared with 2022/23 (170). There were 3 Stage 2 complaints processed in 2023/24, compared with 16 in 2022/23 (a reduction of 81%).
- 26 64% of processed complaints were answered within the static SLAs, compared with 59% in 2022/23.
- 27 Eight service areas within Adults and Health responded to complaints between April 2023 and March 2024.
- 28 Social Care Business Support & Finance received 31 complaints - 21% of Adults and Health complaints, a decrease of 64% compared with 2022/23 (85). 80% of processed complaints were responded to within the 10-working day SLA. 53% of processed complaints were upheld or partly upheld. The following primary causes were recorded:

Communication	Service Quality	Payments or Disputed Charges	Service Failure	Staff Conduct	Policy and Procedure	Legal and Regulatory
3%	13%	71%	0%	13%	0%	0%

- 29 There are 9 themes in the themes tracker for Social Care Business Support & Finance in quarters 2 - 4 of 2023/24. The top 5 themes are:

Theme	Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not upheld	Ongoing	Rejected	Not Pursued	Withdrawn
Social Care Contributions	2	2	2	0	0	0	0
Disagree with Financial Assessment	0	0	5	0	0	0	0
Overpayments	0	2	1	0	0	0	0
Unprofessional Behaviour	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Home Care Costs	0	2	0	0	0	0	0

- 30 The Adults service received 20 complaints (14% of Adults and Health complaints), the same number as 2022/23. 80% of processed complaints were responded to within the 10-working day SLA. 27% of processed complaints were upheld or partly upheld. The following primary causes were recorded:

Communication	Service Quality	Payments or Disputed Charges	Service Failure	Staff Conduct	Policy and Procedure	Legal and Regulatory
10%	30%	35%	10%	10%	5%	0%

- 31 There are 8 themes in the themes tracker for the Adults service in quarters 2 - 4 of 2023/24. The 5 key themes are:

Theme	Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not upheld	Ongoing	Rejected	Not Pursued	Withdrawn
Care Home Costs	0	1	4	0	3	0	0
Complaint Against Individual Social Worker	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Safeguarding	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Care Assessment Incorrectly Carried Out	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Disagree with Care Assessment	0	0	0	0	1	0	0

- 32 Adults Commissioning received 17 complaints (12% of Adults and Health complaints), a decrease of 11% compared to 2022/23 (19). 78% of processed complaints were responded to within the 10-working day SLA. 78% of processed complaints were upheld or partly upheld. The following primary causes were recorded:

Communication	Service Quality	Payments or Disputed Charges	Service Failure	Staff Conduct	Policy and Procedure	Legal and Regulatory
0%	76%	6%	0%	6%	12%	0%

- 33 There are 8 themes in the themes tracker for Adults Commissioning in quarters 2 - 4 of 2023/24. The 5 key themes are:

Theme	Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not upheld	Ongoing	Rejected	Not Pursued	Withdrawn
Failures at Multiple Points in Care Process	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
Closure of Stanley Centre	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Care Home Costs	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Safeguarding	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Quality of Care from 3rd Party Provider (Evolving Care)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0

- 34 Adults and Health received 364 compliments between April 2023 and March 2024, spread across 35 services. The Domiciliary Reablement North Team received the highest number (59); followed by the Domiciliary Reablement South Team (54) and the Dementia Reablement South Team (46).

Children and Families

- 35 Children and Families received 512 complaints in 2023/24, 17% of the total received by the council. Of these, 83 complaints were rejected, withdrawn, or not pursued; the remaining 429 were processed as official complaints.

- 36 2023/24 saw a 32% increase in received complaints compared with 2022/23 (388). There were 39 processed Stage 2 complaints in 2023/24, compared with 32 in 2022/23 (an increase of 22%). There were 2 processed Stage 3 complaints in both 2022/23 and 2023/24.
- 37 30% of processed complaints were answered within the static SLAs, compared with 25% in 2022/23. This percentage is impacted by SEN having a temporary 20-working day SLA at Stage 1. If this is considered, 68% of Children and Families complaints were answered within SLA.
- 38 Children's Social Care and SEND staff have continued to deal with increasing demand which impacts on caseloads, which combined with staff turnover and absence has affected the ability to respond to complaints in a timely manner. The Customer Relations Team have been proactive in trying to help teams respond to complaints.
- 39 Fourteen service areas within Children and Families responded to complaints in 2023/24.
- 40 The SEND Team accounts for 46% of all Children and Families processed complaints (233), an increase of 23% compared with 2022/23 (190). 8% of complaints were responded to within the static 10-working day SLA; though as previously noted this service has a temporary SLA of 20 working days and 85% of responses were made within this SLA. 87% of complaints were upheld or partly upheld. The following primary causes were recorded:

Communication	Service Quality	Payments or Disputed Charges	Service Failure	Staff Conduct	Policy and Procedure	Legal and Regulatory
16%	50%	2%	25%	1%	5%	1%

41 There are 17 themes in the themes tracker for the SEND Team in quarters 2 - 4 of 2023/24. The top 5 themes are:

Theme	Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not upheld	Ongoing	Rejected	Not Pursued	Withdrawn
School Placement	21	12	0	0	14	1	4
Required Support for EHCP Not Being Provided	7	12	6	0	5	2	1
ECHP Inappropriate	5	10	5	1	4	0	1
Annual Review Timescales Not Being Met	11	7	1	0	3	1	2
EHCP Not Created	9	8	1	0	1	0	1

42 The SEND Team commenced using the new complaints process at the start of Quarter 3. No SEND complaints received in the latter 2 quarters of 2023/24 have been escalated to Stage 2.

43 CIN/CP Crewe complaints account for 11% of all Children and Families received complaints (56), an increase of 30% compared with 2022/23 (43). 33% of processed complaints were responded to within the 10-working day SLA. 62% of processed complaints were upheld or partly upheld. The following primary causes were recorded:

Communication	Service Quality	Payments or Disputed Charges	Service Failure	Staff Conduct	Policy and Procedure	Legal and Regulatory
11%	30%	0%	5%	36%	13%	5%

44 There are 10 themes in the themes tracker for CIN/CP Crewe in quarters 2 - 4 of 2023/24. The top 5 themes are:

Theme	Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not upheld	Ongoing	Rejected	Not Pursued	Withdrawn
Complaint Against Individual Social Worker	1	4	2	0	2	1	0
Safeguarding	3	0	1	0	1	0	0
Failures at Multiple Points in Care Process	0	1	1	0	0	1	1
Section 47 Investigation	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Child Taken into Care	0	0	1	1	1	1	0

- 45 Education Travel accounts for 10% of all Children and Families received complaints (49), an increase of 444% compared with 2022/23 (9). 82% of processed complaints were responded to within the 10-working day SLA. 78% of processed complaints were upheld or partly upheld. The following primary causes were recorded:

Communication	Service Quality	Payments or Disputed Charges	Service Failure	Staff Conduct	Policy and Procedure	Legal and Regulatory
15%	68%	8%	0%	4%	5%	0%

- 46 There are 11 themes in the themes tracker for Education Travel in quarters 2 - 4 of 2023/24. The top 5 themes are:

Theme	Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not upheld	Ongoing	Rejected	Not Pursued	Withdrawn
Transport Provision	8	3	7	0	0	1	0
Change of Operator	4	3	0	0	1	0	1
Child Safety	6	1	0	0	0	0	0
Application Process	4	1	0	0	0	0	1
Transport Scheduling	3	0	1	0	0	0	0

- 47 We have created customer journey maps throughout the year, and these have been shared with the service for comment and to make suggestions as to where improvements can be made. Members of the Continuous Improvement Team have met with colleagues from Educational Travel; and suggestions around improving the customer experience during peak times have been put forward. The Customer Relations Team will meet with Educational Travel to discuss the coming year, and anticipated complaints around changes in education travel policy. The Customer Relations Team have also offered to go through the complaints in the themes tracker for Quarters 2 – 4 of 2023/24 with Education Travel to identify policy complaints and discuss standard wording for responses to these.
- 48 Cared for Children and Care Leavers Service complaints account for 10% of all Children and Families received complaints (53), an increase of 51% compared with 2022/23 (35). 55% of processed complaints were responded to

within the 10-working day SLA. 45% of processed complaints were upheld or partly upheld. The following primary causes were recorded:

Communication	Service Quality	Payments or Disputed Charges	Service Failure	Staff Conduct	Policy and Procedure	Legal and Regulatory
12%	42%	2%	12%	26%	4%	2%

- 49 There are 15 themes in the themes tracker for the Cared for Children and Care Leavers Service in quarters 2 - 4 of 2023/24. The top 5 themes are:

Theme	Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not upheld	Ongoing	Rejected	Not Pursued	Withdrawn
Complaint Against Individual Social Worker	3	0	7	0	1	0	1
Contact with a Child	6	0	1	0	1	0	0
Failures at Multiple Points in Care Process	2	2	2	1	1	0	0
Child Taken into Care	0	0	1	0	2	0	0
Leaving Care Status	1	0	2	0	0	0	0

- 50 Children and Families received 167 compliments in 2023/24, spread across 10 services. Family Services received the highest number (71); followed by the SEN Team (70) and Education (8).

Corporate Policy

- 51 Corporate Policy received 262 complaints in 2023/24. 9% of the total received by the council. Of these, 14 complaints were rejected, withdrawn, or not pursued; the remaining 248 were processed as official complaints.
- 52 2023/24 saw an 18% decrease in received complaints compared with 2022/23 (319). There were 12 Stage 2 processed complaints in both 2022/23 and 2023/24.

53 82% of processed complaints were answered within the static 10-working day SLA, compared with 77% in 2022/23.

54 Sixteen service areas within Corporate Policy responded to complaints in 2023/24.

The Council Tax Billing and Collections team account for 44% of all received complaints (120), a decrease of 34% compared with 2022/23 (181). 88% of complaints were responded to within the 10-working day SLA. 35% of complaints were upheld or partly upheld. The following primary causes were recorded:

Communication	Service Quality	Payments or Disputed Charges	Service Failure	Staff Conduct	Policy and Procedure	Legal and Regulatory
24%	49%	23%	2%	0%	2%	0%

55 There are 20 themes in the themes tracker for the Council Tax Billing and Collections team in quarters 2 - 4 of 2023/24. The top 5 themes are:

Theme	Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not upheld	Ongoing	Rejected	Not Pursued	Withdrawn
Bailiff Involvement	10	0	6	0	0	0	0
Receipt of Reminder Letter	3	0	6	0	0	0	0
Receipt of Summons Letter	0	0	8	0	0	0	0
Council Tax Rebates	2	0	5	0	0	0	0
Council Tax Arrears	2	0	4	0	0	0	0

56 Customer Service Centres (Macclesfield & Crewe) account for 13% of received complaints (33), a decrease of 35% compared with 2022/23 (51). 93% of complaints were responded to within the 10-working day SLA. 77% of complaints were upheld or partly upheld. The following primary causes were recorded:

Communication	Service Quality	Payments or Disputed Charges	Service Failure	Staff Conduct	Policy and Procedure	Legal and Regulatory
12%	36%	0%	4%	48%	0%	0%

- 57 There are 9 themes in the themes tracker for Customer Service Centres (Macclesfield & Crewe) in quarters 2 - 4 of 2023/24. The top 5 themes are:

Theme	Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not upheld	Ongoing	Rejected	Not Pursued	Withdrawn
Advisor - Rude / Abrupt Manner	6	3	3	0	0	0	0
Telephone - Line Cutting Off	2	0	1	0	0	0	1
Inter-departmental Communication	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
Inaccurate Information Provided	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Unprofessional Behaviour	0	0	2	0	0	0	0

- 58 Corporate Policy received 166 compliments in 2023/24, spread across 6 services. The Council Tax Billing and Collections team received the most compliments (98); followed by Customer Service Centres (36); and Business Rates Billing and Collection (29).

Economy and Growth

- 59 Economy and Growth received 68 complaints in 2023/24. 2% of the total received by the council. Of these, 7 complaints were rejected, withdrawn, or not pursued; the remaining 61 were processed as official complaints.
- 60 2023/24 saw a 19% increase in received complaints compared with 2022/23 (57). There were 3 Stage 2 complaints processed in 2023/24, compared with 6 in 2022/23, a decrease of 50%.

- 61 62% of processed complaints were answered within the static 10-working day SLA, compared with 53% in 2022/23.
- 62 Six service areas within Economy and Growth responded to complaints in 2023/24.
- 63 Strategic Housing accounted for 50% (34) of all Economy and Growth complaints received, a decrease of 6% compared with 2022/23 (36). 71% of processed complaints were responded to within the 10-working day SLA. 29% of processed complaints were upheld or partly upheld. The following primary causes were recorded:

Communication	Service Quality	Payments or Disputed Charges	Service Failure	Staff Conduct	Policy and Procedure	Legal and Regulatory
9%	65%	0%	0%	15%	0%	11%

- 64 There are 8 themes in the themes tracker for Strategic Housing in quarters 2 - 4 of 2023/24. The top 5 themes are:

Theme	Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not upheld	Ongoing	Rejected	Not Pursued	Withdrawn
Home Choice - Priority / Banding	0	1	7	0	0	0	0
Homelessness	2	0	3	0	0	0	0
Social Housing Eligibility	0	0	2	1	0	0	0
Home Adaptations	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Disabled Facilities Grant	0	1	0	0	0	0	0

- 65 Assets & Property accounted for 34% (22) of all Economy and Growth complaints received, an increase of 29% compared with 2022/23 (17). 38% of processed complaints were responded to within the 10-working day SLA. 38% of complaints processed were upheld or partly upheld. The following primary causes were recorded:

Communication	Service Quality	Payments or Disputed Charges	Service Failure	Staff Conduct	Policy and Procedure	Legal and Regulatory
14%	59%	0%	18%	0%	9%	0%

66 There are 9 themes in the themes tracker for Assets & Property in quarters 2 - 4 of 2023/24. The top 5 themes are:

Theme	Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not upheld	Ongoing	Rejected	Not Pursued	Withdrawn
No Response to Customer Contact	2	0	1	1	0	0	0
Maintenance of CEC Assets	2	0	1	1	0	0	0
Maintenance of Empty CEC Assets	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Sale of CEC Assets	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Boundary Responsibility	0	0	1	0	0	0	0

67 Economy and Growth received 2 compliments in 2023/24; Growth and Regeneration and Rural and Green Infrastructure received one each.

Environment and Communities

68 Environment and Communities received 1,678 complaints in 2023/24. 55% of the total received by the council. Of these, 53 complaints were rejected, withdrawn, or not pursued; the remaining 1,625 were processed as official complaints.

69 2023/24 saw a 36% increase in received complaints compared with 2022/23 (1,233). There were 95 Stage 2 complaints processed in 2023/24, compared with 60 in 2022/23, an increase of 58%.

- 70 70% of complaints were answered within the static 10-working day SLA, compared with 71% in 2022/23. This percentage is impacted by Development Management having a temporary 20-working day SLA. If this is considered, 79% of Environment and Communities complaints were answered within SLA.
- 71 Nineteen service areas within Environment and Communities responded to complaints in 2023/24.
- 72 Waste & Recycling accounted for 47% (790) of all Environment and Communities complaints received, an increase of 4% on the previous year (758). 90% of processed complaints were responded to within the 10-working day SLA. 95% of processed complaints were upheld or partly upheld. The following primary causes were recorded:

Communication	Service Quality	Payments or Disputed Charges	Service Failure	Staff Conduct	Policy and Procedure	Legal and Regulatory
1%	34%	1%	61%	2%	1%	0%

- 73 There are 27 themes in the themes tracker for Waste & Recycling in quarters 2 - 4 of 2023/24. The top 3 are:

Theme	Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not upheld	Ongoing	Rejected	Not Pursued	Withdrawn
Multiple Missed Bin Collections	447	21	15	0	3	2	3
Missed Bin Not Returned for in 5 Working Days	71	3	2	1	0	0	0
Multiple Missed Bin – Assisted Collection	42	0	1	0	0	0	0

- 74 Environmental Services (Waste Strategy) accounted for 33% (546) of all Environment and Communities complaints received. The service saw an increase of 1409% in 2023/24 compared with 2022/23 (35). 60% of processed complaints were responded to within the 10-working day SLA. 36% of processed complaints were upheld or partly upheld. The following primary causes were recorded:

Communication	Service Quality	Payments or Disputed Charges	Service Failure	Staff Conduct	Policy and Procedure	Legal and Regulatory
8%	45%	16%	7%	0%	24%	0%

- 75 There are 41 themes in the themes tracker for Environmental Services (Waste Strategy) in quarters 2 - 4 of 2023/24. The top 3 themes are:

Theme	Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not upheld	Ongoing	Rejected	Not Pursued	Withdrawn
Damaged Bin Replacement Charge	100	2	106	0	1	4	1
Garden Bin Subscription Charge	4	5	133	0	0	5	0
Garden Waste Scheme	14	9	42	1	1	2	0

- 76 Development Management accounted for 11% of all received complaints for Environment and Communities (181), a decrease of 10% on 2022/23 (202). 29% of processed complaints were responded to within the static 10-working day SLA, though as previously noted this service has a temporary SLA of 20 working days and 91% of processed responses were made within this SLA. 56% of processed complaints were upheld or partly upheld. The following primary causes were recorded:

Communication	Service Quality	Payments or Disputed Charges	Service Failure	Staff Conduct	Policy and Procedure	Legal and Regulatory
31%	62%	1%	2%	3%	1%	0%

- 77 In the last quarter of 2022/23 and throughout 2023/24, Development Management have been working under the new complaints process. One of the key objectives being a reduction in Stage 2 complaints. 2023/24 saw a reduction of 24% for Stage 2 complaints, 38 compared with 50 in 2022/23. During this time, customer journey maps have been created for the service; and these have been shared with the service for comment and to make suggestions as to where improvements can be made. Customer Services have also provided further training in

using CRM, to ensure that colleagues in Development Management are aware of how the customer call back process works and that call backs are made within SLA.

- 78 There are 19 themes in the themes tracker for Development Management in quarters 2 - 4 of 2023/24. The top 3 are:

Theme	Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not upheld	Ongoing	Rejected	Not Pursued	Withdrawn
No Action - Planning Application	21	7	10	1	0	1	1
No Response to Customer Contact	17	12	6	0	0	2	0
Disagree with a Decision	1	14	11	0	2	0	0

- 79 Environment and Communities received 96 compliments in 2023/24, spread across 11 services. Waste and Recycling received the most compliments (44); followed by Grounds Maintenance (19); and Libraries (11).

Highways and Transport

- 80 Highways and Transport received 385 complaints in 2023/24. 13% of the total received by the council. Of these, 38 complaints were rejected, withdrawn, or not pursued; the remaining 347 were processed as official complaints.
- 81 2023/24 saw an 18% decrease in received complaints compared with 2022/23 (470). There were 17 Stage 2 complaints processed in 2023/24, compared with 30 in 2022/23, a decrease of 43%.
- 82 67% of complaints were answered within the static 10-working day SLA, compared with 71% in 2022/23.
- 83 Three service areas within Highways and Transport responded to complaints in 2023/24.
- 84 Highways accounted for 83% (320) of Highways and Transport complaints received, a decrease of 23% compared with 2022/23 (415). 79% of processed complaints were responded to within the 10-working day SLA. 51% of processed complaints were upheld or partly upheld. The following primary causes were recorded:

Communication	Service Quality	Payments or Disputed Charges	Service Failure	Staff Conduct	Policy and Procedure	Legal and Regulatory
8%	82%	1%	3%	3%	3%	0%

85 There are 47 themes in the themes tracker for Highways in quarters 2 - 4 of 2023/24. The top 5 are:

Theme	Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not upheld	Ongoing	Rejected	Not Pursued	Withdrawn
Flooding	10	11	13	1	3	0	1
No Action - Reported Potholes	4	8	12	0	2	1	0
No Action - Street Lighting Issues	6	8	5	0	2	0	0
Gullies & Drain (Flooding)	5	6	7	0	1	0	0
No Action - Gullies and Drains	3	4	5	0	0	0	0

86 Highways and Transport received 26 compliments in 2023/24, spread across 3 services. Highways received the most compliments (23); and Parking Services (2) and Strategic Infrastructure (1).

Consultation and Engagement

- 87 Quarterly reports on complaints and compliments are provided to all directorates highlighting areas of concern and of good practice specific to their directorate. By recognising the key themes and primary causes of complaints, management teams are enabled to consider opportunities to drive improvements and to share best practice. This can form the basis of developing forward action plans to improve the service and its delivery. A key theme in complaints received across all directorates is communication with customers, and the work we are doing with customer service standards is important to making improvements.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 88 To ensure that the Committee is provided with assurances of service departments use of complaints to deliver service improvements in line with the Customer Experience Strategy.
- 89 To ensure that the Committee is kept informed of the Ombudsman's findings and to provide assurance that the Council is complying with the Corporate Complaints Policy and any recommendations made by the Ombudsman.

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing	Poor customer experience would not be addressed, lessons would not be learned, and service improvements would not be made	Likely increase in complaints to Local Government Ombudsman with the potential for financial penalties and poor reputational impact

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 90 Whilst there are no legal implications flowing directly from the content of this report, there are legal, reputational and resource implications in complaints that are taken through the corporate process and in addressing complaints which reach LGO and Public Report. Providing services with the data and trends is a means to influence and improve customer engagement.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 91 If Fault causing Injustice is found, the Council can be asked to pay compensation to a complainant, the level of which is determined on a case by-case basis. The cost of such compensation is paid for by the service at fault. In 12 cases where the Ombudsman found Fault with Injustice between April 2023 and March 2024, the Council was required to make compensation payments totalling £17,125. This represents a 339% increase on payments made between April 2022 and March 2023.
- 92 Two cases account for £13,275 of this compensation (£9,500 and £3,775). The remaining cases totalling £3,850.

Policy

- 93 Analysis of complaints enables services to identify and deliver improvements in service aligned with the Council's Customer Experience Strategy. If a high volume of complaints were received about a specific policy, a review of the relevant policy could be triggered and referred to the relevant service committee.

An open and enabling organisation.	A council which empowers and cares about people	A thriving and sustainable place
1.Listen, learn and respond to our residents, promoting opportunities for a two-way conversation		

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 94 When responding to complaints, the Council must ensure that people are treated fairly and that we comply with the Equality Act 2010, making reasonable adjustments where necessary. This may include providing responses in large font, using coloured paper, or communicating by specific means such as email only.

Human Resources

- 95 Whilst the primary purpose of this report is to inform Members of the outcome of complaints and to seek to secure improvements in performance, resource implications arise from the high numbers of complaints. These relate to the increased demand upon officers in researching the background to complaints and responding appropriately. Where complaints relate to specific staff members, for example because of behaviour or attitude, these are escalated to the appropriate manager.

Risk Management

- 96 If recommendations made by the Ombudsman are not followed, this could trigger a public report, as detailed in paragraphs 14 to 16.

Rural Communities

- 97 There are no direct implications for rural communities.

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

- 98 Implications for Children and Young people are included in paragraphs 37 and 38 of this report – particularly relating to lack SEND provision or social care support.

Public Health

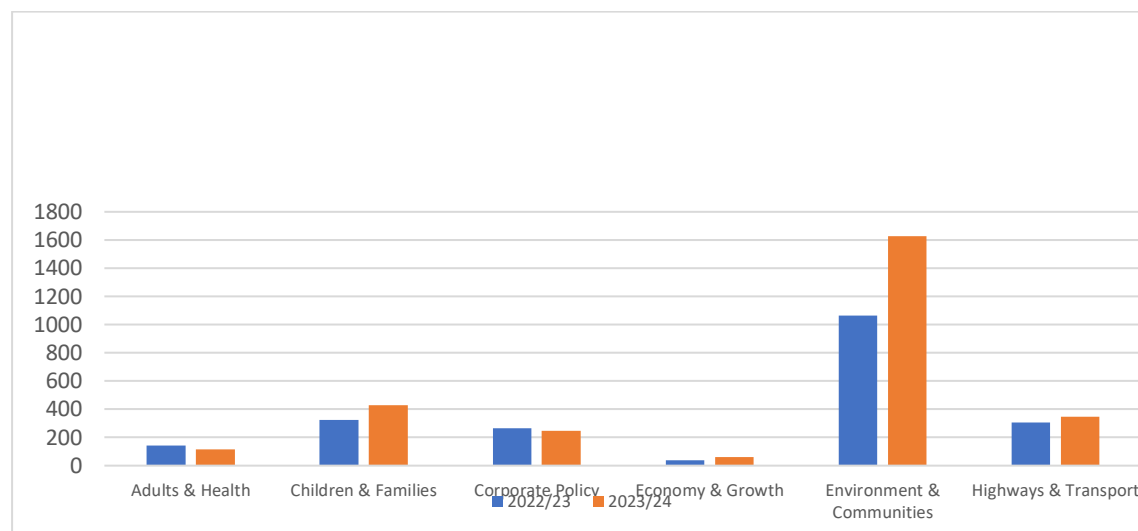
- 99 *There are no direct implications for public health.*

Climate Change

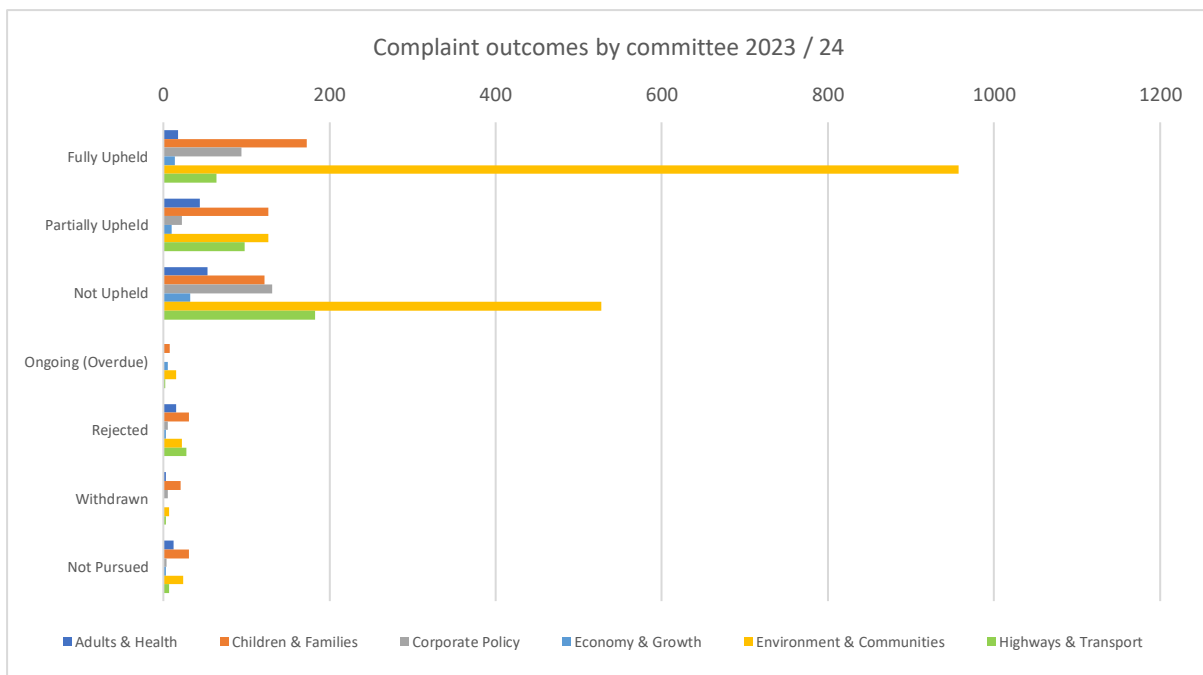
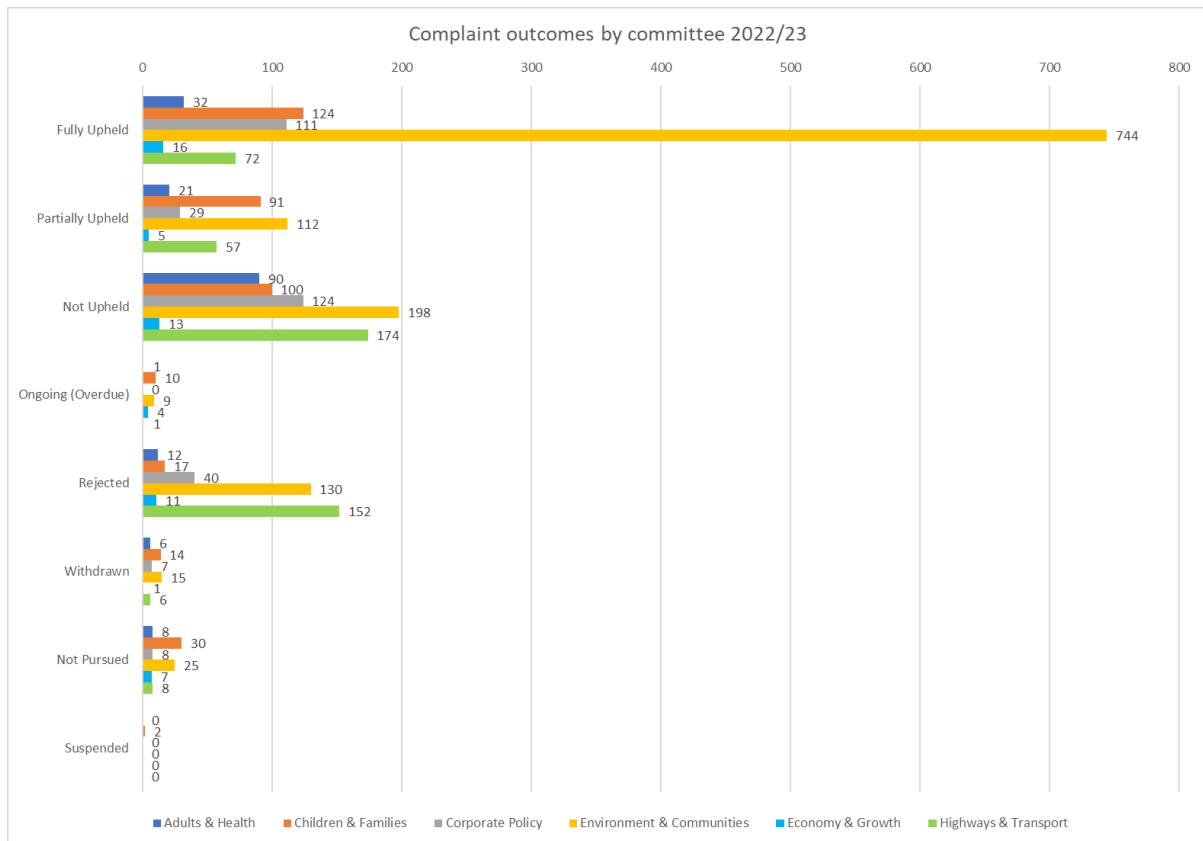
- 100 There are no direct implications for climate change

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Jane Farnworth, Acting Head of Customer Services Jane.farnworth@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	<p>Appendix 1 - Comparison of total complaints by committee 2022/23 and 2023/24</p> <p>Appendix 2 - Comparison of complaint outcomes by committee 2022/23 and 2023/24</p> <p>Appendix 3 - Comparison of complaint outcome distribution by committee 2022/23 and 2023/24</p> <p>Appendix 4 - Processed complaint outcomes by committee, per complaint stage</p> <p>Appendix 5 - Complaint response timeframe performance 2023/24 by committee (static)</p> <p>Appendix 6 - Complaint response timeframe performance 2023/24 by committee (non-static)</p> <p>Appendix 7 - Compliments received 2023/24 by committee.</p> <p>Appendix 8 - Examples of compliments received, by committee.</p> <p>Appendix 9 - Contact volumes 2023/24 by committee</p> <p>Appendix 10 – Quarter 4 complaints survey report</p> <p>Appendix 11 - Outcome of complaints to the LGSCO by committee</p> <p>Appendix 12 - Summary of Recommended Actions from Ombudsman Decision Notices where Fault was found (as per Appendix 10)</p>
Background Papers:	N/A

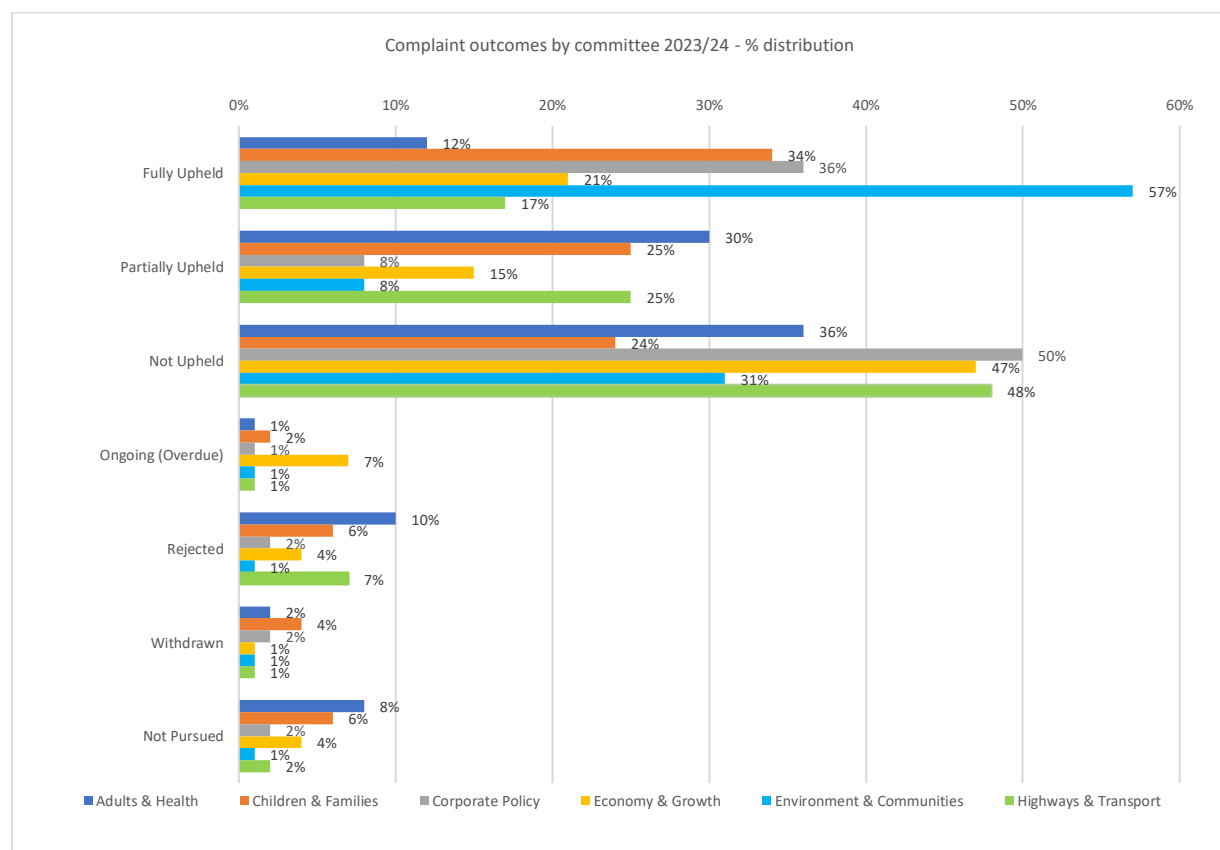
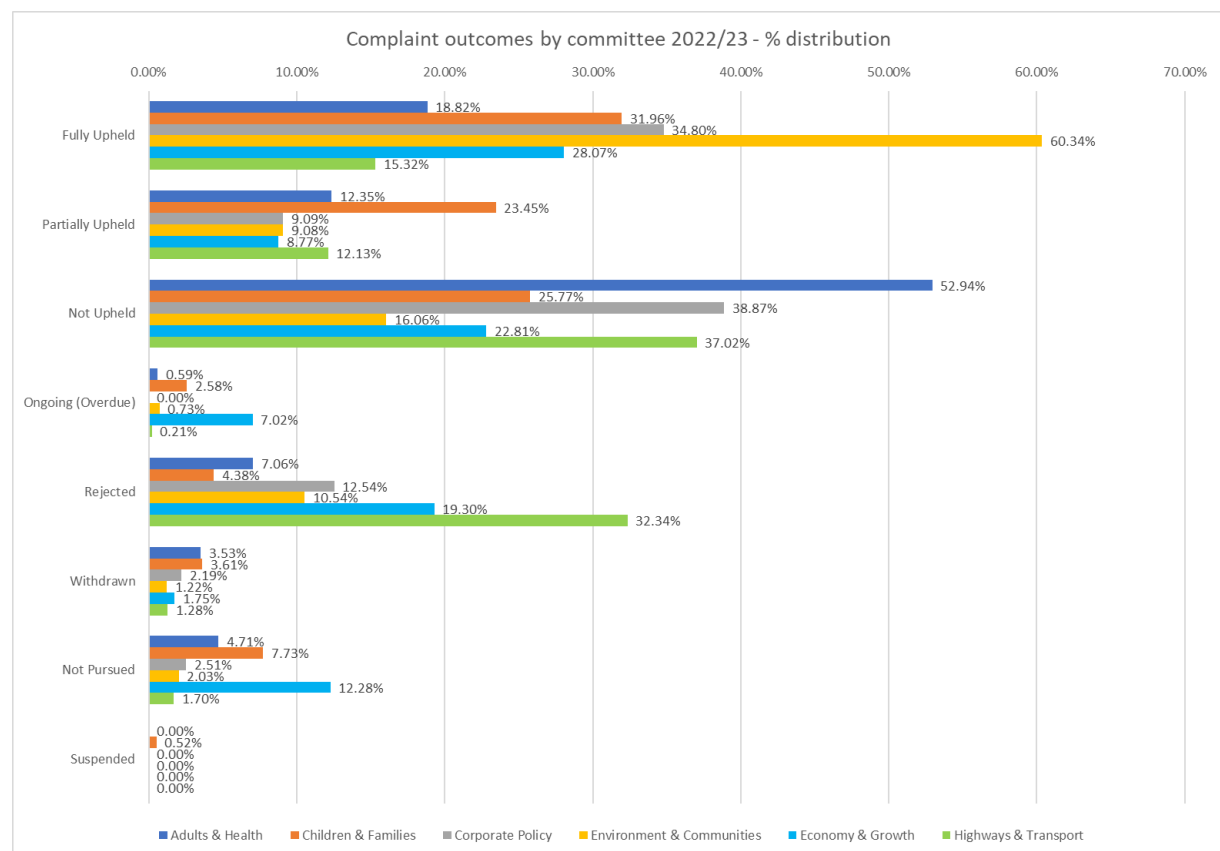
Appendix 1 - Comparison of total complaints by committee 2022/23 and 2023/24



Appendix 2 - Comparison of complaint outcomes by committee 2022/23 and 2023/24



Appendix 3 - Comparison of complaint outcome distribution by committee 2022/23 and 2023/24



Appendix 4 - Processed complaint outcomes by committee, per complaint stage**Stage 1**

Committee	Fully Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld	Ongoing (Overdue)
Adults & Health	17	44	51	1
Children & Families	161	106	110	4
Corporate Policy	90	20	125	1
Economy & Growth	13	9	31	5
Environment & Communities	935	112	471	12
Highways & Transport	61	98	183	2

Stage 2

Committee	Fully Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld	Ongoing (Overdue)
Adults & Health	1	0	2	0
Children & Families	8	16	7	3
Corporate Policy	4	2	6	0
Economy & Growth	1	1	1	0
Environment & Communities	22	14	56	3
Highways & Transport	2	5	9	0

Appendix 5 - Complaint response timeframe performance 2023/24 by committee (static)

Committee	Processed Complaints	Ongoing (Overdue)	On Time	Overdue Response	% On Time
Adults & Health	116	1	74	41	64%
Children & Families	429	8	130	289	30%
Corporate Policy	248	1	204	43	82%
Economy & Growth	61	5	38	18	62%
Environment & Communities	1625	15	1144	466	70%
Highways & Transport	347	2	231	114	67%

Appendix 6 - Complaint response timeframe performance 2023/24 by committee (non-static)

Committee	Processed Complaints	Ongoing	On Time	Overdue	% On Time
Adults & Health	116	1	104	11	90%
Children & Families	429	8	293	128	68%
Corporate Policy	248	1	225	22	91%
Economy & Growth	61	5	40	16	66%
Environment & Communities	1625	15	1288	322	79%
Highways & Transport	347	2	272	73	78%

Appendix 7 - Compliments received 2023/24 by committee

Committee	Total Compliments
Adults & Health	364
Children & Families	167
Corporate Policy	169
Economy & Growth	2
Environment & Communities	96
Highways & Transport	26

Appendix 8 - Examples of compliments received, by committee

Adults & Health

- I just wanted to pass on to you my grateful thanks for your help as X's Social Worker...we were fortunate that we came into contact with yourself, and you restored our faith. After a while and getting to know X more you totally understood the difficulties we were facing, plus the fact that I wasn't coping, being the same age as hubby and with no family to assist. I can't thank you enough for your support, efficiency, and pleasant friendly manner, it helped us both a lot. Social Services are lucky to have you.
- All the carers who looked after myself were very professional and polite and respectful. They all treated my home with care and respect for my possessions. They were always on time and helped me with anything I needed including advice on how to solve some of the problems that occur with age and "wear and Tear". for all these things I would like to thank and compliment each and every one of them. Good fortune in the future.
- Your team have supported my stepmother (X) and her husband recently, during the first week of January 2024. I wanted to express my thanks for your help during this difficult time and
 - how pleasant all carers who visited were
 - the standard of care was spot-on. I saw this myself as my visit coincided with one of theirs.
 - ensuring my stepmothers dignity at all stages which is genuinely appreciated
 - high levels of health care, wearing of masks, gloves etc vital as my stepmothers immune system is compromised
 - being polite and caring but firm, encouraging her to walk when she didn't want to
 - noting her decline and calling emergency services both timely and paramount as she had developed Sepsis and could have declined rapidlyWe are extremely grateful. Please pass on my comments to your staff and with sincere thanks,
- Just a line to thank you for helping my dad and family and guiding us through processes which we were not aware of. Also, thank you for your pleasant and calm approach when dealing with dad who is 96 years young. On behalf of all the family Thanks again.

Children & Families

- Thank you so much for all your hard work!! I can't thank you enough for everything you have done for myself and X!! I'm crossing my fingers for a successful 12 months ahead. I will be sad not to have you as key worker as I feel you have been the first person to really listen, understand and work with us but I shall welcome the new key worker.
- I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you and your team for all your help over the last 6 months. We appreciate your desire to do what is right for X and to ensure it happens within the desired timeframe. All of this when you have resource pressures yourselves. Thank you so much for everything you have done.
- I would like to share that this contact referral for case escalation done by X was so detailed, clear, and easy to read. X had pulled it all together really well so when I reviewed it for Checs to progress it was clear straight away threshold has been met. Y SW who has the contact now also agreed how good it was which she has shared with Z.

- Massive thank you to X for all her support in my son's case at Malbank. X has made a huge difference, I'm full of praise.

Corporate Policy

- Firstly, I would like to thank you for taking the time to consider my email, also for getting back to me so efficiently I will make sure the direct debit is set up and make sure these payments are kept on top of in the future, again thank you for your help I really appreciate it.
- Amazing, thank you so much that is lifesaving! Your quick help is much appreciated!
- I spoke to X who was incredibly helpful and patient with my enquiry. He is an excellent asset to the council, and I hope he continues being as helpful as I found him.
- Thank you for your reply to my email so quickly, what you have suggested is brilliant. I really appreciate your help regarding my monthly council tax payments and a great weight has been lifted off my shoulders. Thank you again.

Economy & Growth / Environment & Communities / Highways & Transport

- I would like you to pass on our thanks to the men who empty our bins on X street in Congleton. They are regular, careful, never let us down, the drivers amazingly reverse up our little cul de sac without a problem, and all through the pandemic it was the same. So many people complain that I thought it was time they were thanked.
- I'd just like to say how lovely Macclesfield looks with all the flowers. I've lived here for 40 years, and I've seen such a change - it all looks more welcoming. I particularly like the wildflowers near Sainsbury's - breathtaking. I haven't seen a proper wildflower meadow since I was a child. And while I'm on the subject, full marks to whoever decided to mow down only a foot's width on the verges going out of town. It's forward thinking and a step in the right direction. Thank you.
- Hi folks...just wanted to say a huge thank you on how quickly you repaired the carriageway on a500 this week...I reported it by e mail last week....so impressed...many thanks
- We were visiting family this morning with my 3 children, 2 of which have special needs and are obsessed with trucks/vans vehicles. The silver bin collection truck had come round past around 8.10am (SK94DL). My children always loved watching it go past so they stood at the door and the two men who were on collection were so nice they took a minuet out of there very busy day to wave and talk to my children. And honestly, I can't thank them enough, my children were ecstatic they were so excited and have gone into to school to tell all their friends about it, I wanted to highlight how grateful I am to them both to take that time to make there day and they probably didn't realise how much it would affect them. But I wanted you to let you know how much of a credit they are to your company.
- Just wanted to say a huge thank you to your highways team for refreshing the white lines on Crewe Green roundabout it has made such a positive difference and i am sure will improve the safety for those using it on a daily basis like myself.
- Many thanks the Highways team who came out and cleared all the grids as described in the Highways team member's letter. I am delighted to read that this thorough deep clean of grids was

also carried out in Alderley Road and I will continue to monitor these too as I walk along. I would also like to thank the Highways team who did such a good job of clearing the debris left behind after the New Year flood from the pavements along Alderley Road and the lower end of Fulshaw Park South.

- I decided to visit Sandbach Library earlier today in the hope that I might be able to obtain some assistance with an IT task I was struggling with. I was hugely impressed by the very high standard of service offered there and the amount of help I was given. Special thanks to X and Y, who both individually helped me and were both superb.
- My mental health has been boosted by the warm and knowledgeable welcome I have received from library staff and other service users. There is a welcome to a venue for self-help, facilitated and aided by friendly people who seem genuinely interested in their customers and motivated to help them.

Appendix 9 - Contact volumes 2023/24 by committee

Committee	Total Telephony Contacts	Complaints & Compliments
Adults & Health	40,635	510
Children & Families	56,483	679
Corporate Policy	124,427	428
Economy & Growth	25,690	70
Environment & Communities	127,463	1774
Highways & Transport	25,665	411
Total	400,363	3872

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Complaints Satisfaction Survey

Quarter 4 data (Mid-January – March)

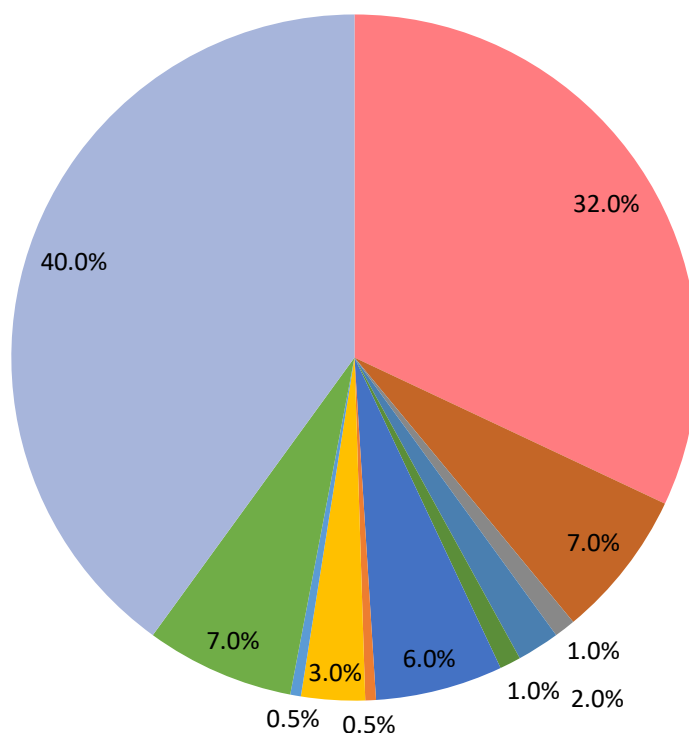
Survey Responses	
January	48
February	76
March	31
Total Q4:	155

Question: What was your most recent complaint to Cheshire East Council about? (Please select one option only)

The category selected the most was the 'Other (please specify)' at 40% (64 out of 155 responses). Of the 64 responses, 42% was regarding Waste Commissioning (18 regarding damaged bins/the replacement of damaged bins and 9 regarding the garden bin subscription service).

Missed bin collections was the second most selected category at 32% of responses.

Chart What was your most recent complaint to Cheshire East Council about?

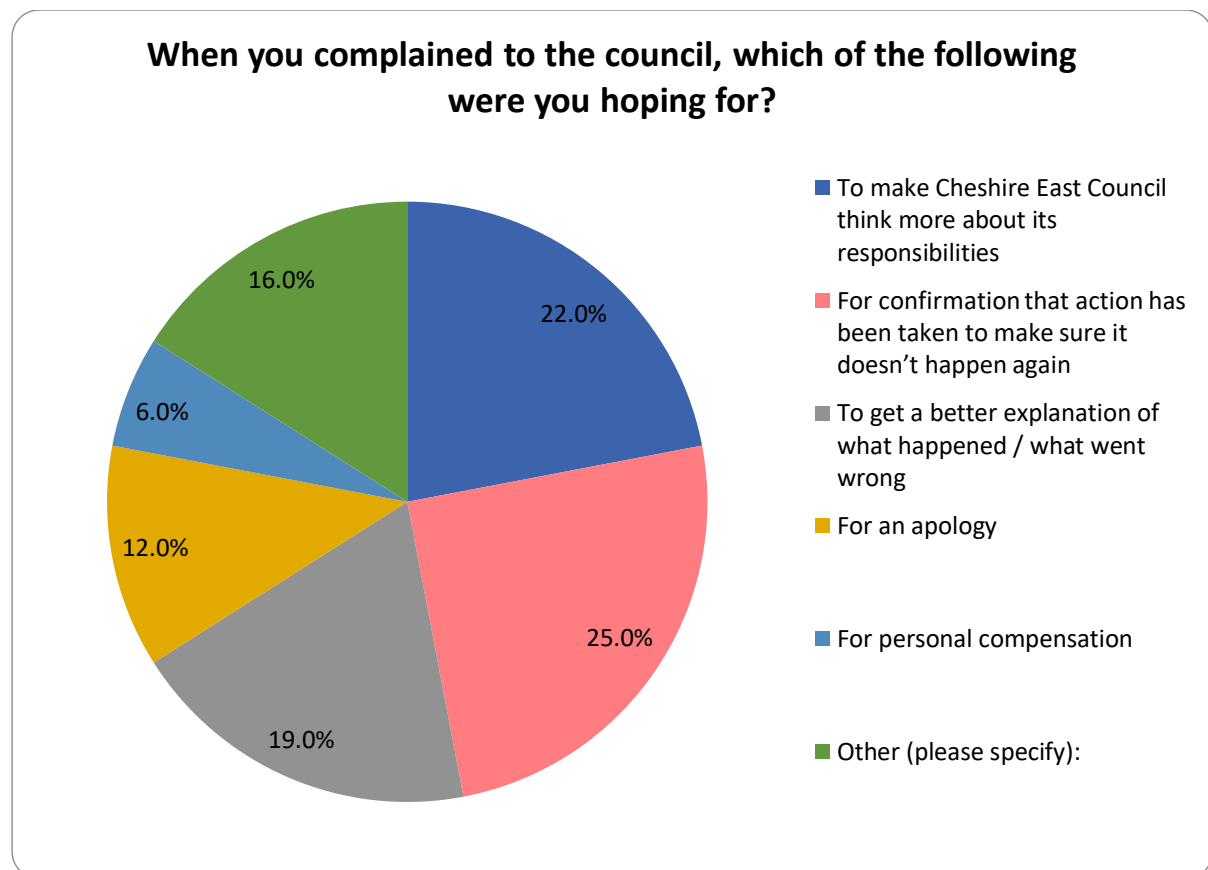


- Missed bin collection
- Maintenance of roads (e.g. potholes, resurfacing, damaged or missed signs)
- Flooding issue / concern
- Time taken to process a planning application
- Lack of planning enforcement
- Children's Social Care
- Special Educational Needs & Disabilities, SEND
- Adults Social Care
- Frequency of buses or a change in bus route
- An issue with council tax
- Parking dispute
- An issue with the service provided by customer services
- Other (please specify):

Question: *When you complained to the council, which of the following were you hoping for?*

In Quarter 4, we had a total of 155 responses. There were 311 responses to this question, as customer could select multiple answers therefore it is likely most customers picked 2 or more options when answering this question.

We had 50 customers select the 'Other' category. 30 of the 50 responses in the 'Other' category (60%) detailed something regarding Waste/Waste Commissioning.

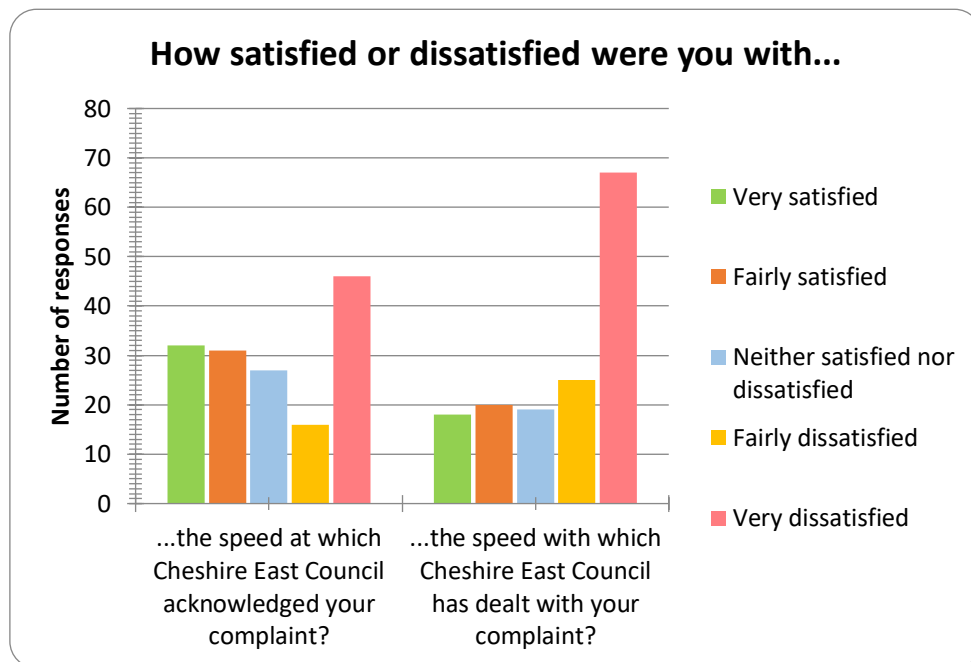


Question: *How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with...*

...the speed at which Cheshire East Council acknowledged your complaint?

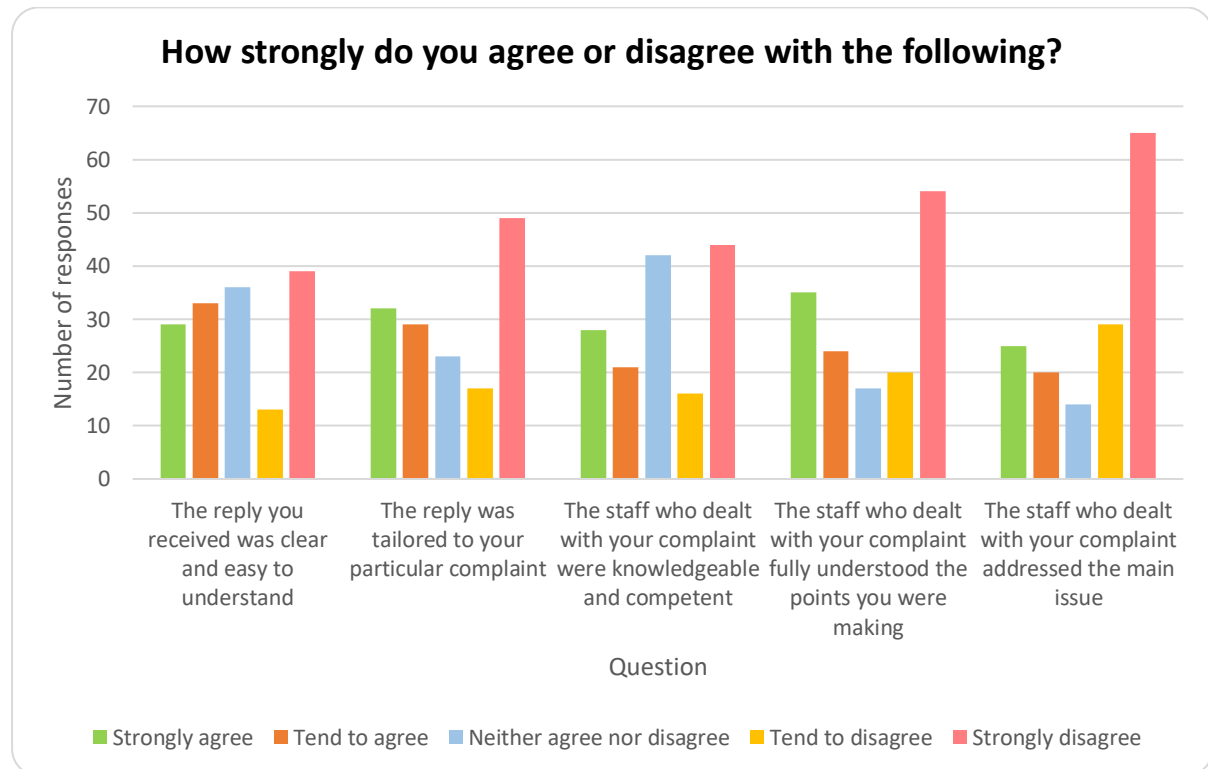
...the speed at which Cheshire East Council has dealt with your complaint?

Across both questions the answer selected the most was 'Very dissatisfied' with 38% of customers selecting this option.



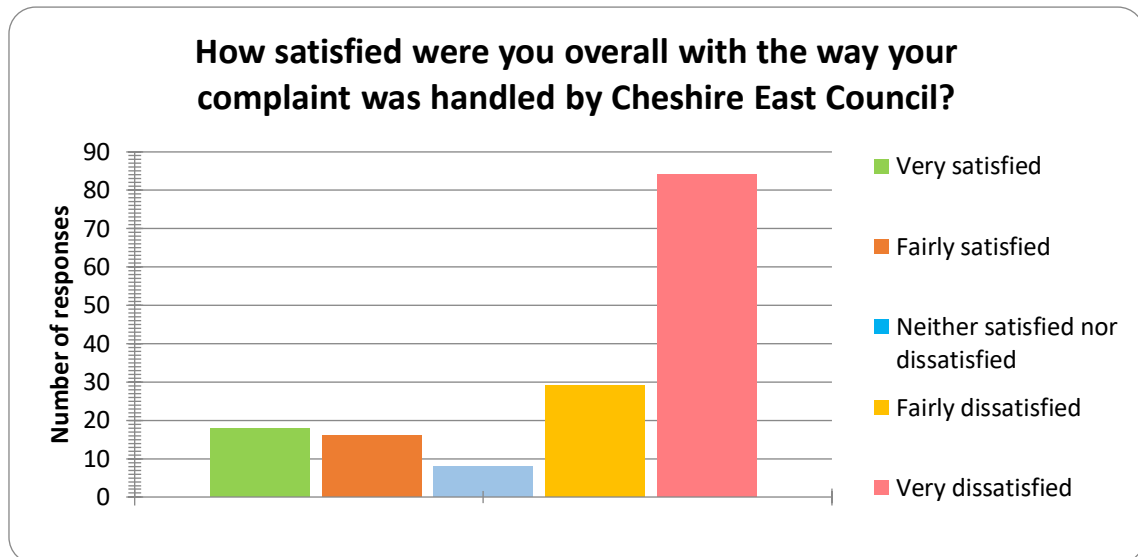
Question: *How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following? (5 questions to answer)*

For each of the 5 questions asked, 'Very dissatisfied' was selected the most in answer to the all questions, however as an average across all 5 questions 'Very satisfied' was the second most common answer.



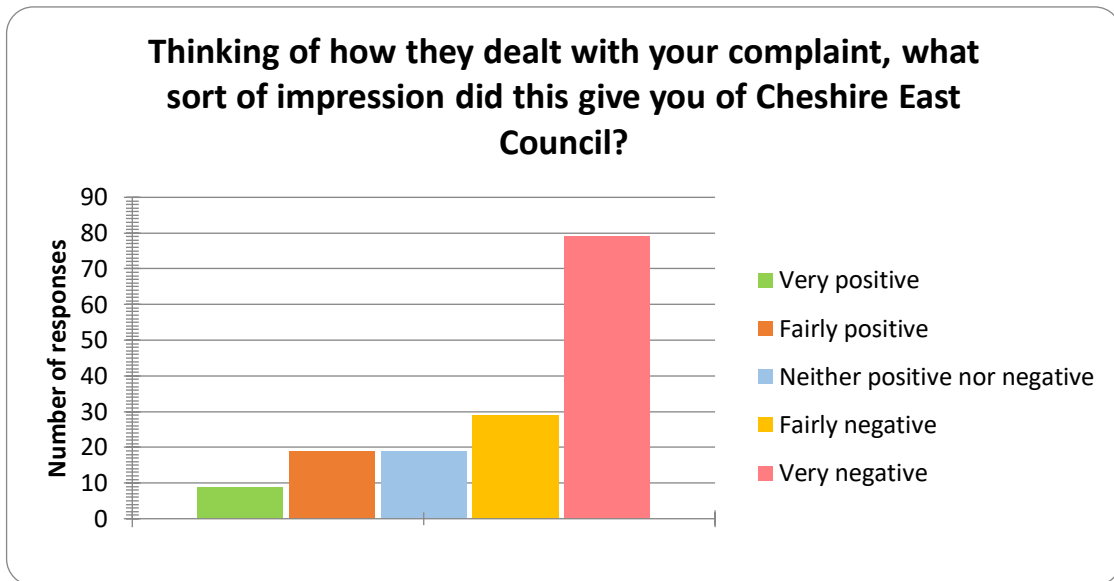
Question: *How satisfied were you overall with the way your complaint was handled by Cheshire East Council?*

‘Very dissatisfied’ was by far the most common answer to this question, with 54% of customers selecting this option. As a second part to this question customers were also asked ‘Why did you say that?’. 107 (out of 155) customers gave a reason for their selection, and the most common answer was that they felt that their complaint was still not resolved after going through the complaints process.



Question: *Thinking of how they dealt with your complaint, what sort of impression did this give you of Cheshire East Council?*

108 out 155 customers (70%) felt that the way their complaint was dealt with left them with either a fairly or very negative impression of Cheshire East Council. 18% of customers were left with a fairly or very positive impression and 12% neither positive nor negative impression.



Question: *Thinking back to what you were expecting at the outset when you first contacted Cheshire East Council to make your complaint, has the experience of dealing with them been better than, in line with or worse than you expected?*

56% of customer felt that their experience when making a complaint with Cheshire East Council was worse than they expected, 36% felt that their experience was in line with their expectations, and 9% felt that their experience was better than they expected.



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Appendix 11 - Outcome of complaints to the LGSCO by committee 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

Committee	Total number of final decisions	Outcomes of final decisions				Total compensation awarded
		Rejected	No fault	Fault but no Injustice	Fault with injustice	
Adults & Health	15	12	0	0	3	£2,400
Children & Families	28	18	2	2	6	£13,175
Corporate Policy	7	5	1	1	0	£0
Environment & Communities	28	24	3	0	1	£400
Economy & Growth	1	0	0	0	1	£150
Highways & Transport	11	8	0	1	2	£1,000
Totals	90	67	6	4	13	£17,125

Appendix 12 - Summary of Recommended Actions from Ombudsman Decision Notices where Fault was found (as per Appendix 11)

Adults and Health Committee

Service	Summary and Ombudsman's Final Decision	Agreed Action	Action Taken
Business Support and Finance	<p>The Ombudsman's final decision – 3 April 2023</p> <p>Summary: Mrs L complained about the way the Council handled her mother, Mrs X's direct payments. Mrs L said the Council was misleading and confusing in its communication and demanded payment Mrs X did not owe. The Council failed to provide clear and transparent financial information, incorrectly calculated Mrs X's account three times and delayed in pursuing the debt for 20 months. The Council will write off Mrs X's outstanding charges and pay Mrs X and Mrs L £200 each to recognise the frustration and uncertainty this caused.</p>	<p>Within one month the Council agreed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • write to Mrs X and Mrs L and apologise for the confusion, frustration and uncertainty caused to them and pay them £200 each to recognise the same; and • cancel the outstanding invoice against Mrs X's account. <p>Within three months the Council agreed to remind relevant staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where discrepancies arise in audits to ensure the reasons for this are clearly explained to the person; and • of the importance of providing clear and transparent information to ensure people understand their responsibilities when accessing direct payments both at the point of arranging them and following any audit. 	<p>Apology letters issued on 5 April 2023</p> <p>Payments made on 28 April 2023</p> <p>Debt confirmed as written off 19 May 2023</p> <p>The minutes from an audit meeting have been shared with the team, and these discuss the corrective actions.</p>

Service	Summary and Ombudsman's Final Decision	Agreed Action	Action Taken
<p>Learning Disability Team East</p>	<p>The Ombudsman's final decision – 14 April 2023</p> <p>Summary: Ms K complained the Council and its social worker failed its social care duties towards her daughter. We did not find enough evidence of fault in the processes the Council followed to reach its view. We cannot therefore criticise the merits of its decision. There was some fault in how it progressed and communicated a charity's grant. The Council agree to make payment to acknowledge the distress and uncertainty this caused Ms K.</p>	<p>To remedy the injustice the Council caused to Ms K, the Council should, within one month of the final decision:</p> <p>a) apologise in writing to Ms K and pay £100 to acknowledge the distress and uncertainty and time and trouble its failure to progress and follow up on the charity's grant and the confusion it caused her; and</p> <p>b) contact the Charity to agree how the approved grant payment can be used to purchase the epilepsy band for Miss X and inform Ms K if no agreement can be reached.</p>	<p>Apology letter issued 17 May 2023</p> <p>Payment made 17 May 2023</p> <p>Ms K was informed that the Council is unable to support accessing the epilepsy band via the charity.</p>
<p>Learning Disability Team East</p> <p>(Joint complaint with SEND)</p>	<p>The Ombudsman's final decision – 8 February 2024</p> <p>Summary: Mr X complained about how the Council looked for a new educational placement for his adult daughter, Ms Y. Mr X also complained about how the Council reviewed Ms Y's Education, Health</p>	<p>Within one month of the date of my final decision, the Council will take the following actions.</p> <p>a) Apologise to Mr X for the distress, uncertainty and frustration he experienced as a result of the faults identified in this decision. We publish guidance on remedies which sets out our expectations for how organisations should</p>	<p>Letter of apology issued 7 March 2024.</p>

Service	Summary and Ombudsman's Final Decision	Agreed Action	Action Taken
	<p>and Care (EHC) Plan, about how it amended the EHC Plan and about its failure to secure the provision in Ms Y's EHC Plan. The Council was at fault. Mr X also complained about the supported living placement the Council identified for Ms Y. The Council was not at fault in how it decided the placement could meet Ms Y's needs but was at fault for moving Ms Y to the placement without a sufficiently lengthy transition or an up-to-date care and support plan. The faults caused Mr X and Ms Y significant injustice. To remedy that injustice, the Council should apologise to Mr X, pay him a total of £9500, issue Ms Y's amended EHC Plan and make improvements to its practice.</p>	<p>apologise effectively to remedy injustice. The Council should consider this guidance in making the apology I have recommended in my findings.</p> <p>b) Pay Mr X £400 in recognition of that distress, uncertainty and frustration.</p> <p>c) See under Children's Section.</p> <p>d) See under Children's Section.</p> <p>e) Pay Ms Y, care of Mr X, £1,500 in recognition of the significant impact on Ms Y's wellbeing of the short transition to supported living and the Council's failure to review her care and support plan before the move.</p>	<p>Payment of £1900 made on 7 March 2024 (as part of an overall payment of £9500 together with the related SEND case which equalled £7600)</p> <p>Please see the related SEND case.</p>

Children and Families Committee

Service	Summary and Ombudsman's Final Decision	Agreed Action	Action Taken
SEND	<p>The Ombudsman's final decision – 24 May 2023</p> <p>Summary: The Council gave flawed advice that a transition review to name a post-16 placement would be completed earlier than usual due to the complainant's anxiety. This raised expectations and caused disappointment and distress when the advice was reversed. The Council will apologise, pay £150 to acknowledge the distress caused, and make service improvements.</p>	<p>Within four weeks of the final decision: The Council will apologise to Ms X and her daughter again to acknowledge the period of raised expectations was from July to September and not just after the meeting in September.</p> <p>The Council will pay Ms X's daughter a symbolic payment of £150 to acknowledge the frustration, distress and disappointment caused by the flawed advice.</p> <p>The Council will share learning from this complaint with its SEN staff so that early reviews are only offered in appropriate circumstances and where there is a genuine intention to complete the review (which includes follow up actions) within a faster timeframe. While it may be appropriate to hold early meetings about transition to explore options, staff should be careful not to raise expectations that decisions about placement will be made outside the Council's usual timescale.</p>	<p>Apology letters issued 21 June 2023.</p> <p>Payment made on 12 June 2023.</p> <p>From email issued to SEND staff 21 June 2023: Reviews are only offered in appropriate circumstances and where there is a genuine intention to complete the review (which includes follow up actions) within a faster timeframe.</p>

Service	Summary and Ombudsman's Final Decision	Agreed Action	Action Taken
			<p>While it may be appropriate to hold early meetings about</p> <p>transition to explore options, staff should be careful not to raise expectations that decisions about placement will be made outside the Council's usual timescale.</p>
SEND	<p>The Ombudsman's final decision – 24 July 2023</p> <p>Summary: Mrs X complained the Council delayed issuing her child, Child Y's amended Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan following an annual review in March 2022. The Council was at fault for the delay in issuing Child Y's EHC plan following the annual review. The</p>	<p>Within three months of the final decision the Council will provide us with evidence of how it has reviewed its procedures to reduce delays in issuing final EHC plans following annual reviews. It will provide us with an action plan of any actions it has taken or intends to take going forward.</p>	<p>Response sent to the Ombudsman on 24 October 2024:-</p> <p>Cheshire East Council have refreshed the Cheshire East Special Educational Needs and Disability</p>

Service	Summary and Ombudsman's Final Decision	Agreed Action	Action Taken
	<p>Council has already apologised to Mrs X for the delay, which was an appropriate remedy for the injustice caused. Child Y was not caused an injustice by the delay. The Council will provide evidence of how it will reduce similar delays to prevent a reoccurrence of the fault.</p>		<p>Partnership Strategy 2021-2025.</p> <p>Demonstrating the local authority's commitment to developing and making ongoing improvements to internal procedures to ensure compliance with statute and regulations associated with the annual review of EHC plans.</p> <p>The coproduction of the refreshed SEND strategy identifies the improvement of timeliness and transformation of annual reviews of</p>

Service	Summary and Ombudsman's Final Decision	Agreed Action	Action Taken
			EHC plans as a priority.
SEND	<p>The Ombudsman's final decision – 9 October 2023</p> <p>Summary: Mrs X complained about failures in the Council's handling of her request for a change of placement for her son, Y. The Council was at fault for a delay in finalising an annual review carried out in May 2022, failings in its handling of the change of placement request, and failures in sharing information with Mrs X. It will apologise, make a symbolic payment, and use the learning from this case to make improvements to its services.</p>	<p>Within one month of the date of the final decision, the Council will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • apologise to Mrs X for the long delay in finalising the annual review in May 2022, the failings in its handling of the change of placement request, its delay in sharing information about its consultations with other schools, the failure of officer 1 to make a record of their visit to school 1 in May 2022, and the failure to share information that its panel would consider in December 2022; and • pay her £500 as symbolic payment to reflect the frustration, uncertainty, and avoidable time and trouble caused to her, and the additional uncertainty suffered by Y. <p>Within three months of the date of the final decision, the Council will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide us with details of its review of its process for carrying out EHC plan reviews, including the steps it has taken and is taking to ensure that reviews are finalised within statutory timescales; 	<p>Letter of apology issued dated 19 October 2023.</p> <p>Payment of £500 made on 19 October 2023.</p>

Service	Summary and Ombudsman's Final Decision	Agreed Action	Action Taken
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • share this decision with its newly appointed SEND training manager to ensure that the learning from this case is shared with all relevant staff and included in the Council's rolling training programme, as appropriate. As a minimum this should ensure the Council either arranges a review or ensures by some other means that it has full and up-to-date information about a child's needs before considering a change or placement request or consulting with alternative educational settings. 	<p>Response sent to LGSCO 7 Dec 2023.</p> <p>Draft SEND Training Programme for 2024 shared with LGO 26 Jan 2024.</p>
SEND	<p>The Ombudsman's final decision – 13 October 2023</p> <p>Summary: Mrs Y complained the Council failed to deliver all Miss Z's special educational needs provision in her Education Health and Care Plan. We have found fault by the Council in failing to issue Miss Z's plan within the statutory timescale and the delay and failure in delivering parts of her special educational needs provision from</p>	<p>Within four weeks from the date of our final decision, the Council has agreed to:</p> <p>a) apologise to Mrs Y and to Miss Z for its failure to issue the EHC Plan on time and provide all of Miss Z's SEN provision from the start of the Autumn term 2022.</p> <p>b) <i>We publish guidance on remedies which sets out our expectations for how organisations should apologise effectively to remedy injustice. The organisation should consider this guidance in making the apology I have recommended in my findings;</i></p>	<p>Letter of apology issued dated 8 Nov 2023.</p>

Service	Summary and Ombudsman's Final Decision	Agreed Action	Action Taken
	<p>September 2022 to July 2023. This fault has caused injustice. The Council has agreed to remedy this by apologising to Mrs Y and Miss Z, making payments to recognise the impact of the missed provision on Miss Z, and to reflect Mrs Y's distress, time and trouble and reporting to us on the position regarding the missing provision. It has also agreed to make a service improvement.</p>	<p>c) pay Mrs Y £350 to reflect the distress caused by the delay in issuing the plan, the failure to deliver all Miss Z's SEN provision, and her time and trouble bringing her complaint to us. <i>This is a symbolic amount based on the Ombudsman's published Guidance on Remedies;</i></p> <p>d) pay Miss Z £1,400 for each school term she did not receive PTSD therapy and SALT for the period from the start of the autumn term 2022 to 28 November 2022, and £1,000 for each school term she did not receive SALT from 28 November 2022 to the end of the summer term 2023. I have assessed this as a total of £3,425. This is to recognise the impact on Miss Z of the missed SEN provision; and</p> <p>e) report back to us on the position with regard to the delivery of Miss Z's SALT from September 2023. And what it will do to make up for the provision she has missed.</p> <p>Within three months from the date of our final decision, the Council has agreed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share learning from this decision with staff to ensure they are aware of the importance of issuing an EHC Plan within the required timescale following a SEND Tribunal order, and arranging 	<p>Payment of £350 made on 6 Dec 2023</p> <p>Payment of £3425 made on 30 Nov 2023</p> <p>Response regarding SALT provision sent to LGO on 14 Nov 2023</p> <p>Email sent to all SEND staff 4 Dec 2023</p>

Service	Summary and Ombudsman's Final Decision	Agreed Action	Action Taken
		the provision to start from the date the plan is issued.	
SEND	<p>The Ombudsman's final decision – 7 November 2023</p> <p>Summary: Mrs X complained the Council failed to provide suitable alternative provision for her child W. She also complained the Council did not secure W's special educational provision and delayed in reviewing W's Education, Health and Care plan. The Council was at fault in how it considered whether it owed W the duty to provide alternative educational provision. It was also at fault for delay in reviewing W's Education, Health and Care plan and for poor complaint responses. This caused Mrs X frustration and distress and meant W missed out on educational provision. To remedy their injustice, the Council will pay Mrs X £850, apologise and carry out staff training.</p>	<p>Within one month of the date of the final decision, the Council will take the following action:-</p> <p>a) Apologise to Mrs X for the frustration she felt due to the delays carrying out W's annual review and its poor complaint responses and for the distress she felt due to the tuition panel's flawed consideration of W's referral.</p> <p>b) Pay Mrs X £250 in recognition of that frustration and distress.</p> <p>c) Pay Mrs X £600 to recognise the impact of the lost provision on W. This takes into account the provision W missed out on, their age and their ability to engage with that provision had it been put in place. <u>Total Payment = £850</u></p> <p>d) Remind staff in the medical needs tuition team that when considering a referral for tuition, the test they should apply is whether the child would receive a suitable education without the Council making arrangements.</p>	<p>Letter of apology issued 6 Dec 2023</p> <p>Payment of £850 made on 4 Dec 2023</p> <p>Evidence of action submitted to LGO 9 Jan 2024</p>

Service	Summary and Ombudsman's Final Decision	Agreed Action	Action Taken
		<p>e) Provide the Ombudsman with evidence it has completed the training programme for staff on the new alternative provision school referral process.</p> <p>f) Remind staff that the recommendations they make for service improvements as part of complaint responses should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-limited).</p>	<p>Evidence of action submitted to LGO 9 Jan 2024</p> <p>Email issued to those staff on the rota for completing SEND Stage 2 complaint investigations 7 Dec 2023.</p>
<p>SEND</p> <p>(Joint complaint with Adults)</p>	<p>The Ombudsman's final decision – 8 February 2024</p> <p>Summary: Mr X complained about how the Council looked for a new educational placement for his adult daughter, Ms Y. Mr X also complained about how the Council reviewed Ms Y's Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan, about how it amended the EHC Plan and about its failure to secure the provision in Ms Y's EHC Plan. The Council was at fault. Mr X also complained about the supported living placement</p>	<p>Within one month of the date of my final decision, the Council will take the following actions.</p> <p>a) Apologise to Mr X for the distress, uncertainty and frustration he experienced as a result of the faults identified in this decision. We publish guidance on remedies which sets out our expectations for how organisations should apologise effectively to remedy injustice. The Council should consider this guidance in making the apology I have recommended in my findings.</p> <p>b) Pay Mr X £400 in recognition of that distress, uncertainty and frustration.</p>	<p>Letter of apology issued 7 March 2024.</p> <p>Payment of £7,600 made on 7 March 2024 (as part of an overall payment of £9500 in conjunction with the Adults case</p>

Service	Summary and Ombudsman's Final Decision	Agreed Action	Action Taken
	<p>the Council identified for Ms Y. The Council was not at fault in how it decided the placement could meet Ms Y's needs but was at fault for moving Ms Y to the placement without a sufficiently lengthy transition or an up-to-date care and support plan. The faults caused Mr X and Ms Y significant injustice. To remedy that injustice, the Council should apologise to Mr X, pay him a total of £9500, issue Ms Y's amended EHC Plan and make improvements to its practice.</p>	<p>c) Pay Ms Y, care of Mr X, £7200 in recognition of Ms Y's lost educational provision. This equates to £2400 per term, in line with the Ombudsman's Guidance on Remedies. d) Issue Ms Y's final amended EHC Plan and make Mr X aware of his right to appeal the provision and placement named in that plan. e) See under Adults Section</p> <p>Within three months of the date of my final decision, the Council will also take the following actions.</p> <p>a) Remind staff they must issue a decision to amend, maintain or cease a child or young person's EHC Plan after an annual review meeting. b) Remind staff they must complete amendments to EHC Plans within the timescales set out in law, guidance and by caselaw. c) Review this case and identify what steps the Council should take to ensure its SEND and adult social care departments communicate effectively, particularly when a young person with an EHC Plan is moving to an adult social care setting.</p>	<p>which equalled £1900).</p> <p>Final EHCP issued on 10 January 2024. Copy sent to LGSCO with covering letters on 5 March 2024.</p> <p>ctions due by 8 May 2024.</p>
SEND	The Ombudsman's final decision – 28 February 2024	Within one month of the date of the final decision statement, the Council will:	

Service	Summary and Ombudsman's Final Decision	Agreed Action	Action Taken
	<p>Summary: Mr X complained that the Council failed to implement provision from his son, Y's, Education, Health and Care Plan and did not follow its own corporate complaints procedure. We found the Council was at fault for not providing Y with suitable transition from primary school to his secondary school. We also found the Council was at fault in its complaint handling. The Council agreed to apologise, make a payment to Mr X and Y and review its process to improve its practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • apologise to Mr X and Y for its failure to provide Y with the support he needed in transitioning to his secondary school and the distress and frustration this has caused them. The Council should refer to our guidance on making an effective apology; • pay Mr X £300 to remedy the distress, frustration, and unnecessary uncertainty he experienced; and • remind its staff, through appropriate training, of the Council's non-delegable duty to secure the Special Educational Needs provision set out in Section F of a child's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan). 	<p>Apology letter issued 27 March 2024.</p> <p>Payment of £300 made on 28 March 2024.</p> <p>Email reminder sent to SEND managers on 27 March 2024.</p>
SEND	<p>The Ombudsman's final decision – 13 March 2024</p> <p>Summary: Mrs X complained the Council failed to provide her child, Y, with suitable education and the content of their Education, Health and</p>	No actions.	No actions.

Service	Summary and Ombudsman's Final Decision	Agreed Action	Action Taken
	<p>Care Plan. She also complained about the Council's communication. We ended the investigation about delivery of Y's Plan between September 2022 and January 2023 because it is unlikely we would find fault causing significant injustice. We also did not investigate a later period because Mrs X had a right of appeal to the SEND Tribunal. There was fault in the Council's communication, but the Council has already apologised, which is an appropriate remedy.</p>		

Corporate Policy Committee

Service	Summary and Ombudsman's Final Decision	Agreed Action	Action Taken
Council Tax	<p>The Ombudsman's final decision – 12 September 2023</p> <p>Summary: Mr X complains the Council took recovery action on a historic Council Tax debt that he was not liable for. The Ombudsman finds fault with the Council for failing to contact Mr X before restarting recovery action. However, no injustice has been caused to Mr X as it would not have changed the action taken.</p>	<p>No corrective actions but advice provided by the Ombudsman in relation to historic Council Tax debt:-</p> <p><i>If the Council's query is for historic Council Tax debt in general, the Ombudsman has some guidance on what he expects Councils to consider before recommencing action. If no action has been taken for some time we always expect a council, before taking any recovery action, to contact the debtor first to remind them of the existence of the debt. We do not have a blanket rule on council's pursuit of historic debt. But councils need to consider if is fair and reasonable to enforce a</i></p>	

Service	Summary and Ombudsman's Final Decision	Agreed Action	Action Taken
		<p><i>specific liability order. Some factors to consider are –</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>If the debtor contested liability for the debt did the council tell them clearly at the time of their appeal rights?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>If the debtor seems to have moved without telling the council what efforts, if any, did the council make at the time to trace their new address?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Does the council's delay mean the debtor will be unable to challenge liability now, as evidence may be no longer available?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>If the debtor says they paid the debt has the passage of time meant the debtor's financial records are no longer available?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Has the council been actively pursuing the debt, so the debtor had ample opportunity to raise any queries?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Does any delay by the council justify giving a longer period to pay the debt than the council might normally consider?</i> <p><i>The debtor may not contest they owe the debt. So as long as the council has considered the above factors and come to a reasoned decision, we would not criticise them for taking recovery action.</i></p>	

Economy & Growth Committee

Service	Summary and Ombudsman's Final Decision	Agreed Action	Action Taken
Assets and Property	<p>The Ombudsman's final decision – 6 February 2024</p> <p>Summary: Mr X complains the Council did not properly deal with his complaint about a defective Heat Pump in its market. We find the Council delayed providing its complaint response which caused Mr X uncertainty and frustration. The Council should apologise to Mr X, make a symbolic payment of £150 for his time and trouble resolving his complaint and undertake a period of monitoring and review if any further remedial works are necessary.</p>	<p>Within one month of my final decision date, the Council should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write to Mr X and apologise for its delay in providing its complaints response and any avoidable uncertainty and frustration caused to him. • Make a symbolic payment of £150 to Mr X for his time and trouble in trying to resolve his complaint. • Check the Heat Pump and confirm it is working correctly and undertake any necessary remedial works if it is found to be defective. • Monitor the temperature in the Market for a period of six weeks to confirm it meets the HSE guidance. • Review if any further immediate action is required to improve the Market's temperature including the maintenance of the air curtains, 	<p>Apology letter issued 15 March 2024.</p> <p>Payment of £150 made 3 April 2024.</p> <p>We have been checking the Air Source Heat Pump to ensure it is working correctly and monitoring the temperature in the Market to confirm it meets the HSE guidance. The</p>

Service	Summary and Ombudsman's Final Decision	Agreed Action	Action Taken
		installation of thermometers, temporary heating fans and its remote temperature management system.	Approved Code of Practice on the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations suggests the minimum temperature for working indoors should normally be at least 16°C. A temperature log for a six-week period (Feb & Mar 2024) shows indoor temperatures achieving 16°C during occupancy hours.

<u>Service</u>	<u>Summary and Ombudsman's Final Decision</u>	<u>Agreed Action</u>	<u>Action Taken</u>
Community Enforcement	<p>The Ombudsman's final decision – 28 April 2023</p> <p>Summary: Mr Q is making a complaint on behalf of his daughter (Miss G). He says the Council has failed to resolve issues relating to household bins being left for collection at a designated site which is close to Miss G's home. We found the Council was at fault for not taking agreed enforcement action for apparent breaches to the rules which were repeated and long lasting. The Council had agreed to control this problem when we investigated the issue in 2019. It failed to do so and bins and household waste has often been left outside Miss G's home for days unchallenged. This caused her an injustice because the fault adversely impacted on the use and enjoyment of her home. The Council has agreed to our recommendations for the Council to remedy the injustice suffered.</p>	<p>The Council will perform the following actions by 26 May 2023:</p> <p>a) Provide a written apology to Miss G and Mr Q which acknowledges the fault and injustice identified in this statement.</p> <p>b) Pay Miss G £400 to serve as an acknowledgement of the impact of the failings and the injustice caused to her.</p> <p>c) Clarify to Miss G and Mr Q how evidence of non-compliance with the bin rules should be submitted to the Council. It will also arrange to have a telephone call with either of them at the end of each month for the next three months to review and discuss any problems.</p> <p>The Council should also perform the following actions by 26 July 2023:</p> <p>d) The Council will arrange to monitor the situation with the bins in Miss G's area within the limited resources available to it. Patrols will be put in place by officers from the relevant Council department to monitor fly-tipping and we will use this resource as a way to monitor the situation, as well as to encourage Miss G and Mr Q to report instances of bins not being collected.</p>	<p>Apology letter issued 12 May 2023.</p> <p>Payment of £400 made.</p> <p>Miss Q has been advised that she can submit her own photos of any bins left out on her street direct to the Council.</p> <p>Miss Q had telephone conversations with a senior officer in May and June 2023.</p> <p>Monitoring completed during May, June and</p>

<u>Service</u>	<u>Summary and Ombudsman's Final Decision</u>	<u>Agreed Action</u>	<u>Action Taken</u>
			July 2023. The situation with the bins had improved following the period of monitoring.

Highways & Transport Committee

Service	Summary and Ombudsman's Final Decision	Agreed Action	Action Taken
Highways	<p>The Ombudsman's final decision – 24 May 2023</p> <p>Summary: Mr X complains the Council entered his land without giving notice. We found the Council was at fault, but the apology it provided to Mr X in response to his complaint was an appropriate remedy to the complaint.</p>	<p>No specific actions as the fault had already been remedied via an apology:-</p> <p><i>As the visit on this occasion did not cause significant injustice, the Council accepted it needs to give notice to Mr X and the Council provided an apology to Mr X, I have now completed my investigation and closed my file. This is on the basis the Council is at fault, but a suitable remedy has already been provided.</i></p>	No actions.
Highways	<p>The Ombudsman's final decision – 24 August 2023</p>	The Council agreed to take the following action within 4 weeks of the final decision on this complaint:	Letter issued to Mr J on 12 September 2023.

Service	Summary and Ombudsman's Final Decision	Agreed Action	Action Taken
	Summary: We found fault on Mr J's complaint about the Council failing to investigate reports of water ponding on the road outside his home following road works. It failed to explore this when he complained. The agreed action remedies the injustice caused.	<p>a) Send Mr J a written apology for its failure to have clarified and explored the issue of potential ponding when he made a formal complaint.</p> <p>b) Remind complaint officers of the need to ensure new reports raised during the complaints procedure are referred promptly through to the appropriate department.</p>	Reminder issued to Highways Formal Correspondence staff 12 September 2023.
Highways	<p>The Ombudsman's final decision – 31 January 2024</p> <p>Summary: Mr Q complained about the Council's response to flooding events affecting his home. We found fault in the Council delaying in instructing an engineering consultancy to report into the cause of the flooding. Also, in some of its response to that report which found fault in how had scrutinised a flood risk assessment and in its later communications with Mr Q. We found this caused him injustice in avoidable distress and frustration. The Council has accepted these</p>	<p>The Council has accepted the Ombudsman's findings and agreed that within 20 working days of the final decision, it would take the following action to remedy Mr Q's injustice:</p> <p>a) it will make an apology to Mr Q taking account of guidance in section 3.2 of our published guidance on remedies Guidance on remedies - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. The apology will come from an appropriately senior officer and specifically recognise the Council was at fault for how it scrutinised the developer's FRA before approving the development at the crux of Mr Q's complaint. It should recognise the consequent effect of that and the distress of flooding events on Mr Q and his wife;</p>	Letter of apology issued 27 February 2024.

Service	Summary and Ombudsman's Final Decision	Agreed Action	Action Taken
	findings and agreed actions that we consider will remedy this injustice, set out at the end of this statement.	<p>b) it will make a symbolic payment to Mr Q of £1000. Of this £250 is to remedy the injustice identified in paragraph 67, £500 to remedy that identified in paragraph 73 and £250 to remedy that identified in paragraphs 84 and 87.</p> <p>The Council has also agreed a commitment to continue to update Mr Q on the progress of the implementation of its action plan at least once every eight weeks. As its last update was sent mid-January, the next update will be sent no later than six weeks from the date of this decision statement. The Council has committed to provide such updates in all circumstances. It will also put in writing its reasons should it come to the view the action plan has completed, or if it considers it can make no further progress in its implementation, at which point such updates will cease.</p>	<p>Payment made 26 February 2024.</p> <p>Update provided to Mr Q on 27 February 2024 and 13 March 2024.</p>

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OPEN

Corporate Policy Committee

13 June 2024

Final Outturn 2023/24

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

Report Reference No: CP/11/24-25

Ward(s) Affected: All Wards

Purpose of Report

- 1 This report provides Members with the final outturn, for Corporate Policy Committee services, for the financial year 2023/24. Members are being asked to consider the serious financial challenges being experienced by the Council (and other councils) and to recognise the important activities aimed at minimising the impact on services.
- 2 Members of the Committee are being asked to consider the financial performance of the services relevant to their terms of reference.

Executive Summary

- 3 The Council operates a financial cycle of planning, monitoring and reporting. This review is part of the monitoring cycle and provides the final outturn position for the 2023/24 financial year. This report supports the Council priority of being an open and enabling organisation, ensuring that there is transparency in all aspects of Council decision making.
- 4 The full report will be received by Finance Sub Committee on 25 June 2024. Service Committees will receive the sections relevant to their committee (see Annex 1).
- 5 The Outturn is reported as part of the Statutory Accounts and is therefore subject to audit. The audited Accounts will be presented to the Audit and Governance Committee on 30 September 2024.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corporate Policy Committee:

1. Consider the factors leading to a positive Net Revenue financial outturn of £4.5m underspend against a revised budget of £41.9m (10.7%), for Corporate Policy Committee services.
2. Scrutinise the contents of Annex 1 and note that any financial mitigation decisions requiring approval will be made in line with relevant delegations.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 6 Committees are responsible for discharging the Council's functions within the Budget and Policy Framework provided by Council. The Budget will be aligned with Committee and Head of Service responsibilities as far as possible.
- 7 Budget holders are expected to manage within the budgets provided by full Council. Committee and Sub-Committees are responsible for monitoring financial control and making decisions as required by these rules.

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:	Annex 1 – Final Outturn 2023/24 – Corporate Policy Committee
Background Papers:	Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-27 First Financial Review 2023/24 Second Financial Review 2023/24 Third Financial Review 2023/24



Final Outturn 2023/24

Corporate Policy Committee

June 2024

This report receives scrutiny and approval from Members of Cheshire East Council. As a public report, the Council welcomes feedback to the information contained here.

Anyone wanting to comment is invited to contact the Council at:
RandC@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Corporate Policy Committee

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Corporate Policy Committee

1. 2023/24 Final Outturn and Commentary

2023/24	Revised Budget (NET)	Outturn	Variance	Forecast Variance FR3	Movement from FR3 to Outturn
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Directorate	846	310	(536)	(263)	(273)
Finance & Customer Services	13,645	12,988	(657)	(190)	(467)
Governance & Compliance Services	10,431	9,509	(922)	(374)	(548)
Communications	690	671	(19)	7	(26)
HR	2,587	2,131	(456)	(350)	(106)
ICT	11,605	9,710	(1,895)	279	(2,174)
Policy & Change	2,055	1,995	(60)	(82)	22
Corporate Services	41,859	37,314	(4,545)	(973)	(3,572)

Outturn Commentary

Overall Corporate services is reporting an underspend of £4.5m at outturn against a budget of £42m.

Key issues include the saving from the MARs 2023/24 scheme where staff have left, significant vacancy management, reductions in spend and increased income. This is an improvement of £3.6m over the figures reported at the Third Financial Review. A key reason for that variance is ICT expenditure being less than expected.

Key issues include:

Corporate (Directorate): -£0.5m underspend

Key issues relate to vacancy management for senior posts -£0.2m; the budgets removed from service areas in Corporate as a result of Mars savings in 2023/24 -£0.3m. The Mars changes were made after third review giving the £0.3m improvement on this line.

Finance and Customer Service: -£0.7m underspend

Key issues relate to pressures in Customer Service Centres £0.1m offset by savings through increasing income, vacancy management and additional grants in Revenues and Benefits -£0.7m and Finance and Procurement -£0.1m. The position has improved by £0.5m since the third review from one-off rebates -£0.2m and increased income -£0.3m, both in Finance and Revenues and Benefits.

Governance and Compliance: -£0.9m underspend

Key issues relate to underspends in:

- Audit and Risk -£0.3m from increasing income and vacancy management.
- Democratic and Governance Services -£0.6m from: reduced member allowances (including not paying special responsibility allowances for multiple roles and not applying the pay award); increased registration income and reduced transport spend.

This is a £0.5m improvement from third review as a result of: Registration Services income -£0.15m; prudent forecasting; Civic Office increased income /coroner's service lower spend -£0.1m; and Elections -£0.17m of reduced spend.

Human Resources: -£0.5m underspend

Key issues: lower spending from central training budget and no spend on organisational development budget. The position has improved by £0.1m since third review through further non-essential spend reductions.

ICT -£1.9m underspend

Key issues: savings have been achieved through the Gemini Programme but the impact (alongside CEBERT recruitment restrictions) has resulted in a reassessment of planned projects and delays in commissioned work. This has led to unmet income targets and lower than anticipated contractual spend.

Contract costs within the Shared Service were lower than expected. This was due to lower than budgeted expenditure on the Next Generation Cheshire LAN/WAN and supplier issues leading to the delayed contract renewal of the cloud management solution and lower usage of Bulk SMS services.

The Strategy position reflected areas where contracts came in under budget, partly due to the timing of the Digital contract (which is now a 2024/25 cost), a reduction in replacement hardware kit and lower use of offsite storage.

This is a £2.2m improvement from third review as a result of lower than anticipated contract spend -£1.6m, timing of Digital project costs in year -£0.2m, charging additional staff costs to capital -£0.2m and reduced Gemini project spend -£0.1m.

Note: There will be a review focussing on the specific areas where there were major variances to see whether they are a one-off variance, or if there is an underlying budget variance that needs to be addressed in 2024/25. Findings will be reported at the next Corporate Policy Committee meeting.

Corporate Policy Committee

2. Corporate Grants Register

- 2.1 Cheshire East Council receives two main types of Government grants; specific use grants and general purpose grants. Specific use grants are held within the relevant service with a corresponding expenditure budget. Whereas general purpose grants are held in central budgets with a corresponding expenditure budget within the allocated service area.
- 2.2 Spending in relation to specific use grants must be in line with the purpose for which it is provided.
- 2.3 **Table 1** provides a detailed listing of all Corporate Policy related grants, their movements between the reporting period and the treatment of the grant.
- 2.4 **Table 2** shows additional specific purpose grant allocations that have been received which are £500,000 or less and are for noting only.
- 2.5 **Table 3** shows additional general use grant allocations that have been received which are £500,000 or less and are for noting only.
- 2.6 **Table 4** shows delegated decisions for additional general use grants previously named within the MTFS.

Table 1 – CORPORATE GRANTS REGISTER

Grants 2023/24	Original Budget	Revised Forecast FR3	Final Outturn	Change from Revised Forecast FR3	Treatment of Grant
	2023/24 £000	2023/24 £000	2023/24 £000	2023/24 £000	Notes 2 - 5
CORPORATE POLICY					
Specific Purpose (Held within Services)					
Revenues and Housing Benefits:					
Housing Benefit Subsidy	46,652	53,221	54,186	965 SRE	
Discretionary Housing Payments Grant	314	349	349	-0	
Housing Benefit (HB) Award Accuracy Initiative	29	30	30	0	
LADS - VEP (RTI) funding	24	21	21	-0	
LADS - Internet Protocol Access	0	1	0	-1	
New Burdens: Universal Credit, maintenance & natural migration	8	8	8	0	
LADS - New Burdens - Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)	0	60	60	0	
LADS - New Burdens - Benefit Cap	0	1	1	0	
LADS - New Burdens - Welfare Reform Changes (S4/2022)	62	0	0	0	
LADS - New Burdens - Single Fraud Investigation	0	1	1	0	
LADS - New Burdens - Single Housing Benefit Extract Automation	5	16	16	-0	
LADS - New Burdens - Changes to Universal Credit Stop Notice	0	1	1	-0	
LADS - New Burdens - Supported & Temporary Accommodation Change Request	2	0	0	0	
LADS - New Burdens - Supported & Temporary Accommodation	5	0	18	18 SRE	
Incapacity Benefit Reassessment (S5/2022)	2	0	0	0	
Council Tax Rebate Scheme - New Burdens on Account Payment	0	94	0	-94	
Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding	0	325	69	-257	
Energy Bills Support Scheme Admin / Staffing costs of administering grant	0	0	69	69 SRE	
Energy Bills Support Scheme Admin / Staffing costs of administering grant - carried forward	0	0	-28	-28	
Democratic Services:					
Police and Crime Commissioner's Panel grant	65	65	65	0	
Electoral Integrity Programme - New Burdens (Voter ID)	132	132	225	93 SRE	
Electoral Integrity Programme - New Burdens (Postal Votes)	0	8	0	-8	
Policy and Change:					
Funding for Local Authority for Adult Social Care	0	0	10	10 SRE	
Human Resources:					
Skills for Care	0	0	5	5 SRE	
Total Corporate Policy - Specific Purposes	47,300	54,334	55,105	771	

Grants 2023/24	Original Budget	Revised Forecast FR3	Final Outturn	Change from Revised Forecast FR3	Treatment of Grant
	2023/24 £000	2023/24 £000	2023/24 £000	2023/24 £000	Notes 2 - 5
CORPORATE POLICY					
General Use (Held Corporately)					
Revenue Support Grant	388	388	388	0	
Housing Benefit Administration Subsidy	626	741	741	0	
NNDR Administration Allowance	587	578	578	0	
New Homes Bonus	3,794	3,794	3,794	0	
Services Grant	1,720	1,720	1,720	0	
Council Tax Support Fund	0	521	0	-521	Reserves
Council Tax Support New Burdens	0	25	25	0	
Local Government Transparency Code	0	0	13	13	SRE
Debt Charges (Ministry of Justice)	0	0	40	40	
Business Rates Reliefs Compensation Grant 2023/24	0	21,039	0	-21,039	Reserves
Total Corporate Policy - General Use	7,115	28,807	7,300	-21,507	
TOTAL CORPORATE POLICY	54,415	83,140	62,404	-20,736	

Notes

- 1 The Dedicated Schools Grant, Pupil Premium Grant, Sixth Form Grant and Other School Specific Grant from the Education Funding Agency (EFA) figures are based on actual anticipated allocations. Changes are for in-year increases/decreases to allocations by the DfE and conversions to academy status.
- 2 SRE - Supplementary Revenue Estimate requested by relevant service.
- 3 ODR - Officer Decision Record to approve immediate budget change to relevant service.
- 4 Reserves - transfer to reserves at year end.
- 5 Balances - amount will be included as a variance to budget.

Table 2 – DECISION DELEGATED TO OFFICERS

Supplementary Revenue Estimate Requests for Allocation of Additional Grant Funding (Specific Purpose) £500,000 or less

Committee	Year	Type of Grant	£000	Details
Corporate Policy	2023/24	Energy Bills Support Scheme Admin / Staffing costs of administering grant (Specific Purpose)	69	This is a new grant from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. This is New Burdens funding to recompense the Authority for resource used in the administration of Alternative Fuel payments.
Corporate Policy	2023/24	Funding for Local Authority for Adult Social Care (Specific Purpose)	10	This is a grant from the Department of Health and Social Care. This grant is primarily related to all the additional work that is required to produce the Client Level Data (CLD) set on a quarterly basis and the proposed changes for the SALT adults social care return. The Business Intelligence team in corporate service has already completed preparatory towards the proposed changes. Cheshire East have been submitting CLD on a voluntary basis over the last 12 months.
Corporate Policy	2023/24	Skills for Care (Specific Purpose)	5	This is a new grant from the Workforce Development Fund (WDF). It consists of funding from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) disseminated by Skills for Care. It aims to ensure that care staff have the appropriate skills and qualifications for their roles.
Total Specific Purpose Allocations less than £500,000			84	

Table 3 – DECISION DELEGATED TO OFFICERS

Supplementary Revenue Estimate Requests for Allocation of Additional Grant Funding (General Use) £500,000 or less

Committee	Year	Type of Grant	£000	Details
Corporate Policy	2023/24	Local Government Transparency Code (General Use)	13	This grant is from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. New burdens in relation to the Council's obligation to publish information in line with the Government's Transparency Code 2014. This grant has been received since the requirements came into effect but has not been allocated to Compliance and Customer Relations.
Corporate Policy	2024/25	Electoral Integrity New Burdens (General Use)	26	Grant relates to financial year 2024/25. This grant is from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). The purpose of the grant is to provide support to local authorities towards expenditure lawfully incurred or to be incurred by them in the implementation of the Elections Act 2022. The changes are being implemented by the Electoral Services Team and this funding needs to be allocated to the relevant cost code within that service to ensure the changes can be implemented and the requirements of the legislation met.
Total General Use Allocations less than £500,000			39	

Table 4 – DECISION DELEGATED TO OFFICERS

Supplementary Revenue Estimate Requests for Allocation of Additional Grant Funding (Specific Purpose) previously named in the MTFS

Committee	Year	Type of Grant	£000	Details
				On 22 nd February 2023 Council delegated authority to the Chief Finance Officer, to approve supplementary estimates if the value of any named grant changes from the figures contained within Appendix C, Annex 7 of the MTFS.
Corporate Policy	2023/24	Housing Benefit Subsidy (Specific Purpose)	965	Increase on MTFS 2023-27 estimate and Financial Review 3 revised forecast. This grant is from the Department for Work and Pensions. Payment of claims administration within Housing Benefits.
Corporate Policy	2023/24	LADS - New Burdens - Supported & Temporary Accommodation (Specific Purpose)	13	Increase on MTFS 2023-27 estimate. This grant is from the Department for Work and Pensions and is intended to meet costs incurred by LAs to undertake a fully desk-based review of their HB stock cases to ensure, where appropriate, the correct supported housing or temporary accommodation marker is recorded.
Corporate Policy	2023/24	Electoral Integrity Programme - New Burdens (Voter ID) (Specific Purpose)	93	Increase on MTFS 2023-27 estimate. This grant is from the Department for Levelling-Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). The grant is intended to meet the additional costs of the Elections Act which will introduce a suite of measures to improve the integrity of the electoral system - this

Committee	Year	Type of Grant	£000	Details
				will include policies such as requiring photographic identification at polling stations and improvements to accessibility for disabled voters.
Total Delegated Decision Specific Purpose Allocations previously named in the MTFS			1,071	

3. Debt Management

	Outstanding	
	Debt	Over 6 months
	£000	old
	£000	£000
Corporate Policy Committee		
Finance and Customer Services	111	73
Governance and Compliance	20	1
Human Resources	3	-
ICT	184	1
	318	75

Total outstanding debt has increased from £275k at Third Financial Review to £318k at 31st March 2024. Debt over 6 months old has increased from £57k to £75k.

4. Capital Strategy

Table 1 Capital Programme

Corporate Policy								CAPITAL					
CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023/24 - 2026/27													
Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					Total Funding £000
	Total Approved Budget £000	Prior Years £000	Outturn 2023/24 £000	Forecast Budget 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Total Forecast Budget 2023-27 £000	Grants £000	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	
Committed Schemes in progress													
ICT Services													
Care Act Phase 2	6,314	4,130	469	1,715	0	0	2,184	0	0	0	0	2,184	2,184
Digital Customer - Delivery Programme Phase 1	252	129	123	0	0	0	123	0	0	0	0	123	123
Digital Customer Enablement	2,872	1,010	1,414	448	0	0	1,862	0	0	0	0	1,862	1,862
ICT Device Replacement	1,912	453	230	1,229	0	0	1,459	0	0	459	0	1,000	1,459
IADM (Information Assurance and Data Management)	19,465	15,183	1,238	1,644	1,400	0	4,282	0	0	0	0	4,282	4,282
Infrastructure Investment Programme (IIP)	36,326	30,068	997	2,627	1,804	830	6,258	0	0	0	0	6,258	6,258
Unified Communications Project	1,251	1,008	243	0	0	0	243	0	0	0	0	243	243
Vendor Management	1,006	743	21	241	0	0	263	0	0	0	0	263	263
Finance & Customer Services													
Core Financials	11,317	8,813	552	957	698	297	2,504	0	0	0	0	2,504	2,504
Strategic Capital Projects	17,278	8,578	176	4,827	2,300	1,397	8,700	0	0	0	0	8,700	8,700
Vendor Management - Phase 2	320	19	5	0	296	0	301	0	0	0	0	301	301
Total Committed Schemes	98,313	70,134	5,468	13,689	6,498	2,524	28,179	0	0	459	0	27,720	28,179
New Schemes													
ICT Services													
ICT Hybrid Model	1,553	0	445	1,108	0	0	1,553	0	0	0	0	1,553	1,553
Total New Schemes	0	0	445	1,108	0	0	1,553	0	0	0	0	1,553	1,553
Total Corporate Policy	98,313	70,134	5,913	14,797	6,498	2,524	29,731	0	0	459	0	29,272	29,731

Table 2 Delegated Decision - Supplementary Capital Estimates (SCEs) and Capital Budget Virements

Committee / Capital Scheme	Amount Requested £	Reason and Funding Source
Capital Budget Virements that have been made up to £500,000		
ICT		
Digital Customer - Delivery Programme Phase 1	2,000	Virement from the Digital Customer Enablement project to cover in-year expenditure as there was insufficient budget to cover all the costs. The scheme is now complete.
Unified Communications Project	44,955	Virement from the Infrastructure Investment Programme (IIP) to cover in-year expenditure as there was insufficient budget to cover all the costs. The scheme is now complete.
Total Capital Budget Virements Approved	46,955	
Total Supplementary Capital Estimates and Virements	46,955	

5. Reserves Strategy

Corporate Policy Committee

Name of Reserve	Opening Balance 1 April 2023 £000	Forecast Movement in Reserves 2023/24 £000	Forecast Closing Balance 31 March 2024 £000	Notes
<u>Directorate</u>				
Corporate Directorate	1,356	(192)	1,164	To support a number of widespread projects within the Corporate Directorate.
<u>Finance and Customer Services</u>				
Collection Fund Management	17,819	(9,665)	8,154	To manage cash flow implications as part of the Business Rates Retention Scheme. Includes liabilities that will not be paid until future years.
Capital Financing Reserve	12,886	(8,355)	4,531	To provide for financing of capital schemes, other projects and initiatives.
MTFS Reserve	5,147	(2,234)	2,913	To support the financial strategy and risk management.
Section 151 Revenue Grants	558	(544)	14	Unspent specific use grant carried forward into 2023/24.
<u>Governance and Compliance</u>				
Insurance Reserve - Cheshire County Fund	4,976	(1,877)	3,099	To settle insurance claims and manage excess costs. To be reviewed by service, but reserve cannot be given up.
Elections General	640	(508)	132	To provide funds for Election costs every 4 years.
Brexit Funding	13	0	13	To be reviewed.
<u>Human Resources</u>				
HR (CARE4CE Review, Culture Change, Pay realignment, Learning Mgt System)	59	0	59	To fund HR expenditure in relation to the Care4CE review, culture change programme, pay realignment and the Learning Management System.
Pay Structure (M Grade Review)	306	(252)	54	This scheme has now come to an end and the balance can be returned to General Fund.
<u>Policy and Change</u>				
Brighter Future Transformation Programme	1,789	(1,299)	490	To fund the Council's four year transformation programme and its five outcomes of Culture; Estates and ICT systems; Customer Experience, Commercial Approach and Governance.
<u>ICT</u>				
Digital Solutions Architect	0	150	150	To fund a role for the Digital Customer Enablement programme and will be key to realising the cost savings and efficiencies across the Council from the deployment of a number of digital initiatives.
CORPORATE POLICY TOTAL	45,549	(24,776)	20,773	

OPEN

Corporate Policy Committee

13 June 2024

Performance Report – Q4 2023/24

Report of: David Brown – Director of Governance and Compliance

Report Reference No: CPC/03/24-25

Ward(s) Affected: All

Purpose of Report

- 1 To provide the Committee with an oversight of organisational performance against the priorities and vision set out within the Council's Corporate Plan 2021-25.
- 2 This report covers Q4 of 2023/24, 1st January 2024 to 31st March 2024.
- 3 This report supports the responsibility of the Corporate Policy Committee to have a co ordinating role across all other committees and to exercise corporate oversight of outcomes, performance, budget monitoring and risk management.
- 4 To help the committee to consider any amendments in performance reporting, and/or additional data and intelligence that should be included within performance management reporting.
- 5 Appendix 1 provides the detail of performance and progress against priorities.

Executive Summary

- 6 This report gives an update on performance against the priorities in the Council's Corporate Plan. It describes performance in Q4 (January 2024 to March 2024) against the objectives within the Corporate Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corporate Policy Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the organisational performance in Q4 of 2023/24.

Background

- 7 The Council's Corporate Plan 2021-25 outlines 20 priorities for the Council, 6 aligned with the "Open" aim, to be an open and enabling organisation, 8 priorities are aligned to the "Fair" aim, a Council which enables and cares about people and 6 priorities are aligned to the "Green" aim, a thriving and sustainable place. The 20 priorities are as follows:

An open and enabling organisation

- Ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision making
- Listen, learn and respond to our residents, promoting opportunities for a two-way conversation
- Support a sustainable financial future for the council, through service development, improvement and transformation
- Look at opportunities to bring more income into the borough
- Support and develop our workforce to be confident, motivated, innovative, resilient and empowered
- Promote and develop the services of the council through regular communication and engagement with all residents

A council which empowers and cares about people

- Work together with residents and partners to support people and communities to be strong and resilient
- Reduce health inequalities across the borough
- Protect and support our communities and safeguard children, adults at risk and families from abuse, neglect and exploitation
- Be the best Corporate Parents to our children in care
- Support all children to have the best start in life
- Increase opportunities for all children and young adults with additional needs
- Ensure all children have a high quality, enjoyable education that enables them to achieve their full potential
- Reduce the reliance on long term care by improving services closer to home and providing more extra care facilities, including dementia services

A thriving and sustainable place

- A great place for people to live, work and visit
- Welcoming, safe and clean neighbourhoods
- Reduce impact on the environment
- A transport network that is safe and promotes active travel
- Thriving urban and rural economies with opportunities for all
- Be a carbon neutral council by 2025

- 8 This report reviews performance against priorities in the Corporate Plan and focuses upon a "One Council" approach to performance management. This includes a balance of quantitative and qualitative data.
- 9 The full Q4 performance report is at **Appendix 1**. This gives further details on progress made against delivery of the Corporate Plan during Q4 of the 2023/24 municipal year.
- 10 The number of staff network groups has declined during the year, with only 5 now meeting on a regular basis. A corresponding decrease in the number of active participants over the year has been reported, with 185 officers now actively participating in staff network groups.

- 11 The number of apprenticeships has increased, as expected, over the year to 65. This gradual increase was expected, though it is lower than the number reported in 2022/2023. At which point there was an outturn position of 162 apprentices, against a target of 152.
- 12 There are 2,869 FTE staff in Cheshire East Council as at Q4, a slight increase of 3 FTE since Q3, and an increase of 152 FTE since Q1. The vacancy rate across the Council has increased from 10.84% in Q3 to 12.16% (348 officers) in Q4.
- 13 There are 594.51 FTE staff in the Corporate Directorate Q4, a slight decrease on 595.25 in Q3. The vacancy rate in the Corporate Directorate has decreased from 11.68% in Q3 to 11.34% (67 officers) in Q4.
- 14 There are 843.43 FTE staff in Adults Health and Integration directorate Q4, a slight decrease on 848.21 in Q3. The vacancy rate across the Adults Health and Integration directorate has reduced from 15.17% in Q3 to 14.78% (125 officers) in Q4.
- 15 There are 833.43 FTE staff in the Children's directorate Q4, a slight increase on 824.49 in Q3. The vacancy rate across the Children's directorate has reduced from 11.3% in Q3 to 9.81% (82 officers) in Q4.
- 16 There are 592.87 FTE staff in the Place directorate Q4, a slight decrease on 601 FTE in Q3. The vacancy rate across the Place directorate has increased from 11.18% in Q3 to 12.71% (75 officers) in Q4.
- 17 There has also been a further reduction in staff turnover, from 3.5% in Q3 to 3.2% in Q4.
- 18 There has been a continued decrease in the number of agency staff from 297 in Q3 to 237 in Q4.
- 19 There has been a reduction in the variance between the forecast outturn and total net budget, reducing from 3.7% in Q3 to 2.4% in Q4.
- 20 Service committees receive performance information on a regular basis through their subject matter expert officers, specific to the subject of the committee. This performance report offers an oversight of progress against the Corporate Plan and should complement the more detailed performance, service specific dashboards that are considered at service committees.
- 21 **Open – An open and enabling organisation.**

Priorities

- Ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision making
- Listen, learn and respond to our residents, promoting opportunities for a two-way conversation
- Support a sustainable financial future for the council, through service development, improvement and transformation
- Look at opportunities to bring more income into the borough
- Support and develop our workforce to be confident, motivated, innovative, resilient and empowered
- Promote and develop the services of the council through regular communication and engagement with all residents

- 22 98.7% of local taxation (council tax and business rates) were collected in Q4, a continued, increase on the previous quarter and is now at the level of the annual target of 98.7%
- 23 68% of Stage 2 complaints have been resolved within timescales, which represents a continued increase on 56% in Q2.
- 24 The number of freedom of information act responses completed within timescale has remained at 91% in Q4, and continues to fall into the "Adequate" category of compliance as set out by the Information Commissioner (ICO). The ICO has a minimum expectation of 90% compliance.
- 25 There has been an increase in the number of apprenticeships being provided by the Council, with 65 reported in Q4. This is an anticipated increase and aligns with patterns experienced in previous years.
- 26 **Fair – A Council which empowers and cares about people.**

Priorities

- Work together with our residents and partners to support people and communities to be strong and resilient
- Reduce health inequalities across the borough
- Protect and support our communities and safeguard children, adults at risk and families from abuse, neglect and exploitation
- Be the best Corporate Parents to our children in care
- Support all children to have the best start in life
- Increase the opportunities for children, young adults and adults with additional needs
- Ensure all children to have a high quality, enjoyable education that enables them to achieve their full potential
- Reduce the reliance on long term care by improving services closer to home and providing more extra care facilities, including dementia services

- 27 Challenges of cost and demand remain in both Adults and Childrens social care. However, the qualitative performance measures have indicated some positive progress in relation to childrens social care this quarter.
- 28 The rate of Education, Health and Care Plans completed within 20 weeks has declined to 46% this period and is below the national average of 59%. There has been an increase in the number of Children with an EHCP, with 4,664 plans now being reported in Q4, an increase from 4,573 in Q3.
- 29 The percentage of childrens social care assessments completed within 45 days has increased again during Q4, to 95% (compared to 88% in Q3). And remains above the National percentage of 82%. This is seen as an early indicator that, when needed, individuals are receiving support in a timely fashion.
- 30 The rate (and numbers) of cared for children has increased during Q4 to 541 children, a rate of 69 per 10,000. This is still below the national rate of 71 per 10,000 children.
- 31 In terms of education, the percentage of good and outstanding primary and secondary schools remain above the national average and has increased during the period from Q3 96% to Q4 95% (Primary Schools) and from Q3 91% to Q4 96% (Secondary Schools). Both measures are above the national average for each setting.
- 32 The number of children missing from education has increased from Q3 156 to Q4 218, which is now higher than our Q1 position of 197 children.
- 33 One of our poverty indicators is to monitor the numbers of pupil eligible for free school meals, and it is reported that noted that an increase has been reported in Q4, from Q3 8,621 to 8,870 in Q4. This represents an increase of over 300 children since Q1 (8,525)
- 34 There has also been an increase in the number of Children in Need reported during Q4 to 1,969 giving a rate of 251 per 10,000 children, against a national rate of 343 children per 10,000.
- 35 Reported levels of Children with a Child Protection Plan in Q4 are 35.2 per 10,000 and remain below a national rate of 43 per 10,000. These figures represent an increase from Q3 where levels were 31.8 per 10,000.
- 36 **Green – A thriving and sustainable place.**

Priorities

- A great place for people to live, work and visit
- Welcoming, safe and clean neighbourhoods
- To reduce the impact on our environment
- A transport network that is safe and promotes active travel
- Thriving urban and rural economies with opportunities for all
- To be carbon neutral by 2025

- 37 There are 6 priorities under the “Green” aim for a thriving and sustainable place.
- 38 During the year, there has been a continued effort to reduce the number of planning applications in hand. Levels in Q4 are now at 200, which represents a significant reduction from Q1 levels of 400.
- 39 The number of affordable homes delivered has increased during Q4 to 569, from 232 in Q3. Year to date, 1000 affordable homes have now been delivered, exceeding the annual local target of 355 homes.
- 40 The percentage of waste collected sent for recycling and reuse remains reasonably steady, with 52% in Q4 and we have improved upon the annual target of over 50%
- 41 Progress made towards the net zero target has slightly reduced in Q4 to 48%.
- 42 The installation of new electric charging points has increased during Q4, with 28 installed during the period. The year total of 52 EV chargers installed exceeds the annual target of 28.
- 43 The percentage of major applications determined within 13 weeks or agreed time remains above both the national target of 87% and the local target of 90%, with 100% being determined in Q4.
- 44 The percentage of non-major applications determined within weeks or agreed time continues to remain above the national target of 86%, with 87% being determined in Q4.
- 45 Work continues to be progressed to develop the action plan to support the wider borough target of net zero by 2045.

Consultation and Engagement

- 46 Not applicable.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 47 The Corporate Policy Committee is responsible for reviewing and scrutinising performance against the strategic aims and objectives in the Council's Corporate Plan 2021-25.
- 48 The performance management framework continues to be developed and seeks to provide a robust, customer focussed view of performance. Member input into this development is valued to ensure that performance management reports are of use.
- 49 Performance management is a tool to allow oversight of the Council's key activities and to enable transparency and understanding around where the Council is performing well, and what are the areas of challenge and improvement.

Other Options Considered

- 50 Not applicable.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 51 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 52 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Any financial implications arising from performance matters will be covered in other reports to respective service committees, including separate financial reporting in-year, as well as in further development and reporting of the Medium Term Financial Strategy, as required.

Policy

- 53 This report demonstrates progress against all priorities within the Cheshire East Council Corporate Plan 2021-25.

An open and enabling organisation.	A council which empowers and cares about people.	A thriving and sustainable place.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 54 The range of council activities covered in the Corporate Plan aim to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty and the obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

Human Resources

- 55 There are no direct human resources implications arising from this report.

Risk Management

- 56 Performance and risk are intrinsically linked. Where risks are identified, performance data can evidence the likelihood of the risk and can also show if risks materialise. The performance report identifies areas where performance is strong and areas for development and improvement. This supports the risk management process by providing the opportunity to review progress and identify areas for improvement and any necessary mitigating actions.

Rural Communities

- 57 The Corporate Plan aims to support greater inclusion for rural communities. In 2022/23 a Rural Action Plan was approved by the Economy and Growth committee, which includes priorities around digital connectivity, access, housing, visitor economy and support for rural based businesses.

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

- 58 Performance management of the priorities relating to children and young people and cared for children ensure that there is a focus on children receiving the best start in life and that we deliver on our commitments to children and young people in Cheshire East.

Public Health

- 59 This report supports our Public Health priorities using the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Tartan Rug to ensure that we work with partners to address issues of poor housing, poverty, employment and education across urban and rural communities.

Climate Change

- 60 Performance against the Corporate Plan contributes to overall achievement of the net zero targets for the council and for the borough.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Phil Christian – Acting Head of Business Change Phil.christian@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Performance Report Q4
Background Papers:	Q3 2023 2024 Performance Report Cheshire East Council Corporate Plan 2021-2025

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Cheshire East Council

Corporate Plan 2021-2025

Performance Report – Quarter 4 2023/24



Open

Fair

Green

An open and enabling organisation

By 2025 we want: Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 4 Update	
Priority: Ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision making	
<p>The Council to be seen as being a fair open and transparent organisation and able to demonstrate it.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a new committee system • Demonstrate commitment to open data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 91% of freedom of information requests were responded to within statutory timescales. This is an increase on Q2 and falls into the "Adequate" category of compliance as set out by the Information Commissioner (ICO). The ICO has a minimum expectation of 90% compliance. • Open Data is shared via The Councils' Open Data site - Insight Cheshire East • This data includes Air Quality, Procurement Information - Contracts Register, Procurement Information - Invitations to Tender and Expenditure exceeding 500 GBP. • Q4 has an average of 307 views a day for a total of 27,634 views on Insight Cheshire East across the quarter. Notable spikes were on Jan 15th at 713 views and March 29th at 781 views.
<p>To increase local democracy.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with town and parish councils • Virtual meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The management of the network to transfer from Corporate to the Communities team, as they have an existing contract with CHALC. • Working with the town and parish councils will involve managing the forward plan of themes, organising speakers, writing briefing note for Jackie Weaver, drafting agenda and notes.
Priority: Listen, learn and respond to our residents, promoting opportunities for a two-way conversation	
<p>Our communities will be well informed about things they can do to prepare for emergencies.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced emergency preparedness in communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency preparedness is led by a Joint Emergency Planning Team across Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester councils. • Information is regularly shared through our communication channels to inform people of things they can do to prepare for emergencies.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We develop flexible plans through a process called Integrated Emergency Management, which enables all responding organisations to deal effectively with a major or serious incident at any time of day or night, 365 days a year. These plans are also exercised on a regular basis
<p>The Council is seen by residents as responsive.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation on key plans and strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities for developing the Cheshire East Plan have continued, with an initial structure template being drafted. The Cheshire East Plan policy and strategy steering group has continued to meet during the period and have continued to engage with services and teams across The Council. This activity is planned to continue throughout next year, with the Plan aiming to be approved and launched later in the year. Several consultations and surveys have been undertaken during Q4. Including, budget consultation, Strategic Leisure Review, Mark your Mark Ballot, Childrens Social Care Feedback survey, Crossing Strategy and the Highways Satisfaction Survey. Key stats for the last 3 months: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jan-24, 8 consultations and 7,221 responses Feb-24, 3 consultations and 270 responses Mar-24, 4 consultations and 7,748 responses
<p>Customer services to offer support and guidance and be accessible to people who need them.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review where and how technology can assist and enable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project to introduce artificial intelligence (AI) to the 0300 telephone numbers is underway and should be in place by September 2024. This will enable customers to self-serve where appropriate and allow the contact centre team to support vulnerable customers seeking assistance with more in depth queries. The contact centre technology that sits behind the Capita Payments system is now fully PCI Compliant (Payment Card Industry) and means that customers can make secure payments over the phone to the contact centre, Adult Social Care team and the Business Rates team. Call and screen recording technology is live within the CX One telephony platform, used by the corporate contact centre. The technology will support training and quality monitoring and lead to an overall improved customer experience. The Customer effort score measure has increased by 0.23 since Q2 which is mainly due to longer phone wait times caused by a significant increase in calls about the garden waste scheme.

By 2025 we want: Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 4 Update	
<p>Receive the Ministry of Defence's (MoD) Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Award of silver standard prior to award of gold standard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We submitted our completed Gold MOD award papers in March and had this has been signed off by our MOD Employer Recognition Manager. It was sent to the first panel of judges the beginning of April and passed the initial stage then it has 2 more panels to go through at the MOD before the decision is finalised. We have been made aware our application is very strong following the work we have done previously and will be given the answer around the first week of July 2024.
Priority: Promote and develop the services of The Council through regular communication and engagement with all residents	
<p>A financially sustainable council which has increased levels of reserves.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a 4-year MTFS Develop a sustainable reserve strategy Successful delivery of savings programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our budget consultation ended on Monday 29 January. Each proposal within the consultation aligns to one of our committees. So, for example, proposals relating to parking will be considered by the highways and transport committee, and proposals about election costs will be considered by the corporate policy committee. Cheshire East Council has agreed a budget at a meeting of full council on Tuesday, 27th February and approved a 4.99% increase in Council Tax, the maximum amount currently allowed from April 2024. The budget outlines £30m in savings across council services to help ensure financial sustainability. For example, it will look at ways to generate income from assets such as libraries, close the three household waste sites at Bollington, Middlewich and Poynton, review the costs to its garden waste scheme and reduce council office accommodation.
Priority: Look at opportunities to bring more income into the borough	
<p>Our Alternative Service Delivery Vehicles (ASDV) delivering for our residents and generating a profit (with shareholder dividend) from commercial activities, reducing financial pressures on The Council.</p> <p>Key actions:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial commissioned work has now been completed and will be considered at committee in June.

- Complete programme of reviews of ASDVs

Priority: Support and develop our workforce to be confident, motivated, innovative, resilient and empowered

A committed and motivated workforce.

Cheshire East Council seen as an employer of choice.

Key actions:

- Undertake staff surveys and act on the results
- Implement Best4Business Unit 4 ERP system

- There has been a reduction in the number of staff network groups active and a resulting reduction in the number of active participants as a result. Efforts to re-establish these groups will be aligned to the WorkplaCE programme.

A workforce that can work remotely and flexibly using the latest technology.

Key actions:

- Clear guidance and support to staff and managers.
- Accelerate roll-out of mobile working

- The office closure of Westfields is still progressing with on-going planning taking place to align dates for our upcoming office moves.
- Logistics include - moving desks from Westfields to Delamere House, timing the removal and set up of ICT equipment for staff, clearing cupboards and lockers, so teams moving in have the storage that they need when they arrive, rearranging and tweaking floor plans (in Delamere) to meet the needs of directorates and booking removal companies for the right time to support teams when they move.

Priority: Promote and develop the services of The Council through regular communication and engagement with all residents

Residents and staff to be aware of The Council and the services we provide.

Key actions:

- Review communications plans and style

- Cheshire East Council has a Communications Strategy which includes a clear vision for The Council's communications with residents. It sets out aims and outlines priorities for communications activity that will support the delivery of the corporate plan. It also sets out the principles we will follow when communicating.
- The [Media Hub](#) provides residents with an opportunity to subscribe to email updates from lots of different council services, including:
- Libraries, Children's centres, Highways, Countryside rangers, Fostering, And Family hubs. Or residents and stakeholders can simply sign up to receive a weekly update of council news and information

Resident satisfaction with The Council to be in line with similar councils.

Key actions:

- Undertake regular communications with residents
- Develop new Customer Experience strategy

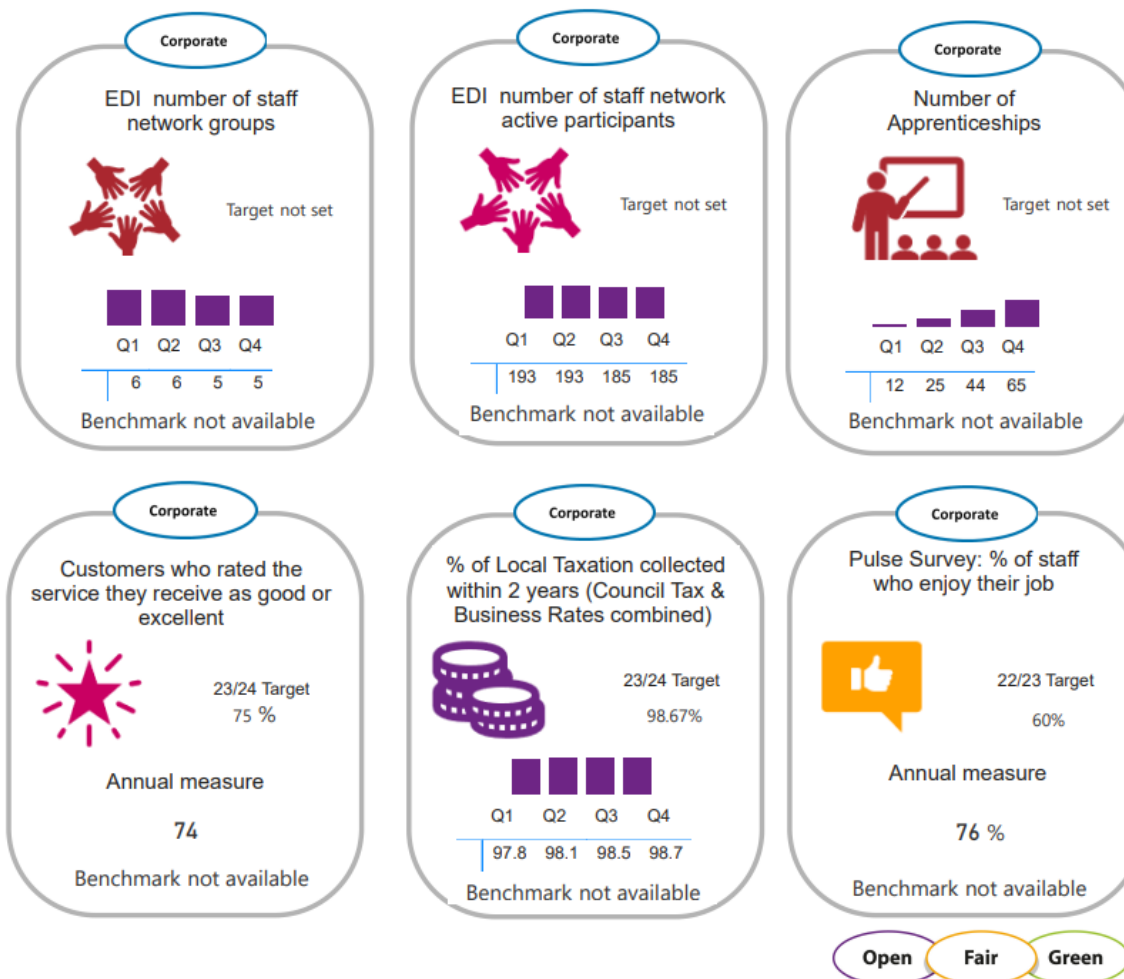
- Regular communications with residents, members and staff are undertaken through the communications and media team.
- A [Customer Experience Strategy](#) was developed and sets out our vision to deliver against this commitment and to provide the best possible experience for our customers, whoever they are and however they contact us.
- We know that we provide a wide range of services to our customers and we know that the experience will differ depending on the service accessed and the way in which it is accessed.
- We also know that as a public service provider it is important that customers can trust us to design services which respond to their needs and the needs of the local area and that these are delivered in a way which provides value for their money.

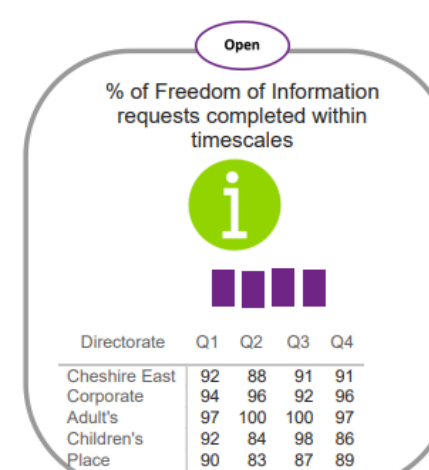
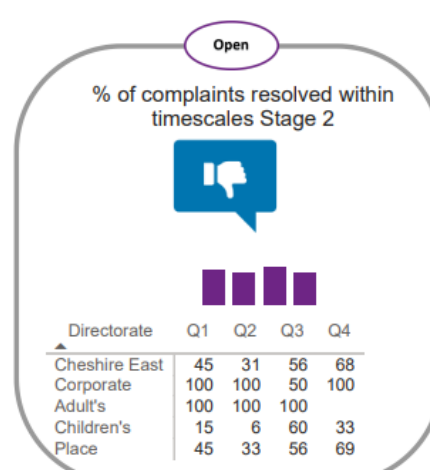
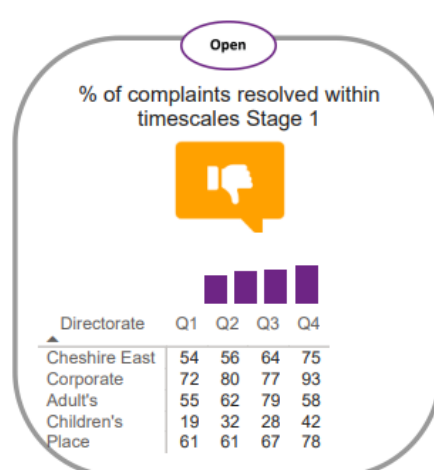
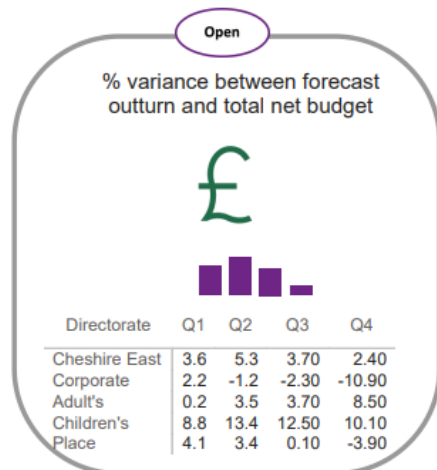
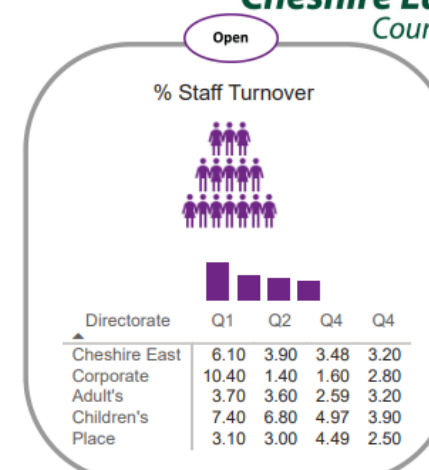
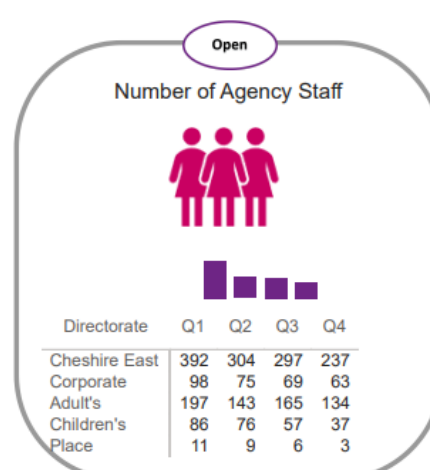
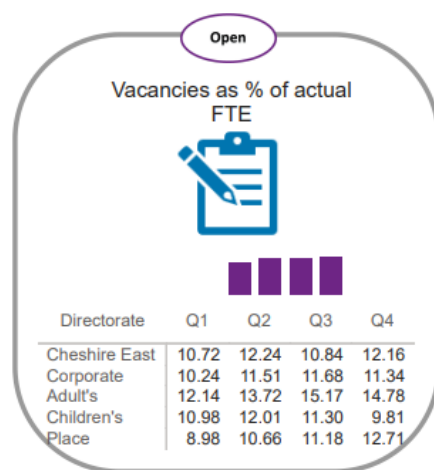
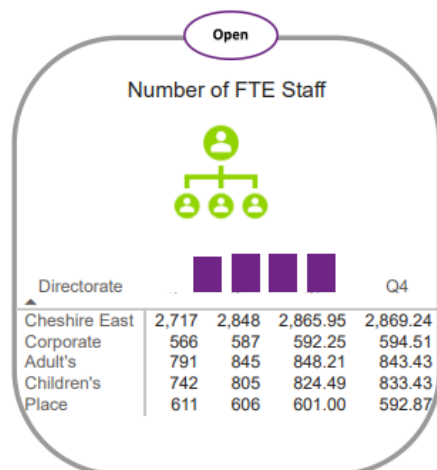
The Council to be regarded as a good partner.

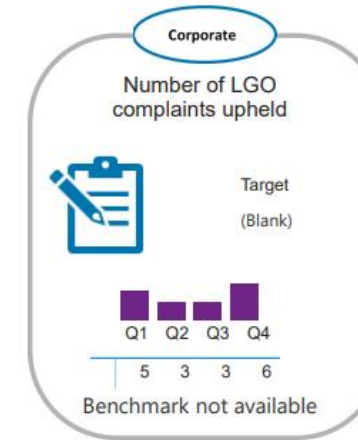
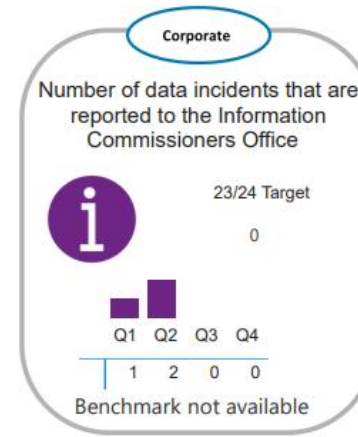
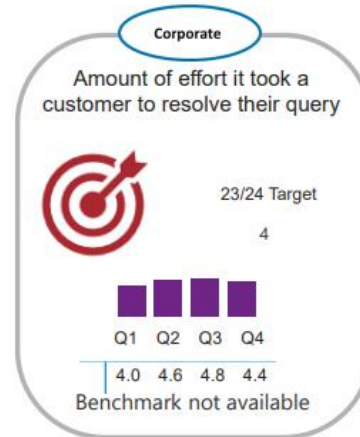
- An internal review of partnerships is expected to be undertaken and will seek to support the key ambitions of the Council and the aims and objectives of [the Corporate Plan](#).

Performance measures supporting An open and enabling organisation

- Ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision making
- Listen, learn and respond to our residents, promoting opportunities for a two-way conversation
- Support a sustainable financial future for the council, through service development, improvement and transformation
- Look at opportunities to bring more income into the borough
- Support and develop our workforce to be confident, motivated, innovative, resilient and empowered
- Promote and develop the services of the council through regular communication and engagement with all residents







A council which empowers and cares about people

By 2025 we want:	Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 4 Update
Priority: Work together with our residents and our partners to support people and communities to be strong and resilient	
<p>All services to be developed together with our residents and communities, so they are based on what works for people in Cheshire East.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed our vision for children and young people, and working together • Work with residents to understand the continuing impact of Covid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the social value notice board, 7 organisations have offered help to the Voluntary, Community, Faith, Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector organisations in Cheshire East. • The Council supports both Mental Health Partnership Board and the Learning Disability Partnership Board and both boards have representation from people with lived experience as well as third sector groups and Members of the Council. Their primary function is the oversee the implementation of the plans for mental health and learning disability and are answerable to the Health and Wellbeing Board. • The One You Cheshire East service is currently being recommissioned. This has included extensive coproduction and engagement work with stakeholder organisations, residents and providers. This has included a healthy lifestyle survey which was circulated to circa 12,000 residents as well as focus groups and drop-ins with specific types of residents e.g. those in areas of deprivation. • Procurement for the service is expected to commence in late May/early June with a view to the new contract commencing in November 24.
<p>Families and communities are strong and resilient.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a strong, local, social impact structure • Develop a locality model of working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheshire East Council is continuing to transform its support services for children and young people from birth up until the age of 19 (or 25 for those with special educational needs and disabilities) through the development of its family hubs. These hubs are bringing council, health and community services together, so that families with children and young people can access the right help and support, at the right time. Over the past 12 months the council has already opened five physical family hubs across the borough and are looking to develop further outreach provision through family hub 'connect' sites – giving the opportunity for more in-person support and advice. Through the recently launched new family hubs digital offer, families can expect online access to advice and information at the touch of a button, making it much more convenient for those who are unable to access a family hub near them. • As part of our family hubs development, we have divided the borough of Cheshire East into eight collaborative areas, four in the north and four in the south. These areas bring together multi-disciplinary teams who work in specific geographies to improve the lives of children and young people. Each area has identified the specific priorities for that area and are currently working together to address these.

By 2025 we want:	Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 4 Update
<p>Cheshire East is a welcoming and supportive place, where equality, freedom, fairness and opportunities are available to all.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a suitable location within the borough and develop a traveller transit site • Increase collaboration with marginalised groups • Secure social value benefits 	<p>Transit Site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans are on target to open a Transit Site in Cheshire East in the summer of 2024. • The LIVE WELL page which provides information to Gypsies and Travellers has been updated to include advice re Lifestyle on Prescription to improve access to health services for people without a permanent address. <p>Marginalised Groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued integration & development support within the ARAP (Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy) scheme for Afghan families. • 13 families resettled into Cheshire East. • 294 Ukrainian guests with sponsors matched with 145 households (all in education, training or work.) • A further 83 Ukrainian families living independently in either social housing, or private rented sector accommodation. • Creation and chairing of the Internal Armed Forces Network EDI group. <p>Social Value:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Connected Communities Noticeboard allows community organisations to identify areas that need support and request support for these directly from our Commissioned services and local businesses. • Social Value Charter Annual Review – the review will capture data across services to evidence the positive impacts we are making to the lives of Children and Young people, as well as environmental, economic and social benefits for all Cheshire East Residents. • Reviewing Corporate Social Responsibility evaluating equality and inclusion of employees, local economic benefits and the Carbon Neutral Action Plan. • Publication of a Health Needs Assessment for our East Timorese community, recommendations from which will inform ongoing work to reduce health inequalities.
<p>Work with partners for the benefit of our communities inspiring confidence in public services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued support of the 8 Veteran Breakfast clubs all throughout the borough. • The Council's Veterans Officer continues to work with groups such as the Royal British Legion to organise Armed forces events across the borough.

By 2025 we want:

developing community cohesion and community resilience.

Key actions:

- Deliver evidence based early intervention and prevention services
- Reduce loneliness and isolation

Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 4 Update

- Working in partnership with the Voluntary, Community, Faith, Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector, including Refugees Welcome, Elim Church, Hope Church etc., to develop strategies that increase efficiency, transparency and promotion of the migration schemes in the community and enhance the avenues of support for both sponsors and guests. Such schemes include Welcome cafés, Informal ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes and Wellbeing and inclusion sessions.
- Procurement undertaken and a contract is now in place with collaborative partners to grow our VCFSE Sector and Town and Parish Council offer to meet the needs of vulnerable residents ensuring a fair and equitable approach to implementing the service. The overall aims and purpose of the service are:
 - Growing the market - Market shaping the VCFSE & Local Councils (LC) sector to meet existing and emerging needs.
 - Growing communication channels - Creating ways, forums and communication channels for strategic and thematic discussions to enable clear ways for information to be gathered and disseminated amongst the VCFSE & LC.
 - Growing influence on public sector decisions - Acting as leader to identify opportunities for the VCFSE sector and sustainable investments, by encouraging VCFSE & LC to act as advocates, or professional lead in key existing forums.
 - Active involvement in the PREVENT (national safeguarding programme) group and GRT (Gipsy, Romany and Traveler) steering group.
- The Council's Community Grants Team nominated and shortlisted for the Best team award at the Government Grants Award 2024.
- A third multi-agency workshop has been held to further discuss and shape the development of plans to increase physical activity levels and the number of people with a healthy weight in Cheshire East. An update was presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board and early drafts of the actions plans shared and endorsed. Further development work with partners is ongoing to support and enable the identification and delivery of actions to support people to eat well and move more.
- The Lifestyle on Prescription resource continues to be socialised with health and care professionals across Cheshire East. Engagement work with young people and practitioners has been initiated to develop bespoke and targeted resources to support and encourage healthy lifestyles and behaviour.
- Review of licensing applications from a public health perspective are continuing to be undertaken.
- Scoping and mapping of the local position re: smoking cessation and tobacco control has been initiated.

By 2025 we want:	Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 4 Update
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Health have also enabled and facilitated partnership involvement in the development of the Cheshire and Merseyside Smokefree Framework and facilitated a session at a sub-regional event. Work on the Social Isolation and Loneliness Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) is underway.
Priority: Reduce health inequalities across the borough	
<p>Work with partners to address the issues of poor housing, poverty, employment and education opportunities across urban and rural areas.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the Cheshire East Partnership Five Year Plan Promote regular screening and take up of preventative health opportunities Improve the mental health of all people working and living in Cheshire East To continue to support a zero-suicide approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Health played a key role in creation of the Health and Care ‘Blueprint 2030’. Write up of the evaluation of developments in local delivery of the National Child Measurement Programme including analysis to track change in BMI between reception and year 6; analysis of parental feedback; analysis of professional feedback; and presentation of findings at the Behavioural Science and Public Health Conference in Liverpool. Work on improving uptake of physical health checks in primary care of patients with a Severe mental Illness is ongoing including training for the wider public health workforce. Planning and delivery of staff influenza vaccination programme, with almost 900 taking up the offer. Working with NHS colleagues to increase uptake of vaccinations and health checks through deployment of the Living Well bus. Work to continue to deliver a multi-agency approach to self-harm and suicide prevention is ongoing - Cheshire East Harm and Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2023-2025. <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suicide prevention training is now available for all professionals in Cheshire East and being delivered The Domestic Abuse and Suicidality toolkit has been launched Targeted engagement with Children and Young People who have lived experience, to contribute to the design for the plan for the Safety Planning, Resilience and Protective Factors Development and approval of a new collaboration with East Cheshire NHS Trust to support Public Health training and development in foundation programme junior doctors, and further integration between public health, communities and health and care. GP trainees are working to improve cervical screening uptake and MMR uptake in Crewe. There has been further presentation of JSNA work in Crewe to the Crewe Connect forum.

By 2025 we want:	Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 4 Update
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A JSNA conference was hosted by the Public Health team, which was well attended and received and served to promote the JSNA resources available as well as to shape next steps. • Public health has contributed to the development of more integrated care community dashboards to enable them to address local challenges more effectively through both proactive and reactive measures. • The Tartan Rug interactive dashboard has been published with an accompanying video user guide. This enables users to focus in on specific areas of health or specific wards and explore existing inequalities.
Priority: Protect and support our communities and safeguard children, adults at risk and families from abuse, neglect and exploitation	
<p>Children receive the right support, by the right people, at the right time, so they are effectively protected from harm, and are supported to stay within their families and communities.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued investment in Early Help and Prevention services • Work with our partnerships to ensure there is a joined-up approach to safeguarding children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public health has led upon the commencement of an evidence review into the cost effectiveness of violence and crime prevention interventions which is feeding into Youth Justice Service health improvement discussions. • Public Health contributed significantly to the Cheshire Child Death Overview Panel annual report which has now been finalised. • An extension to the Household Support Fund (HSF) was announced by the government on 6 March 2024. A new package of HSF support in Cheshire East has been agreed up to September 2024, including crisis support to financially vulnerable households most in need. The fund has been made available to support immediate needs and help those who are struggling to afford household basics including food, energy and wider essentials. In addition, the fund is available to provide support to financially vulnerable households most in need that has a long-term sustainable impact. • Work continued to ensure that Cheshire East Holiday Activities and Food programme (HAF) was in place for the easter holidays. This programme provides Cheshire East's children and young people from families who are in receipt of income/benefits-related free school meals the opportunity to attend free activities during the school holidays, where nutritional food is also provided. A new online booking method offers eligible parents the opportunity to browse and book with ease, with a clear breakdown of the activities available, and by which providers. • The council's inspection of local authority children's services took place from 26 February to 8 March 2024. In summary, the inspectors looked at the experiences of children and young people, and what impact council services have made for them. Whilst inspectors recognised many strengths across the council, they also identified areas of improvement, including our support for care leavers up to the age of 25. Work is already under way to improve the experiences of our children and young people, learning from this inspection and building on the progress we have made over the last few years.

By 2025 we want:	Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 4 Update
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely assessments are one of the first indicators that the risks and needs of a young person's life experience are being promptly identified, enabling their support needs to be considered. The percentage of children's social care assessments completed within 45 days has continued on a positive trajectory and has resulted with an indicative outturn position of 81% for the reporting year. • There is an increase since Q3 in the number of children supported with a child protection plan from the previous quarter and is a rate of 35.2 per 10,000. This still places us below the latest available published national figures for 2023, which show an England rate of 43.2 and a Northwest picture of 49.1. Our statistical neighbours ranged from 25.2 to 52.3, with those nearest (Cheshire West and Chester and Warrington) at 49.3 and 52.3, respectively. • Cheshire East's Safeguarding Children Partnership held their annual Learning Week in February with an overarching theme of 'The Child's Voice and their Lived Experience'. Over 2300 practitioners took part, with 133 local experts presenting more than 66 topics, with some online sessions attracting over 100 attendees.
<p>People and organisations to work together to prevent and stop the risk and experience of abuse and neglect, whilst promoting the well-being of adults with care and support needs.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse and neglect to adults with care and support needs • Safeguard adults at risk • To address causes of abuse, neglect or exploitation • To ensure that officers are adhering to legislation and promoting best practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Serious Violence Strategy has been published on the Safer Cheshire East Website. • Cheshire Police launched Phase 1 of their Right Care Right Person programme in Cheshire. Adult Social Care are contributing to the implementation and have updated policy and procedures accordingly. • An Annual Training Event was held in February 2024, for those Practitioners and Signatories who are involved in the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards to protect individuals who lack capacity living in Care Homes or are receiving treatment in Hospital. • The Safeguarding Board held its first Multi Agency Practice Management Learning Session in January 2024 which focussed on the theme of Self Neglect and a report and recommendations will be shared with the Board in April 2024. • Adult Social Care continue to share learning from our Safeguarding Adults and Domestic Homicide Reviews with Managers, Elected Members and Practitioners to promote a culture of learning and improvement. • In response to the updated Prevent and Channel Guidance, Cheshire East and Cheshire West have refreshed their joint strategy. Prevent Benchmarking and Channel Self Assurance Protocols have been completed and returned to the Home Office.

Priority: Be the best corporate parents to the children in our care

Always deliver on our pledges to care for children and young people, and those who are cared for will have an experience, that we will:

- Be a good corporate parent
- Improve education, training and employment outcomes
- Work to achieve permanence and keep children safe
- Improve health and wellbeing outcomes
- Prepare young people for adulthood

- The Supported Internship will be expanded from September 2024 to support up to 65 young people (currently c40) with learning disabilities and/or neurodiversity into paid employment. The service currently supports 79% of young people accessing the programme into paid employment at the end of their internship and is well supported by local employers. This figure puts Cheshire East in the top quintile nationally for this type of support.
- The new Cared for Children and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy was approved by Children & Families Committee in February 2024, for the period 2024-2027. It will be updated annually to reflect changes in needs where required and to help communicate to the independent market where our current pressures are – currently we are working hard to mobilise additional emergency accommodation, following a recommendation in the recent Ofsted ILACS inspection, as well as additional units of accommodation for 18+ care leavers. Recruitment of Local Authority foster carers is also an area of significant activity.
- The Preparing for Adulthood team are gradually improving the number of young people assessed for Adult Social Care needs prior to the age of 18. Although at 38%, this remains well below the target of 70% the trajectory is moving in the right direction, with an improvement from 30% at the end of 2023. A composite Preparing for Adulthood cross-cutting plan has been developed, drawing actions from the 5 SEND Strategy workstreams, key recommendations from the analysis in this area undertaken by Impower consulting in 2023, and known areas requiring improvement from the NDTi Preparing for Adulthood audit tool undertaken in autumn 2023.
- The PFA team have also developed a new guidance booklet for service users and their families which sets out what to expect from Adult Social Care, and an updated SEND PFA toolkit for schools has also been developed by the Quality team in Education.
- There has been an increase in the number of cared for children in Cheshire East compared to the previous quarter, with 68 individuals coming into care in Q4, compared to 36 in Q3. Unlike previous quarters, this hasn't been heavily influenced by unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC), but rather a small number of large families with 4 of these families accounting for a third of all the entrants.
- There has been a small increase in the percentage of cared for children placed out of borough and over 20 miles from their home address. There is a continued focus as part of our ongoing sufficiency work to ensure that, wherever possible, young people are supported close to their home network. This quarter has seen the opening of the first of three new children's homes in the borough. It is important to recognise there will always be a cohort of young people placed at a distance to offer the best support for their future lives, especially where this is with extended family and/or their forever home.

By 2025 we want:	Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 4 Update
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Q4, our long-serving foster carers were recognised for their dedication and commitment to caring for children at a ceremony held by Cheshire East Council. Seven fostering families, with nearly 160 years' service in total were presented with their awards at a special event. In total, these families have cared for more than 200 children and young people during that time. • During March we made contact with all 209 care leavers aged over 21 at the time to ensure they were aware of the support available to them and offer them an allocated worker. • We recently updated Cheshire East's cared for children and care leavers sufficiency strategy to outline our vision to intervene early, prioritising the safety of children by keeping them at home whenever possible. The strategy clearly identifies our planned initiatives in children's social care and commissioning to address existing gaps in provision, emerging demands, and to stabilise family environments.
Priority: Support all children to have the best start in life	
<p>All children enjoy access to high quality childcare and support programmes that maximises their development in terms of speech and language, resilience and ability to learn and play.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain high numbers of children placed in high quality childcare settings • Promote and improve access to the parenting journey, with additional support offered to the most vulnerable families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The percentage of eligible children in Cheshire East taking up the 2-year-old and the 3- and 4-year-old childcare offer is 75% and 97%, respectively. This compares well to the national average of 74% and 94%, respectively. • We have continued to increase our reach to children in their early years and their families. For the year from January 2023, we have seen 9,542 adults, an increase of 12% on the previous year and 6,665 pre-school children (19% increase) through the roll out of family hubs and the increased parenting journey offer. More children and families are now accessing universal and targeted start for life services through a children's centre/family hub including our parenting journey, training, and family support. • Socially isolated families with children with a development delay noted at their 2-year-old check are being supported through a new a home visiting programme - an 8-week intervention in the family home with transition activities to link the family into community early years provision by the end of the programme. • We have achieved outcomes for 361 families in the Supporting Families programme (in 2023/24 to the end of January 2024).

Priority: Increase opportunities for children, young adults and adults with additional needs

Great services and provision across the partnership for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) which means children's needs are met effectively and efficiently.

Key actions:

- Ensure that all recommendations from Ofsted inspections have been addressed and improvements are embedded in practice.
- Focus on further improving communication across the SEND partnership
- Review the pathways for transition to adulthood
- Expand the local provision of SEND places to enable more children to attend a school

- Governance arrangements to be reviewed to ensure multi-agency decision making (especially where there are implications for other system partners) are robust and planned strategic approaches well communicated and understood.
- Review of support for Children with Disabilities (including early help and short breaks) currently underway. Will also include development of pathways and approaches to support greater independence through childhood to prevent, reduce or delay additional need wherever possible. Work also underway to increase the take up of Direct Payments for Adult service users as rates of take up are high amongst under 18's with eligible needs but less-so amongst over 18's.
- The number of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in Cheshire East has significantly increased over recent years. As at March 2024 there has been a further small increase in the number of individuals being supported with an EHCP and represents a 12% increase from the same point last year.
- Due to the increase in EHCPs, we are increasingly looking at how we can provide the right service at the right time for our children with SEND. Through our recently approved revised Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) management plan, we will continue to increase local specialist provision and become less reliant on the independent sector, embed the graduated approach and inclusion across all schools and settings and strengthen SEN support and strengthen decision making and governance.
- Our family hubs are now hosting SEND drop-in sessions. These are hosted by our health practitioners to offer parents, children and young people support and guidance with all SEND-related issues, sharing expert advice to help you understand why your child may be struggling.
- The opening of the newly expanded Springfield School site in Wilmslow, creating up to 80 much-needed local school spaces for children and young people with SEND took place in February 2024. The satellite site has been designed and built with special consideration for the access, safeguarding, and sensory requirements of pupils aged four to 18.
- The council submitted a revised proposal for special school provision to the Department for Education (DfE) in March 2024, requesting a 120-place free SEND school for secondary age pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. The DfE have confirmed their support for this revised bid and indicated that the Free School process will start in May 2024. The new school will support children and young people requiring an Education, Health and Care Plan and is part of the council's plans to provide a wide range of SEND pathways to meet the needs of our young people. These additional special school places will enable children

By 2025 we want:	Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 4 Update
	<p>and young people to remain within Cheshire East and avoid the need to travel long distance to go to school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The premiere of ‘Hear my Voice’ – a series of five films which focus on prevention and effective communication to support young people with a learning disability and/or autism took place in March 2024 at the Heritage Centre in Macclesfield and was aimed at professionals who work with young people with autism or learning disabilities, with a focus on helping them when they are in crisis. The stars of the show were the children and young people from Jigsaw - Cheshire East’s SEND Youth Forum, whilst also being co-produced by CANNDID and Level Up, and funded by NHS England. • On National Supported Internship Day (27 March) an event was held for local businesses to let them know all about Cheshire East’s Supported Internships Programme and how this can help boost their business. The programme aims to help young people with a learning disability transition into paid work. During the session, businesses heard all about the programme and the benefits hiring someone with an educational healthcare plan can bring, having any questions answered from our Supported Internships Team.
<p>Provision for young adults to live independently within in the community.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leisure, life and meaningful employment opportunities are developed to improve life chances for young adults • Promote citizen engagement and participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement has been undertaken with people with learning disabilities and carers who access learning disability respite, on proposals for a new learning disability respite model. This has involved surveys (including easy read) and face to face events in February and March 2024. • The new model seeks to ensure we can support a wide range of individuals with different support and accommodation needs who access respite and achieve improved outcomes by developing new skills, accessing a range of activities within the service and the wider community as part of their respite stay.
Priority: Ensure all children have a high quality, enjoyable education that enables them to achieve to their full potential	
<p>All children enjoy the best education which prepares them to thrive in adulthood.</p> <p>Key actions:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work is ongoing (facilitated by Public Health) to run HENRY (Health, Exercise, Nutrition for the Really Young), an obesity prevention programme with the Family Hubs. • Public Health are continuing to support schools with suicide and self-harm prevention training and guidance.

By 2025 we want:	Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 4 Update
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure we have sufficient school places locally to meet the differing needs of children and respond to our growing population. • Support and challenge all education settings to deliver our key priorities with a focus on addressing inequalities. • Provide support and challenge where children are not attending school or receiving an appropriate education. • Support children to catch up on the learning they lost during Covid • Support children and young people's mental health and wellbeing to resolve problems as early as possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A public health registrar is working with rural schools around improving emotional and mental wellbeing in children and young people and school staff in rural areas. • Cheshire East Council contacted thousands of parents and carers on national secondary school offer day (1 March), with 94 per cent receiving their first preference choice. More than 4,900 applications were received from parents and carers whose children will be moving up to secondary school in September 2024. • There have been 6 school inspections in Q4, with 4 remaining good, one remaining outstanding and a newly converted school also judged to be good. • The percentage of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in years 12-13 was higher than we have seen previously and possibly reflects the overall difficulties being seen in the job market. This however does relate to a relatively small number of individuals of which just over 30% are currently unavailable to the job market due to illness or parenting/ caring responsibilities. The youth support service continues to work closely with all individuals to support them with a range of options to find the best post-16 pathway.
<p>Priority: Reduce the reliance on long-term care by improving services closer to home and providing more extra care facilities, including dementia services</p> <p>Vulnerable and older people live safely and maintain independence within community settings.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with partners to develop appropriate 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A tender to develop Mountview in Congleton into a site which promotes independent living and can meet the needs of those with learning disabilities and complex needs has gone live. Cheshire East Council is seeking to procure a provider to design, build, finance and operate 2 specialist housing schemes. 	

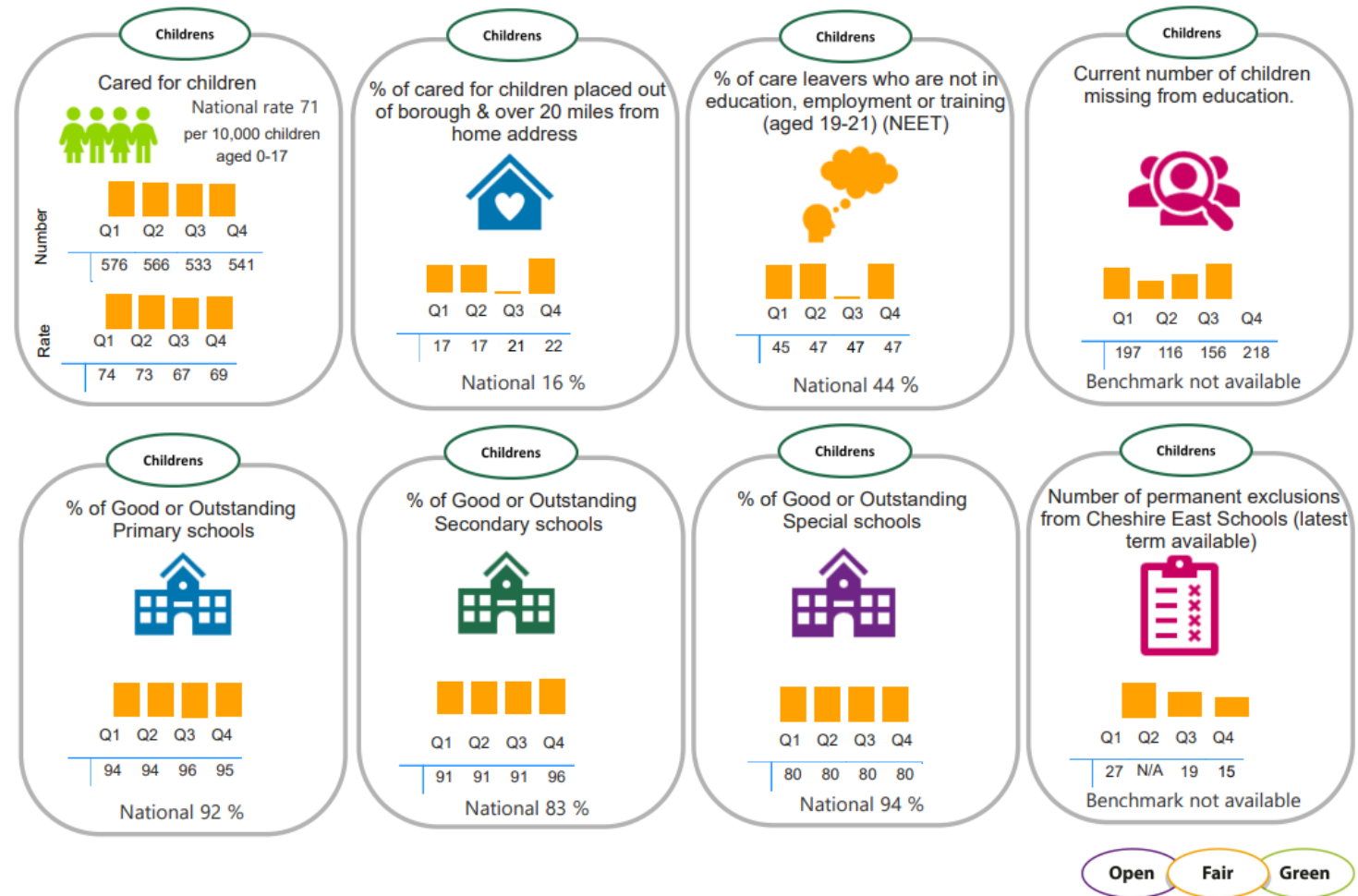
By 2025 we want:	Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 4 Update
<p>accommodation and extra care housing models</p>	
<p>People are cared for and valued by a professional and caring workforce.</p> <p>Care4ce to become an exemplar high quality trading company.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a quality trading company • Recruit and train a skilled and motivated workforce. • Provide a professional pathway for progression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work is underway to work with people aged 18 – 24 to discuss a ‘day in the life’ of a support worker and offer taster sessions. All staff receive a robust induction and Care4CE has developed a training Programme for 2024 – 2025. • A 12-month Leadership and Development programme for Managers and Supervisors and Care4CE is looking specifically at succession planning and supporting career development. For example, Care4CE offers staff, who wish to progress their career, to work alongside supervisors and managers to gain insight into these roles. • Arrangements to improve recruitment are in place. They include linking in with the DWP, The Pledge, Colleges, Care Leavers and other partners to offer opportunities and promote roles within Adult Social Care.
<p>To prioritise Home First for patients discharged from hospital. Where possible patients are discharged to a home of their choice.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand and develop the Home First service to support people to stay at home longer • Work to develop integrated health and social care teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On going work continues across the Integrated care system with a dedicated focus on Community Prevention and Hospital Avoidance. There has been an expansion of Community Connectors, maximising the use of Virtual wards and urgent community response, expansion of community connectors and we have to develop relations and maximise the use of the third sector. • Continued focus on strengthening system wide working at all levels across the pathways for people who use our health and social care system and have continued to deliver a multi-disciplinary team via the Transfer of Care Hubs and Urgent Community Response teams. • Targeting our hot spots to improve our efficiency and effectiveness of capacity use e.g., Occupational Therapy role and reablement and the homeless project. • Building our care communities across all 8 localities focused on the Business Intelligence data e.g., hypertension and ageing well clinics delivered across Cheshire East • Setting up new services focused on supporting people to say at home e.g., virtual wards, rapid reablement

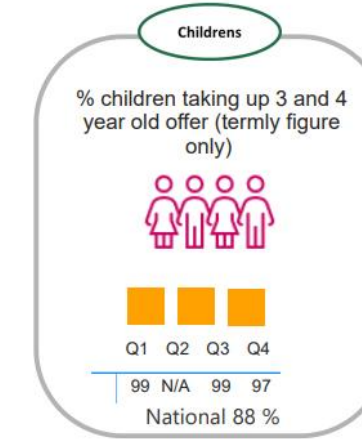
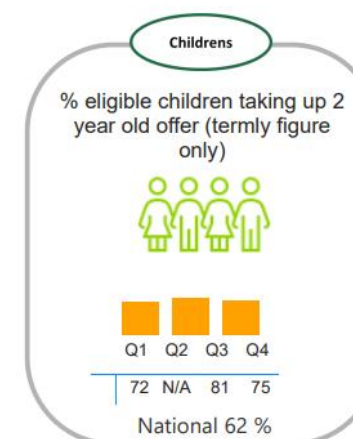
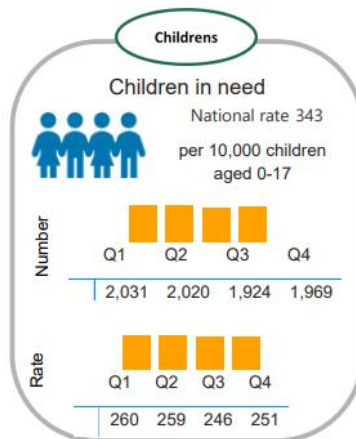
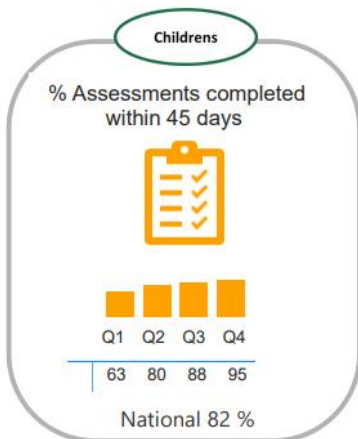
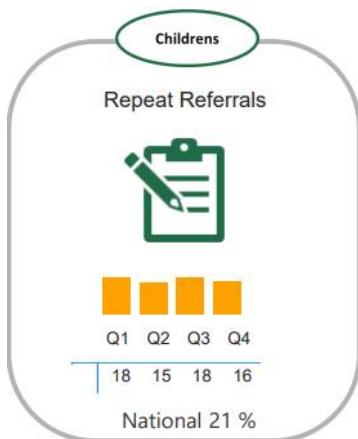
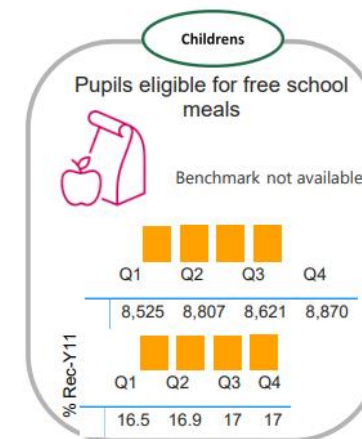
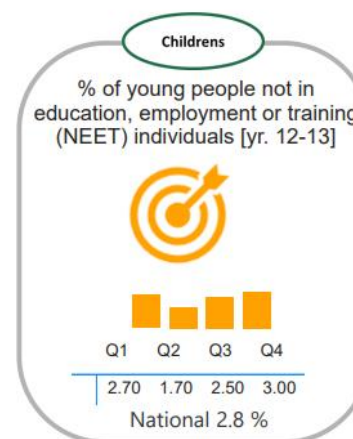
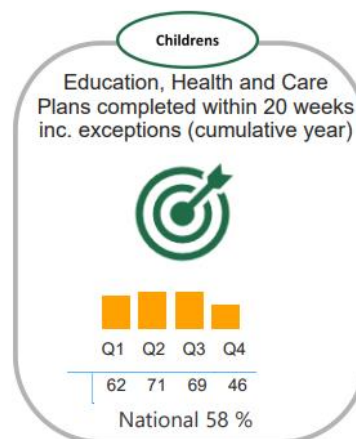
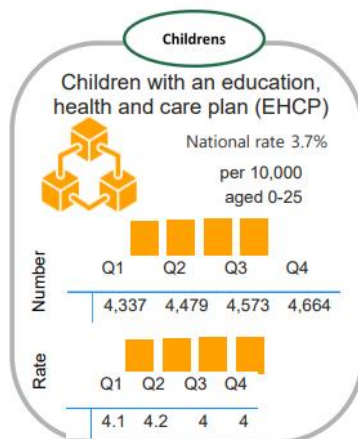
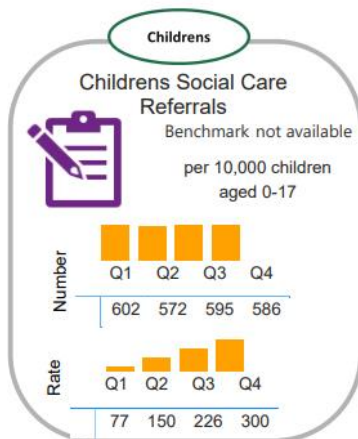
By 2025 we want:	Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 4 Update
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carers Strategy to be implemented • Develop the Shared Lives service • Increased use of technology 	<p>support to Urgent Community Response teams and virtual wards, falls prevention and digital technology offer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principles of the all age carers strategy continue to be embedded and localised work with the carers hub remains a priority to ensure we are effectively supporting carers. • Active works continues to expand and develop the shared lives by way of a focused recruitment campaign by the Shared Lives service. The focus is to recruit more cares who can provide sessions support and short to medium term placements across the Borough. • The community Support Connectors continue to be instrumental in supporting people at the point of discharge and have delivered good outcomes, including improved discharge and reduced reliance on domiciliary and residential care. • The Community Support Connectors, are based at Leighton and Macclesfield Hospitals, integrated into the multidisciplinary team to help relieve system pressures around hospital discharge and care at home for pathway 0, 1 and 2 patients. Outcomes of the Community Support Connectors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing the care packages by providing constructive challenge and alternative provision. • Increasing hospital discharge by providing constructive challenge and alternative provision. • Increasing VCFSE involvement in discharge packages of care. • Identifying the number of gaps in VCFSE provision where, if available, any other of the 3 outcomes would be achieved, this has resulted in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 416 individual patient referrals received to the Community Support Connectors for patient discharge or hospital admission avoidance. ○ Number of social care visits avoided through Community Support Connector action through community sector input 208, ○ Since April 2023,1443 individual patient referrals have been received to the Community Support Connectors.
<p>Adults receive quality assessments of need and support planning and good quality services to keep them</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards of Social Work practice and continuing professional development are monitored at a national and local level.

By 2025 we want:	Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 4 Update
<p>safe and maintain their physical and mental wellbeing.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully implement social work practice within adult social care • Maintain and improve the quality of care and support services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Cheshire East Practice Assurance Framework includes professional supervision, meeting the national Standards of the Social Work regulator (Social Work England): the Approved and Supported Year in Employment for newly qualified Social Work staff and Progression Panels for Social Workers, advancing from Grade 8 to Grade 9 Social Worker, thorough Approved Mental Health Professional reapproval Panels. • There are scheduled case file audits to look at good practice and areas for improvement, feedback from people who use and access services. • As part of our three weekly Quality Performance and Assurance Boards, chaired by the Director of ASC Operations, attended by Heads of Service, the Strategic Practice Assurance and Development Manager and representative Locality/Practice Managers we also monitor the quality of assessments, care planning and commissioned care available for our residents and carers.

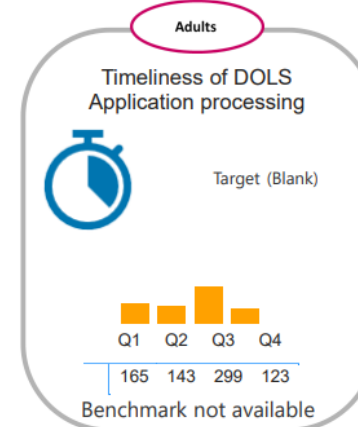
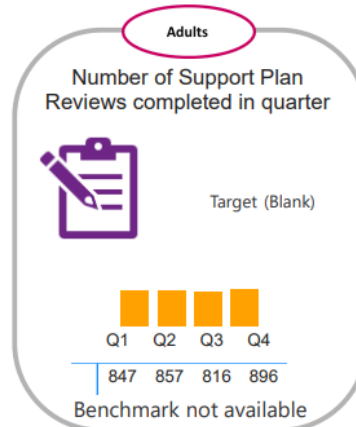
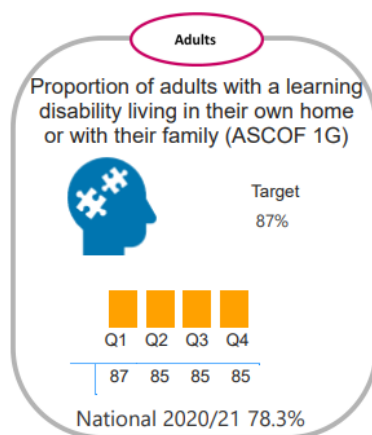
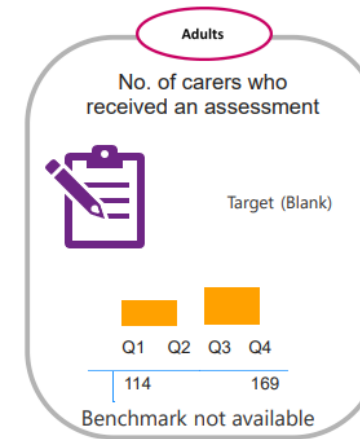
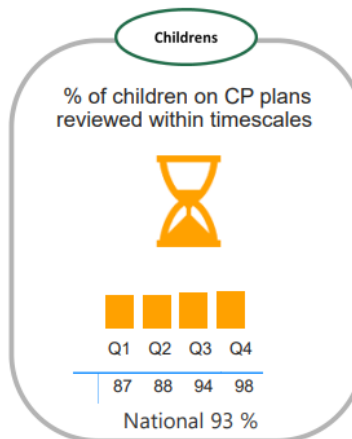
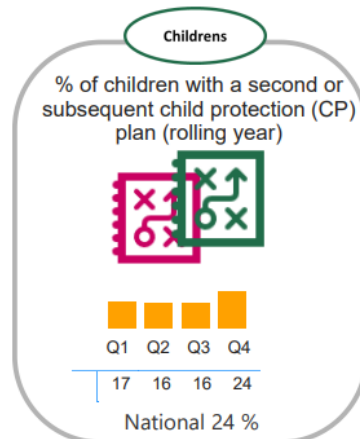
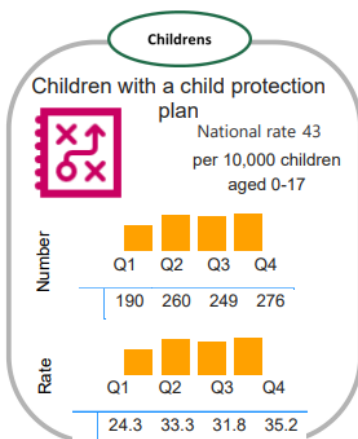
Performance measures supporting A council which empowers and cares about people

- Work together with residents and partners to support people and communities to be strong and resilient
- Reduce health inequalities across the borough
- Protect and support our communities and safeguard children, adults at risk and families from abuse, neglect and exploitation
- Be the best Corporate Parents to our children in care
- Support all children to have the best start in life
- Increase opportunities for all children and young adults with additional needs
- Ensure all children have a high quality, enjoyable education that enables them to achieve their full potential
- Reduce the reliance on long term care by improving services closer to home and providing more extra care facilities, including dementia services

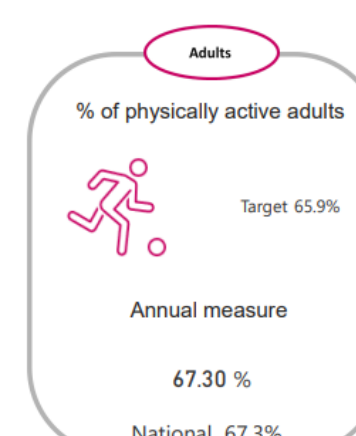
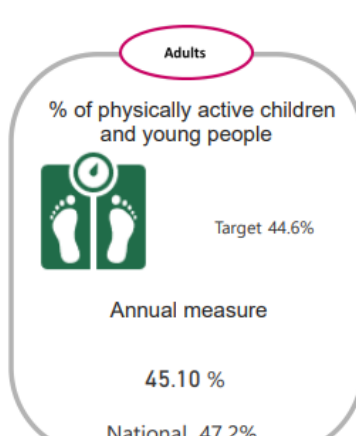
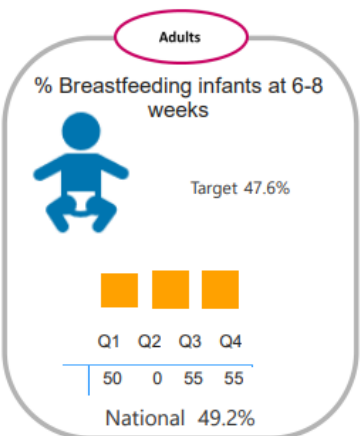
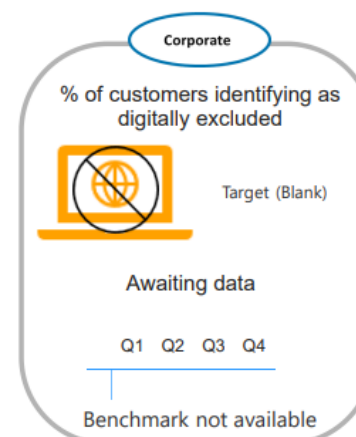
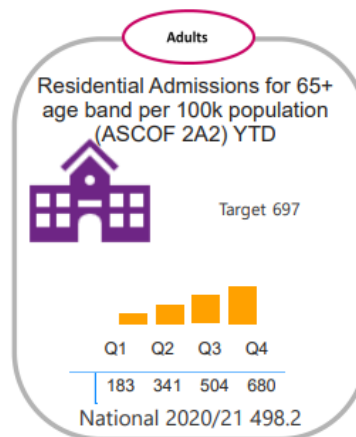
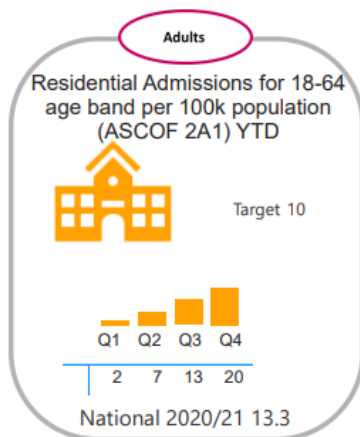




Open Fair Green



Open Fair Green



A thriving and sustainable place

By 2025 we want:

Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 4 update

Priority: A great place for people to live, work and visit Performance 2023/24 – Quarter 4 Update

Enable access to well designed, affordable and safe homes for all our residents.

Key actions:

- Deliver housing to meet the needs of all residents including vulnerable and older people in the borough
- Review and evaluate the need for a private rented sector licensing scheme
- Ensure affordable homes are “tenure blind” and focussed on quality

- We continue to work in partnership with our Registered Housing Providers to increase the supply of affordable homes across Cheshire East. To date 569 new homes have been completed, which exceeds the affordable housing requirement of 355 per annum.
- To ensure that social housing is allocated fairly, in line with legislation and with local and national priorities, we have reviewed and consulted on revisions to the Cheshire East Common Allocations policy. The revised policy was approved by the Economy and Growth Committee in March 24.
- To meet the housing needs of some of our most vulnerable residents we have recommissioned our Housing Related Support Contracts, with services being implemented from 1st April 2024.
- Work continues on the development of the Gypsy and Traveller transit site, which will provide a safe place for the travelling community to stay whilst in the area, reducing the level of unauthorised encampments. Completion is scheduled for summer 24.
- We are progressing with an open procurement process to secure specialist accommodation for those with a Learning Disability on Council owned land. An invitation to tender was advertised through the Cheshire East Chest in March 24.
- We were awarded Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme funding to secure 4 units of accommodation for 18- to 25-year-olds in partnership with the YMCA.
- 218 households have been helped to improve their living conditions through the work of the Housing Standards Team.
- We Secured 4 homes for Afghan families through the Local Authority Housing Fund

A high-quality accessible library service, that remains relevant to the changing needs of Cheshire East residents and delivers value for money.

Key actions:

- Improve and adapt our libraries to meet any changing needs which offer value for money
- Update and refresh the Library Strategy

- The Libraries Service review was successfully implemented on 1st December 2023 with new opening hours going live. This was supported by top up funding at the Crewe and Nantwich sites from the relevant Town Councils for a minimum 3-year period, adding in circa 1.5 days per week of opening time back into the service.
- The development of a new Libraries Strategy which will consider the long-term service requirements and focusing services in the areas of greatest need, as well as investment in service provision with demand warrants it, is ongoing with the intention of taking draft proposals to consultation later in 2024

High quality leisure and sports provision across the borough that delivers good value for money.

Key actions:

- Improve our leisure centres
- Provide walking and cycling recreational routes and outdoor recreational space

- Strategic Leisure Review - Informed by a public consultation exercise undertaken in late 2023, at its March 2024 meeting the same Committee approved a series of proposals for the second stage of the Review (2024/25 onwards) which are designed to improve the value for money of the publicly funded leisure offer, whilst also targeting it at areas of greatest need and demand. These are in the process of now being implemented, with a further update on appropriate additional savings proposals to achieve a balanced budget position to be developed and presented to committee later in 2024.
- Play Pitch and Open Spaces Strategy - At the March 2024 Environment and Communities Committee an updated strategy was approved which sets out a framework to direct and prioritise future investment in the borough's outdoor sports and recreational spaces.

To reduce the number of long-term empty dwellings.

Key actions:

- Establish baseline and review current strategy and policies

- We continue to work with owners of empty properties to try and bring properties back into use. The level of long-term empty homes currently is 1% of the total number of residential properties, which is a slight increase from quarter 3 at 0.92%.

New development to be appropriately controlled to protect and support our borough.

Key actions:

- To keep the Local Plan Strategy under review
- Provide an effective Planning Service with capacity to efficiently determine planning applications
- Robust and effective planning enforcement
- Implementation and maintenance of additional supplementary policy documents
- Effective and competitive Building Control Service
- Continued application of CEC Design Guide principles and focus on Place

- Planning application performance against statutory performance measures is above target for major applications (100%) but below (87%) for non-majors. This includes extensions of time. A backlog of planning applications remains with staff retention and recruitment difficulties across all aspects of the Planning service.
- The reduction in number of applications in the backlog has slowed meaning there are approximately 200 over normal 'on hand' levels. Focus on older applications has continued to be prioritised. The number of applications, particularly householder applications, now being determined within 8 weeks is also improving.
- An Issues Paper for the new Local Plan has been prepared. Supplementary Planning Documents for Sustainable Drainage Systems, Environmental Protection and Developer Contributions have been adopted giving greater advice and guidance to support applications, and new Conservation Areas have been designated providing greater protection of the built environment.
- The Modernisation Plan focus continues to be directed to reducing the backlog; the pending staffing restructure; the implementation of the new IT system; and improvements to the customer experience. The IT system implementation has been re-planned to ensure the supplier can deliver to identified timeframes, while resolving outstanding issues and the draft restructure has been finalised for consultation. Validation checklists have been updated giving customers better guidance on application submissions.
- Work on s106 audit recommendations has progressed well with updates to IT systems now largely complete enabling more effective and efficient reporting to be available going forward.
- Building Control continues to respond to new legislation and ensuring the formal registration of qualified inspectors in accordance with the Building Safety Act.

To make best use of our surplus buildings and assets to support the borough and our partners.

Key actions:

- Review the community asset transfer policy

- The Council continues to receive expressions of interest from eligible organisation and currently has seven which are progressing through the relevant stages in line with the Asset Transfer Policy. Additionally, there are ten asset transfers instructed to legal services to progress, six of which are legacy transfers which were proposed prior to the implementation of the new Policy.

Continue to grow the Cheshire East visitor economy.

Key actions:

- Deliver Cultural Strategy and Place Marketing Action Plan
- Deliver Tatton Park business plan

- After a challenging few years for the Visitor Economy, Cheshire East is recovering and growing at levels not seen since before the Covid pandemic. The latest data shows that the overall value of the Visitor Economy grew by almost 45% to £879 million, whilst welcoming almost 13 million visitors and employing over 9,000 people full time.
- A project led by Cheshire East visitor economy has provided hospitality training for unemployed residents to help fill vacancies in the sector, and also instigated partnerships between schools and hotels to change perceptions of hospitality as a career aspiration for young people.
- Cheshire East hotels are back to pre-pandemic levels with monthly occupation levels around 75%, whilst at the same time achieving record income for each room sold.
- Continuing partnership work with Cheshire's Destination Management Organisation, Marketing Cheshire, has generated positive publicity for Cheshire East towns and 'Cheshire Day', which shined a light on the whole County on the 30th March and was celebrated in Parliament. The award of LVEP (Local Visitor Economy Partnership) status to Marketing Cheshire this year will enable greater partnership with our national tourism agency, Visit Britain, as well as new funding opportunities.
- The shared service 'Archives - A Story Shared' transformation programme, including the building of the new History Visitor Centre in Crewe, has forged ahead this year with final building designs completed for both centres, training sessions for staff and volunteers, engagement with community groups across Cheshire (including youth theatre workshops and Congleton 'Beat of the Bounds' initiative), new digital resources, interpretation and audience development work, as well as progress on touring pods and the attraction of positive media coverage. Hoardings have been erected around the site showing images to help communicate the project.
- The new interactive art trail map for Macclesfield continues to generate positive publicity and additional footfall and visitors to the town. In Crewe, a Cultural Education Partnership (LCEP) has been established to bring together 20 schools and educational organisations with cultural organisations to provide improved cultural experiences and opportunities for children and young people.
- Public art murals have been installed in Lyceum Square in Crewe, following community engagement on designs and the successful programme of summer events and activities last year. Discussions to encourage new groups, audiences and individuals continuing use of this outdoor space is in progress. The Creative Champions scheme, which aims to develop additional voluntary capacity for cultural events and projects, developed a new constituted group in Crewe and is now working with partners in Congleton on a similar scheme.

- The Lyceum Theatre, along with theatres across the UK, still face challenges with audiences yet to return to pre-covid levels. Christmas panto and other shows were well received by audiences however, and there were more performances, higher audience figures and occupancy levels than last year, so there is growth in all areas, indicating a gradual return to pre-pandemic levels.
- Across the borough, Community Cultural Activity Grants have been awarded to 20 organisations to deliver cultural and creative activity in line with the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and CEC cultural framework priorities. Over 300 borough-wide community events have received support during 2023/24, with event organisers receiving advice, technical support and permissions.
- Tatton Park continues to be a major contributor to the borough's tourism and visitor economy, being a key attractor as well as creating economic benefit through its supply chain and events. Tatton has also provided an important place for recreation, health and well-being for Cheshire East residents this year, as well as an educational facility for schools and adult learners and a provider of community benefits through volunteering opportunities, community events and outreach.
- As one of the region's foremost environmental, cultural and heritage assets, being the largest area of public green space in the borough, containing habitats of national and local importance, Tatton has continued to maintain and enhance biodiversity throughout the year, thereby contributing to the Council's Carbon Action plan through nature based off-setting. The impact of cost inflation, weather and changes in demand due to cost-of-living pressures continue to provide challenges to the day-to-day operation, but successful new events, partnerships and promotions have had a positive impact on attracting new audiences, visitor numbers and income this year. Tatton's functions and events expertise was recognised by winning Marketing Cheshire's 'Business Events venue of the Year' award and the diversity of attractions within Tatton generated a growing source of income as a filming location.
- Retail and catering outlets performed well throughout the year, with a continued focus on locally sourced, estate and farm produce. Collaboration with the Tatton Park Charitable Trust saw the launch of new products and retail offers to assist in growing donation levels to support future education, conservation and restoration projects. Tatton retained Green Flag and Green Heritage Site awards in 2023.

Priority: Welcoming, safe and clean neighbourhoods

Crime and anti-social activity and anti-social behaviour to be reduced.

Key actions:

- Use our full range of education, engagement and enforcement tools to protect our communities.
- Take formal enforcement action as appropriate
- Clear and integrated enforcement approach with relevant fit for purpose policies
- Investment in technology to enhance CCTV delivery

- Enforcement is a key part of work carried out by Regulatory Services and during the year we have a number of long-standing cases that have concluded with very positive outcomes as well as ongoing investigations that will carry forward in to 2024-2025. The Enforcement Services group chaired by the Head of Regulatory Services continues to meet, sharing intelligence and encouraging collaborative working across all enforcement services. The development of an enforcement consistency toolkit in conjunction with our legal services team (currently in final draft) will help to provide officers with key template documents for the creation of consistent and good quality enforcement files.
- The CCTV service logged over 17000 incidents during 2023-2024 and had some notable successes in supporting the police to track down offenders and bring them to justice. Specific cases including shoplifting, burglary, assault (in one case with a knife), possession of drugs and vehicle damage.
- The implementation of the new wireless CCTV network has been completed with infrastructure installed in the final towns of Macclesfield and Knutsford scheduled for early 2024-2025. in parallel with the new maintenance contract that was procured in 2023, we are now working on our 'snagging list' to ensure that equipment is operating properly and in synergy with the whole network.

Victims of crime and exploitation to be supported effectively by The Council and partners through collaboration.

Key actions:

- Work with the police and partners to share intelligence and problem solve local issues
- Refresh the Safer Cheshire East Partnership Plan for 2020-23
- Raise awareness around safeguarding

- The Trading Standards Team received 2500 referrals from the Citizens Advice Consumer Service during 2023-2024, taking further action in nearly 70% of cases. Their Banking Protocol work saved Cheshire East residents a total of £156k during the year with savings of between £3-18K per person. In one case the team secured a full refund of over £13K for a Macclesfield resident in relation to their purchase of a second-hand vehicle.
- The CCTV service has received additional funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner as part of the Safer Streets initiative for a specific project in Crewe to install additional CCTV in the town centre. Initial work began in QTR4 but will continue into 2024-2025.
- The Council's new Taxi Licensing Policy had a specific requirement that all drivers needed to attend safeguarding training either at first grant or, for existing drivers, during the lifetime of their current licence. The Licensing Team have had great support from the Safeguarding Team to deliver fully funded training to over 600 drivers (approximately 80% of our total licensed drivers) to date.

- Raise awareness around safeguarding and community safety issues

To protect residents and improve our environment.

Key actions:

- Review local air quality through our Annual Status Reports, taking action to respond to areas of poorer air quality
- Air Quality Management Areas have an action plan outlining planned measures to improve quality
- A regulatory service that balances advice and education
- Provide a robust licensing regime for alcohol, gambling and hackney carriage private hire vehicles
- Proactive inspection and surveillance programmes

- The 2023 Annual Air Quality Status Report (ASR) was submitted to, and approved by, Defra in autumn 2023. The report identified that we are able to revoke a number of our existing Air Quality Management Areas due to significant improvements to nitrogen dioxide concentrations over consecutive years. This work will be completed during 2024-2025 and will incorporate the outcomes of full year monitoring results for 2023.
- Our Defra grant funded project to raise awareness on the impacts of domestic fuel burning and vehicle idling has concluded in year; objectives have been met and all funding has been drawn down. Specific work included the development and dissemination of an awareness leaflet to all Cheshire East households and the provision of a variety of anti-idling signs to local schools in the Borough. This project has supported our ongoing commitment to improving air quality across the Borough as part of our Air Quality Action Plan and overarching Air Quality Strategy for Cheshire East.
- Work to prepare for external consultation on the new Statement of Licensing Policy began in earnest with initial internal consultation with key partners. As part of this process the Environmental Protection Team took the opportunity to develop new noise guidance for Outdoor Concerts and Events which will form part of the refreshed policy and the Policy will also include reference to the incoming requirements of Martyn's Law to deal with terrorist threat. External consultation went live in early April and following this, and the passage of the Policy through our decision-making timetable, it will be presented to Full Council for approval in December 2024.
- The Council's Taxi Licensing Policy was approved in November 2022 leading to a significant change in processes and requirements with some of the changes staggered to mitigate any burdens on the existing trade. To further support the licensed trade the team held two separate engagement events with drivers during 2023 and have used the feedback to review aspects of the policy, clarify requirements and improve processes. It is planned to look at further engagement events in 2024-2025 alongside the development of a bi-annual newsletter for the taxi trade to provide advice and guidance.
- Regulatory Services undertake targeted inspection work in relation to specific issues or events over and above the usual routine inspection programmes. In year they have worked with Wolverhampton City Council enforcement officers to check compliance with Taxi and PHV licensing from cross border hiring and also attended the Nantwich Jazz Festival to ensure compliance with Licensing Act conditions.
- The Commercial Services Team achieved 96.5% of all programmed A - D rated food hygiene premises inspections; this figure includes inspections that were overdue following the reduced inspection requirements

mandated by the Food Standards Agency during the Covid-19 pandemic and to the end of March 2023. Very low risk premises (E rated) continue to be tackled by our trainee and contract officers and through the use of Alternative Enforcement Strategies (AES) permitted by the Food Law Code of Practice. Of those premises that receive a direct inspection, 97.7% are awarded 3 or above in the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme putting Cheshire East on a par with national standards.

- Key numbers for the year: The Commercial Services team dealt with over 900 service requests, investigated 60 workplace accidents and over 200 infectious disease and alleged food poisoning notifications. Environmental Protection dealt with over 1600 complaints from Cheshire East residents, provided over 2000 comments in response to planning and licensing applications and completed 90% of Environmental Permit inspections. The Animal Health and Welfare Team carried out over 300 inspections of licensed premises, farmed animal premises and feed premises including inspection and complaint work for Stockport Borough Council as part of a Service Level Agreement.
- Satisfaction with the Pest Control service remains extremely high with regular positive feedback received from our domestic and business customers. During 2023-2024 the service dealt with 544 requests for treatment in domestic premises (plus associated revisit work), fully serviced all commercial contracts and exceeded targets set in the control with United Utilities for sewer baiting; this contract helps to target the rat population in the wider environment. An excellent result for a small, two-man team.

Improved green spaces for all. Enabling people to exercise and socialise in our parks and open spaces.

Key actions:

- Review and improve our play areas and parks
- Work with partners to provide a more welcoming environment
- Secure funding for additional recreation provision along with improvements to the current provision

- The Council continues to inspect, repair and where investment is available improve our play areas and parks. A major project funded by the Crewe Towns Fund will refurbish 8 pocket parks as key green spaces amongst densely populated areas of Crewe.
- The four pocket parks being delivered by Q4 are near completion. McLaren Street and Derby Docks have had successful opening events where children, councillors, politicians and colleagues from Cheshire East and Ansa gathered to celebrate the works being completed.
- Queen Street and School Crescent have opening events planned for the May school half term. The remaining work still ongoing is the Skate Park at Queen Street which is near completion. Works have included major play area improvements, path improvements, installation of benches, trees and shrub planting and more!
- The two opening events that have occurred receives positive attention in the local media and the improvements across all four parks will offer health, wellbeing, and amenity enhancement to these vibrant green spaces amidst densely populated areas of Crewe.
- The Grounds Maintenance Review which was approved in February 2024 will bring a new maintenance regime from the 1st of April. Green spaces across the borough will still be maintained to a very high standard while allowing for more rewilded areas within our parks and open spaces with increased biodiversity across

- Increase the number of rewilded areas within our parks and open spaces

Cheshire East. Alongside the new maintenance regime, a grounds maintenance software will be incorporated to allow the public to view which green spaces have been cut, their maintenance level and when they are due another cut.

- Cheshire East's Green Spaces for Wellbeing Project, delivered through The Council's arm's length company: Ansa Environmental Services, has been nominated for one of the awards at the Awards for Excellence in Recycling & Waste Management 2024. The programme has been shortlisted in the Local Authority Individual or Team of the Year! The programme has received continued Cheshire East Public Health funding for the next financial year which will allow for the team to continue delivering improved wellbeing for residents through local activities run in our green spaces.

Priority: To reduce our impact on our environment

To have minimised overall waste generated in the borough and maximised our levels of recycling.

Key actions:

- Introduction of the Municipal Waste Strategy
- To review and consult on the household waste recycling provision

- The Council's estimated recycling rate for 2023-24 is 52%. This is in line with last year's result of 51.7%. We did not see as much of a drop as we expect to see with the introduction of The Councils Garden waste subscription charge in Q4 of this year. However, The Council will still need to look to additional measures to increase reuse and recycling in future years to achieve the national recycling target of 60 % by 2035.
- To contribute to this The Council is in early development of introducing a separate food waste collection service by 2026 mandated and funded by central government as part of the Simpler Recycling Scheme announced in Q3.
- The Garden green waste subscription scheme –approved at Committee in July 2023 has now commenced in January of Q4. At the time of writing this report the scheme has now seen a total of 84,555 paid for subscriptions. This level of subscription is in line with the business plan and will deliver its projected income target of £4.05M offsetting a significant proportion of the cost of delivering this non-statutory service.
- From January 2024 The Council has not been able to charge for domestic rubble deposited at the household waste sites due to change in legislation. We have seen an increase in the tonnage throughput since January compared to the same period in the previous years.
- The Council is finalising a public consultation on future levels of household Waste Recycling Centre Provision due to be open for responses in Q1 2024-25. Running parallel to the consultation work The Council is undertaking a procurement for the next service provider of household waste recycling centres with a decision on service provision levels due in September 2024 at the Environment and Communities Committee. Separate to this as part of the 2024 – 25 budget decision The Council will temporarily closure of 3 household waste centres and trial a mobile household waste centre as part of budget saving measures.

To improve biodiversity and natural habitats in the borough.

Key actions:

- Increased rewilding
- Embed biodiversity, including off-setting, across Cheshire East Council estate
- Deliver the tree planting programme

- The Council in Partnership with Mersey Forrest is currently on-site planting 15.9 Hectares of new deciduous woodland in Peover as part of the 120 ha of natural offset of carbon for its own emissions. This adds to the 30-ha planted in previous years and is part of a program of planting that will see our target reached in 2025/26.
- Additional areas for tree planting in the next season have been identified and designs are being progressed through the Forestry Commission.

Priority: A transport network that is safe and promotes active travel

Improvements in the strategic infrastructure that support sustainable and inclusive growth across the borough.

Key actions:

- Delivery of major infrastructure programmes

- The Northwest Crewe highways package that improves safe access to the hospital and enables economic growth remains on programme for completion in Summer 2024 despite the challenging ground conditions as a result of the extremely wet winter.
- The Middlewich Eastern Bypass Compulsory Purchase and Side Road Orders were confirmed following a public inquiry and the Full Business Case was submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) last year. The Council has been requested to undertake further work on the Business Case for the scheme by the DfT which will lead to a delay in the start of the scheme.
- The A500 Dualling scheme has been re-scoped following the cancellation of HS2 to provide a multi-model corridor scheme, improving access to Crewe Railway Station. A revised Business case is in preparation which will confirm the scope of the improvements.
- Through the Winter season the number of highway defects has considerably exceeded business plan forecast with circa 33,000 defects appearing on the network against a business plan figure of circa 20,000
- The Pedestrian Crossing Strategy consultation has closed with analysis on the feedback being undertaken.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Speed Management Strategy measures are being progressed this financial year under the ODR process so no further changes on SMS • Tree Risk Management Strategy - The initial inspection of the highway network has been completed and inspection frequencies based on zoning will be fully implemented moving forwards.
<p>Safer and well-maintained roads.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver planned investment to maintain the highway network • Review of appropriate strategies, such as speed management 	
Investment in electric vehicle infrastructure in our key service centres	
<p>To increase parking provision close to local transport hubs.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Local Transport Plan parking reviews 	
<p>To promote uptake of cycling in our local service centres.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of cycle storage facilities in Cheshire East car parks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has an extensive Active Travel programme; and has recently secured an additional £673,000 of funding from Active Travel England to provide improved facilities in Wilmslow.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in new cycle routes and improve existing ones • Prohibit parking in existing cycle lanes 	
<p>To improve the speed and efficiency of public transport and encourage more residents to make fewer car journeys.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feasibility studies into the creation of rapid transit routes connecting existing infrastructure with key employment sites 	
<p>To reduce areas of the borough not served by public transport.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit proposals to Rural Transport Fund • Develop quality bus partnerships with operators and town councils 	
<p>To encourage an increase in the use of public transport (especially buses).</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operators work together to share real time information 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus routes planned to provide multi-modal connectivity • Cheshire East bus app developed 	
<p>More residents to use walking routes.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote existing routes and nature trails • Create new walking routes between service centres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The promotion of walking and nature trails at The Council’s countryside sites and Tatton Park is ongoing, whilst work with partners on the Bollin Way continues to develop shared routes where possible. • The Public Rights of Way team continue to increase the accessibility of the path network, such as replacing stiles with gates and enhancing path surfaces, on both leisure and active travel routes. The 2023 random survey of paths across the network undertaken by volunteers from the East Cheshire Ramblers and the Peak and Northern Footpaths Society classed 93% of the inspected paths as being in a condition classed as good or acceptable condition. • Maintenance of the borough’s Public Rights of Way network, by resolving issues and obstructions on paths, involved well over 300 reports from the public during the year, the installation of 424 pieces of path furniture such as gates, bridges and signposts, and the maintenance of vegetation on 110km of path. Working in partnership with local communities and landowners to develop opportunities for improved access, the team helped to secure a new permissive path to avoid walking along an A-road on a long distance promoted route. The team also progressed a number of s106 funded improvement schemes to increase accessibility on routes between development sites and service centres and the wider path network, including projects in Wilmslow, Congleton, Brereton, Alsager and Langley. • During 2023-24 the team assessed 323 planning applications in order to ensure the protection and seek enhancement of the path network, a slight increase on the previous year. By working with landowners and developers, the team processed legal orders to divert and improve Public Rights of Way to mitigate the impact of temporary closures where required to ensure the safety of the public. • The Countryside Ranger Service 2024 event programme was launched, with a total of 88 popular events across Cheshire East, led by Rangers and event partners. The Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at Lindow Common in Wilmslow achieved another gold award in the "In your Neighbourhood" category of the RHS North West in Bloom competition as well as an award for Outstanding Achievement over 5 years. Tegg’s Nose Country Park, Macclesfield Riverside Park and Brereton Heath Local Nature Reserve all retained their Green Flag Awards for another year.

- Important Ash dieback (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) control work was conducted at a number of countryside sites across the borough and the Middlewood Way Rangers created a new set of steps in Adlington to provide better access and safety for children attending Adlington Primary School.
- Countryside Ranger Service volunteers continued to provide a huge amount of support to the Rangers work across the Cheshire East countryside with over 9,000 hours of volunteer support this year. Support provided included working with the Rangers to plant trees at a number of sites as well as continuing maintenance work to resurface paths, replace rotten boundary fences, install new or replacement interpretive panels. Day to day operational tasks in managing and assisting visitors, dealing with storm damage and antisocial behaviour plus monitoring and improving habitats and diversity continued throughout the year.

Priority: Thriving urban and rural economies with opportunities for all

Delivery of a strategic regeneration plan for Crewe.

Key actions:

- Successful delivery of the regeneration programmes

- Work is continuing in line with the programme. The new Bus Station and Multi Storey Car Park are nearing completion.

Delivery of a strategic regeneration plan for Macclesfield.

Key actions:

- Successful delivery of the regeneration programme for Macclesfield

- Work is continuing in line with the programme. Improvement opportunities assessed for the Indoor Market.

Successful town centres in our other key towns.

Key actions:

- Work is continuing in line with the programme, and engagement with stakeholders such as Congleton Market Quarter.

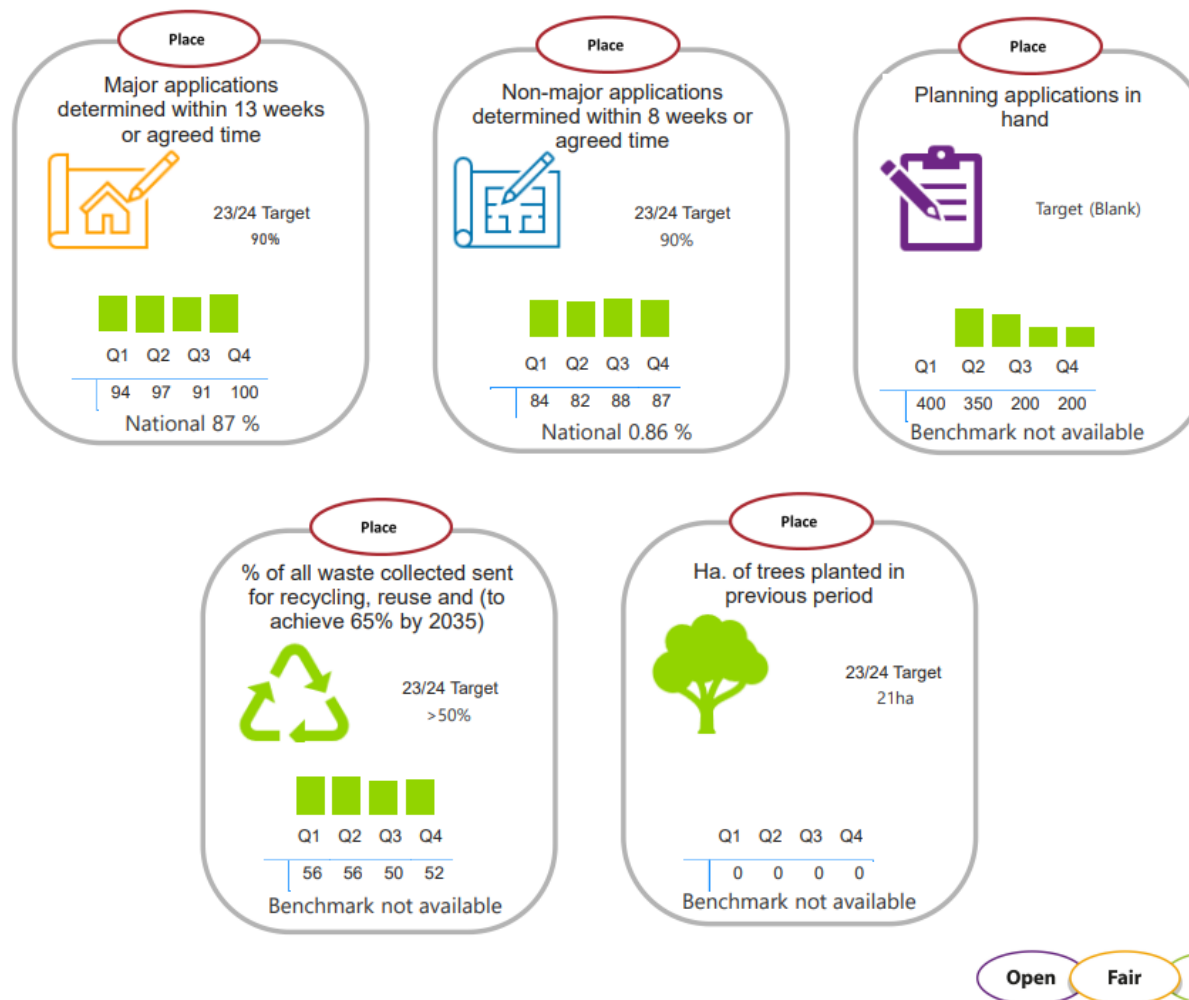
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with our partners and key stakeholders to understand what is important to our towns 	
<p>Maximise the commercial and regeneration opportunities associated with HS2 for the whole borough</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In October 2023, the Prime Minister announced that HS2 north of Birmingham was being cancelled. This included both phases 2a and 2b which would have passed through Cheshire East. • The Council is supporting the Department for Transport and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on a joint transport led deep dive to look at opportunities to accelerate regeneration around Crewe station
<p>Thriving and active rural communities.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the Rural action plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A grant scheme has been rolled out using Rural England Prosperity funding to support Cheshire East based rural businesses including support for small scale investment in micro and small rural enterprises and the development and promotion of the rural visitor economy. A review of the various cross cutting elements of the Rural Action Plan 2022-2026 will take place this year, including progress to date.
<p>Priority: To be carbon neutral by 2025</p>	
<p>To have delivered the milestones in becoming a carbon neutral council.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver actions in the Cheshire East Council Carbon Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full Council took the decision to revise the target date for the Council to be Carbon Neutral from 2025 to 2027 as part of its budget decision in February, due to the financial constraints of the authority. The Council is on track to be carbon neutral as an organisation by the revised target of the end of 2027. Our journey to decarbonisation consists of reducing our own carbon emissions and then insetting those emissions that cannot be reduced to nil. • Decarbonising council emissions has this year focused on our buildings and vehicles. Using grant funding we have installed 14 air source heat pumps, LED lighting arrays, roof insulations and 19 roof mounted solar canopies. These actions reduce the amount of gas used to heat buildings, with the increased electricity consumption coming from our own generation or the 100% green electricity The Council purchases. To begin the work of decarbonising the Council's fleet 24 EV charge points have been installed and the first tranche of electric vans have been ordered. There are further charge points and further vans in plan for the next year. To inset The Council's residual emissions work has begun on The Councils first ground mounted

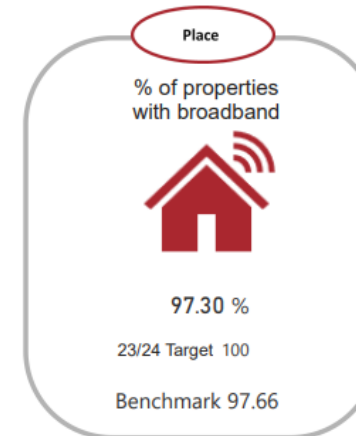
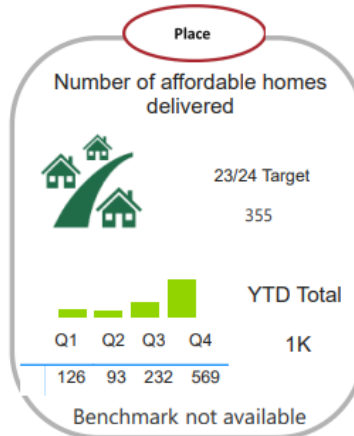
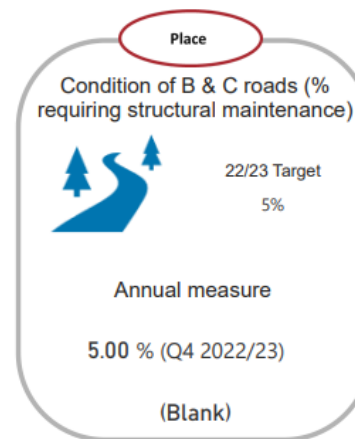
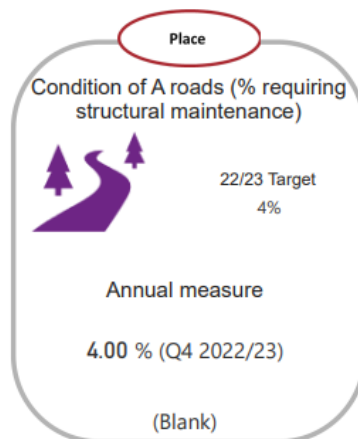
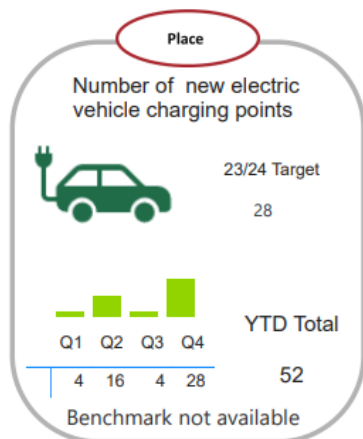
solar farm. The electricity produced will be supplied to The Council's in-vessel compost facility, managed by Biowise, with any surplus power generated being supplied directly to the grid. A 15.9ha woodland planting scheme to sequester more carbon is in progress.

- The Council also has a target to be carbon neutral as a borough by 2045. Following completion of a baseline carbon analysis The Council has developed a draft action plan for 2024-29 which is now subject to public consultation. Houses within the borough are being helped to decarbonise through assistance with affordable warmth for those in need and the provision of a solar together scheme for those able to pay. Shared Prosperity Funding is providing grants to community groups with buildings requiring decarbonisation measures.
- The Council has commenced a detailed review of the scope three emissions that will form a part of the wider borough decarbonisation trajectory.

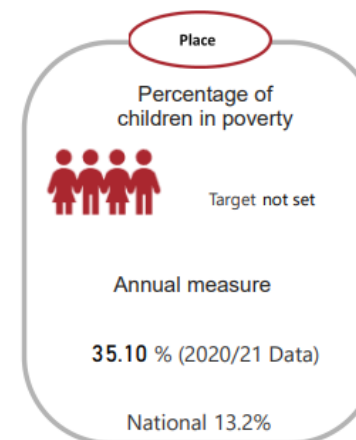
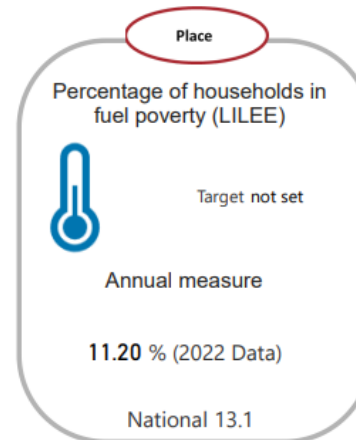
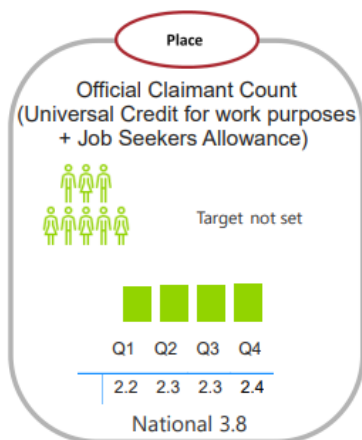
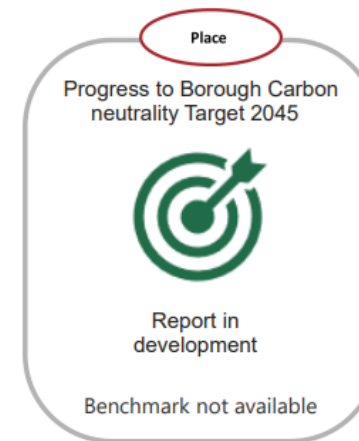
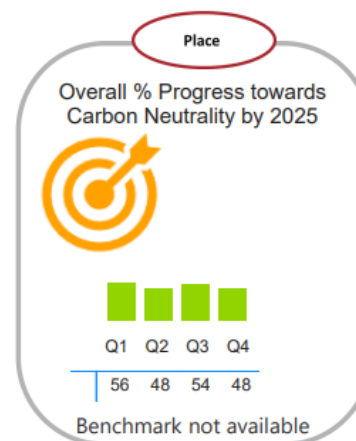
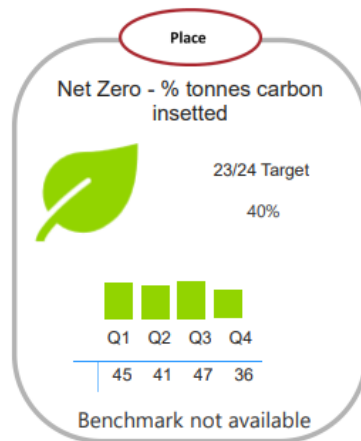
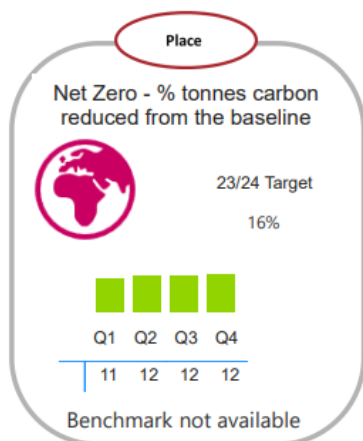
Performance measures supporting A thriving and sustainable place

- A great place for people to live, work and visit
- Welcoming, safe and clean neighbourhoods
- Reduce impact on the environment
- A transport network that is safe and promotes active travel
- Thriving urban and rural economies with opportunities for all
- Be a carbon neutral council by 2025





Open Fair Green



OPEN

Corporate Policy Committee

Thursday, 13 June 2024

Service Budgets 2024/25 (Corporate Policy Committee)

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

Report Reference No: CP/02/24-25

Ward(s) Affected: All Wards

Purpose of Report

- 1 This report sets out the allocation of the approved budgets for 2024/25 to the Corporate Policy Committee.
- 2 The report contributes to the Council's objective of being an open and enabling organisation.

Executive Summary

- 3 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for Cheshire East Council for the four years 2024/25 to 2027/28 was approved by full Council on 27 February 2024.
- 4 Due to the unprecedented financial circumstances that the council finds itself in it was not possible to present a fully balanced budget for the medium term this time. The focus has been wholly on 2024/25 to ensure that effective scrutiny could be achieved in every area to work towards presenting a balanced position in February.
- 5 Service committees are being allocated budgets for 2024/25 in line with the approved MTFS. The financial reporting cycle will provide regular updates on progress on delivery of the budget change items, the forecast outturn position, progress on capital schemes, movement on reserves and details of any supplementary estimates and virements.

The financial reporting timetable for 2024/25 was approved by Finance Sub-Committee on 22 March 2024 and is included at Appendix B.

- 6 In addition to the usual comprehensive reporting at First, Second and Third Financial Reviews (September, November and January cycles), in recognition of the Council's challenging financial position and the importance of achieving a balanced outturn, it has been agreed by the Finance Sub Committee that all service committee meetings during 2024/25 will receive an update report on the delivery of the approved MTFS budget policy change items. This will be based on the tables of budget policy items shown in Appendix A, for each respective committee, and will include RAG-rating and accompanying commentary as reviewed and approved by Corporate Leadership Team in respect of each item.
- 7 Appendix A contains the first update on progress against each revenue budget change item for 2024/25.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corporate Policy Committee is recommended:

1. To note the decision of the Finance Sub-Committee to allocate the approved revenue and capital budgets, related budget policy changes and earmarked reserves to the Corporate Policy Committee, as set out in Appendix A.
2. To note the financial reporting timetable for 2024/25 set out in Appendix B as approved at Finance Sub-Committee on 22 March 2024.
3. To review progress on the delivery of the MTFS budget policy change items, the RAG ratings and latest forecasts, and to understand the actions to be taken to address any adverse variances from the approved budget.
4. To remove the parish compact item from the MTFS as it is not deliverable at present.

Background

- 8 All councils are legally required to set a balanced budget each year. The MTFS was approved by full Council on 27 February 2024.
- 9 The MTFS includes a Report from the Chief Finance Officer in line with the Section 25(1) of the Local Government Finance Act 2003. This

report confirms that the MTFS is balanced for 2024/25. The report also highlights the factors taken into account in arriving at this judgement including relevant financial issues and risks facing the Council during the medium term.

- 10 Finance Procedure Rules set limits and responsibilities for movement of funds, treating reserves as part of this overall balanced position. Any movement within this balanced position is treated as a virement. To increase the overall size of the MTFS requires a supplementary estimate, which must be backed with appropriate new funding and approved in line with the Procedure Rules.
- 11 To support accountability and financial control under the committee system the 2024/25 budget is being reported across the service committees based on their associated functions. This report sets out the allocation of the revenue and capital budgets and earmarked reserves to the relevant service committee in accordance with their functions.
- 12 Each committee function has been associated with a Director budget. Budget holders are responsible for budget management.
- 13 The financial alignment of budgets to each Committee is set out in Table 1 with further details in Appendix A.

Table 1: Revenue and capital budgets allocated to service committees as per the approved MTFS:

ALL COMMITTEES - Summary					
Service Area	Revenue Budget			Capital Budget	Total Revenue and Capital Budget
	2024/25			2024/25	2024/25
	Expenditure £000	Income £000	Net £000	£000	Net £000
Adults and Health	223,849	-86,407	137,442	799	138,241
Children and Families	99,583	-10,620	88,963	38,908	127,871
Corporate Policy	111,416	-69,760	41,656	10,379	52,035
Economy and Growth	36,169	-8,227	27,942	80,263	108,205
Environment and Communities	65,291	-16,642	48,649	18,978	67,627
Highways and Transport	28,669	-12,839	15,830	66,452	82,282
Finance Sub-Committee	18,727	-3,500	15,227	0	15,227
Total Cost of Service	583,704	-207,995	375,709	215,779	591,488

- 14 The 2024-28 MTFS includes a net revenue budget of £375.7m and an approved capital programme of £215.8m for the financial year 2024/25. Further details on the schemes within the capital programme are provided in Appendix A.

- 15 Appendix A sets out the list of budget change items that were approved as part of the MTFS. All budget changes must be successfully delivered during 2024/25 to avoid a further overspend in the coming financial year. Detailed monitoring of these items will continue at every reporting opportunity and the Council's reporting 'masterplan' and committee work programmes will reflect reporting on the monitoring and delivery of all MTFS change items, including matters requiring consultation and/ or decisions. This will ensure regular reporting to Corporate Leadership Team and all service committees on implementation of the MTFS and achievement of savings, throughout the coming year. In addition to reporting at the formal 'financial review' points in the year, other progress reports will be scheduled for reporting to particular service committees, on their items as appropriate.
- 16 Appendix A sets out the capital programme tables by committee. The four-year capital programme includes investment plans of around £0.6bn. It is proposed that it will be funded through a mixture of Government grants, contributions from other external partners and Council resources. At present this programme is not affordable, with interest rates for borrowing at an average for the Council of 5.6% and a continuing need to borrow, the capital programme needs to be reduced significantly in order for the Council to be able the fund the schemes solely or partly funded by Council resources. The capital programme is currently being reviewed.
- 17 The 2024/25 budget was approved at full Council in February 2024 including the use of a further £11.7m of earmarked reserves in 2024/25 to balance the overall budget, as expenditure outweighed the income forecast. The low level of reserves and forecast further use of reserves to support the 2024/25 budget must be addressed as soon as possible. The headline reserves table, as included in the MTFS, is shown below:

	Opening Balance 2023/24 £m	Forecast Closing Balance 2023/24 as at MTFS Feb 2024 £m	Forecast Closing Balance 2024/25 as at MTFS Feb 2024 £m
General Reserves	14.1	1.1*	2.1*
Earmarked Reserves**	61.6	24.3	1.7
Total Revenue Reserves	75.7	25.4	3.8

* Closing balances are dependent on outturn at 31 March 2024 (see *Outturn Report 2023/24* for further updated final position for 2023/24).

** As at the MTFS, all remaining Earmarked reserves excluding those held for ring-fenced purposes are being transferred into the General Fund reserve during 2024/25 to support the forecast deficit position (*this will be reviewed during 2024/25 following Outturn for 2023/24*).

The detail behind the earmarked reserve balances included in the table above, for the Corporate Policy Committee, is set out in Appendix A and is shown in the table below:

Name of Reserve	Opening Balance 2023/24 £000	Forecast Closing Balance 2023/24 as at MTFS Feb 24 £000	Forecast Closing Balance 2024/25 as at MTFS Feb 24 £000
Directorate			
Corporate Directorate	1,356	935	0
Finance and Customer Services			
Collection Fund Management	17,819	7,535	0
Capital Financing Reserve	12,886	0	0
MTFS Reserve	5,147	386	0
Section 151 Revenue Grants	558	0	0
Governance and Compliance			
Insurance Reserve	4,976	4,976	0
Elections General	640	0	0
Brexit Funding	13	13	0
Human Resources			
HR (CARE4CE Review, Culture change, Pay realignment, Learning Management System)	59	59	0
Pay Structure (M Grade Review)	306	0	0
Policy and Change			
Brighter Future Transformation Programme	1,789	490	0
CORPORATE POLICY TOTAL	45,549	14,394	0

- 18 The Council must transform to create sustainable services and support infrastructure projects that reflect 'whole life' costs. This must cover the medium to long term and be backed by reserves that can manage any emerging risks. This is crucial if the Council is to maintain the value that local decision making can bring to local services.
- 19 The Chief Executive has taken the initiative to engage senior officers in a self-assessment of the Council against the Local Government Association (LGA) – Transformation Capability Framework. As requested by Members, the Council has also commissioned an LGA Corporate Peer Review which took place during March 2024. The outcome of these reviews will inform a programme of transformation activity across the Council during the 2024/25 year.
- 20 The transformation programme, needed to help address the financial deficit, as set out in the MTFS report, will focus on:

- (a) Reprioritisation, to create an opportunity to invest in critical areas but also disinvest from areas.
 - (b) Customer engagement and experience, through using technology to streamline service delivery enabling self-service available 24/7, whilst ensuring specialised support and guidance is given to those that need it.
 - (c) Achieving value for money in and across all services, by reducing manual, repetitive tasks through automation of systems and processes.
 - (d) Reviewing organisational structures and operating models to maximise performance and outcomes.
 - (e) Developing the right skills and behaviours across the entire workforce to achieve high productivity levels.
 - (f) Achieving financial targets through the effective implementation of well informed and clear decisions informed by data and insight.
 - (g) Developing the Asset Management Plan to align it to service requirements and dispose of surplus assets.
- 21 Further background information on the reserves balances is available in the Reserves Strategy and the S.25 statement which was approved as part of the MTFS for 2024/25 at the Council meeting on 27 February (Appendix C: MTFS – Annex 13 (Reserves Strategy) and Page 16 (S.25 statement)).
- 22 The council has been in discussion with government for a number of months about particular specific financial issues, including increased demand and unfunded costs for special educational needs, and the continued financial uncertainty following the government's announcement, in October 2023, of the cancellation of HS2 north of Birmingham and spending already incurred by the council in preparation for HS2 phase 2.
- 23 On 29 February 2024, the government announced some Exceptional Financial Support for Cheshire East Council. The support will be in the form of a capitalisation direction. It provides the council with the facility to spread the cost of any additional emerging pressures, up to £17.6m, to future years, effectively providing an alternative to use of reserves should the need arise. This reduces the risk of a Section 114 notice. The support is not in the form of cash. The council would need to pay back expenditure capitalised under this arrangement, in the longer term.

- 24 Reducing these financial risks will enable investment in providing the required organisational capacity and resources in 2024/25 for a council-wide transformational change programme, to create sustainability in the medium-term.
- 25 The table below summarises the estimated four-year position, as included in the MTFs. Early work on business planning for 2025/26 and future years is underway, as part of the Transformation Programme.

	Estimated Net Budget 2024/25 £m	Estimated Net Budget 2025/26 £m	Estimated Net Budget 2026/27 £m	Estimated Net Budget 2027/28 £m
Total Service Expenditure	360.5	380.2	399.1	417.1
Central Budgets:				
Capital Financing	28.5	43.0	57.1	69.8
Income from Capital Receipts	-1.0	-1.0	-1.0	-1.0
Use of Reserves	-12.2	-	-	-
Total Central Budgets	15.2	42.0	56.0	68.7
TOTAL: SERVICE + CENTRAL BUDGETS	375.7	422.2	455.2	485.9
Funded by:				
Council Tax	-287.1	-298.8	-310.6	-322.9
Business Rates Retention	-56.6	-56.6	-56.6	-56.6
Revenue Support Grant	-0.4	-0.4	-0.4	-0.4
Specific Unringfenced Grants	-31.6	-24.5	-24.5	-24.5
TOTAL: FUNDED BY	375.7	380.3	392.2	404.4
FUNDING POSITION	0.0	41.9	63.0	81.5

Consultation and Engagement

- 26 The annual business planning process involves engagement with local people and organisations. Local authorities have a statutory duty to consult on their budget with certain stakeholder groups including the Schools Forum and businesses. In addition, the Council chooses to consult with other stakeholder groups. The Council continues to carry out stakeholder analysis to identify the different groups involved in the budget setting process, what information they need from us, the information we currently provide these groups with, and where we can improve our engagement process.
- 27 Cheshire East Council conducted an engagement process on its Medium-Term Financial Plans through a number of stages running from January 2024 to Council in February 2024.

- 28 The budget consultation launched on-line on 9 January 2024, included details of the proposals against each Corporate Plan aim. This consultation was made available to various stakeholder groups and through a number of forums.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 29 In accordance with the Corporate Plan and the Policy Framework the Finance Sub-Committee has the responsibility to co-ordinate the management and oversight of the Council's finances, performance and risk management arrangements.
- 30 The Sub-Committee is responsible for allocating budgets across the service committees. This responsibility includes the allocation of revenue and capital budgets as well as relevant earmarked reserves.
- 31 The Sub-Committee has responsibilities within the Constitution to approve, or recommend for approval, virement and supplementary estimates that will amend the MTFS. Such requests are brought to the Committee as they arise.

Other Options Considered

- 32 Not applicable.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 33 The legal implications surrounding the process of setting the 2024 to 2028 Medium-Term Financial Strategy were dealt with in the reports relating to that process.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 34 Contained within the main body of the report.

Policy

- 35 The Corporate Plan sets the policy context for the MTFS and the two documents are aligned. Any policy implications that arise from activities funded by the budgets that this report deals with will be dealt within the individual reports to Members or Officer Decision Records to which they relate.

An open and enabling organisation
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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 36 Under the Equality Act 2010, decision makers must show ‘due regard’ to the need to:
- 37 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- 38 - Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it; and
- 39 - Foster good relations between those groups.
- 40 The protected characteristics are age, disability, sex, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, and marriage and civil partnership.
- 41 Having “due regard” is a legal term which requires the Council to consider what is proportionate and relevant in terms of the decisions they take.
- 42 The Council needs to ensure that in taking decisions on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and the Budget that the impacts on those with protected characteristics are considered. The Council undertakes equality impact assessments where necessary and continues to do so as proposals and projects develop across the lifetime of the Corporate Plan. The process assists us to consider what actions could mitigate any adverse impacts identified. Completed equality impact assessments form part of any detailed Business Cases.
- 43 Positive impacts include significant investment in services for children and adults (protected characteristics primarily age and disability).
- 44 The Corporate Plan’s vision reinforces the Council’s commitment to meeting its equalities duties, promoting fairness and working openly for everyone. Cheshire East is a diverse place and we want to make sure that people are able to live, work and enjoy Cheshire East regardless of their background, needs or characteristics.
- 45 The proposals within the MTFS approved in February 2024 include positive and negative impacts. A separate Equality Impact Assessment has been produced and is included in the MTFS 2024-28 Appendix C, Annex 3. Any service changes will be subject to a specific EqIA process as part of their development.

Human Resources

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

Risk Management

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

Rural Communities

- 48 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)

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

Public Health

- 50 Public Health implications of any service budget or policy changes which may be brought forward under the remit of this committee will be considered on a case by case basis.

Climate Change

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

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	<p>Adele Taylor</p> <p>Interim Director of Finance and Customer Services (Section 151 Officer)</p> <p>adele.taylor@cheshireeast.gov.uk</p>
Appendices:	<p>A - Allocation of revenue and capital budgets, budget change items and earmarked reserves for the Corporate Policy Committee</p> <p>B – Financial Reporting Timetable 2024/25</p>
Background Papers:	<p>The following are links to key background documents:</p> <p>Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2024-2028</p>

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Service Budgets Appendix A

Corporate Policy Committee

Contents

Corporate Policy Committee Extracts

1. Allocation of Revenue and Capital Budgets
2. Approved Budget Policy Change items
3. Capital Programme
4. Earmarked Reserves

Corporate Policy Committee

1. Allocation of Revenue and Capital Budgets

CORPORATE POLICY COMMITTEE - Summary					
Service Area	Revenue Budget			Capital Budget	Total Revenue and Capital Budget
	2024/25			2024/25	2024/25
	Expenditure £000	Income £000	Net £000	£000	Net £000
Directorate	1,274		1,274	0	1,274
Finance and Customer Services	59,383	-47,030	12,353	2,069	14,422
Governance and Compliance Service	14,489	-3,559	10,930	0	10,930
Communications	700	-10	690	0	690
Human Resources	2,942	-460	2,482	0	2,482
ICT	30,668	-18,701	11,967	8,310	20,277
Policy and Change	1,960		1,960	0	1,960
Total Cost of Service	111,416	-69,760	41,656	10,379	52,035

2. Approved Budget Policy Change items

MTFS Section 1 Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets (some of the budget change items have been separated out since the publication of the MTFS)	Budget Consultation Reference	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn £m	Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m
	Corporate Policy Committee		+0.489	+0.957		-1.389	+1.015	+0.915
36	Reduce leadership and management costs	CP1	-0.540	-0.190	Red - The initial feedback from the draft outcome of the DMA review is senior management vacancies will require recruitment to the complete complement of Corporate Managers. In year vacancy savings will continue but will be time limited and reducing towards 2025. There is potential to increase costs by additional management support during transformation. This will result in increased budget pressure.	-	-	-
37	Close the Emergency Assistance Scheme	CP2	-0.220	-0.220	Completed	-	-	-
38	Reduce election costs and increase charges where possible	CP3	-0.150	-0.150	Green - The proposal is to make payment, during the 2024/25 year of £70k-£80k from the existing election account, as part of this one-off saving. The remainder will be paid during the financial year by reducing the sum which would normally be paid	+0.150	-	-

MTFS Section 1 Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets (some of the budget change items have been separated out since the publication of the MTFS)	Budget Consultation Reference	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn £m	Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m
					into the election reserve. This might be mitigated in the year of the next local elections by monies which will be raised by charging town and parish councils for their elections in 2027. However, this will not be sufficient and will be likely to lead to the need for a supplementary estimate.			
39a	Accelerate Digital Transformation (ICT Operational efficiencies)	CP4	-0.100	-0.100	Green - 3rd party costs have been reduced and plans to reduce further during the year.	-	-	-
39b	Accelerate Digital (Digital efficiencies)	CP4	-0.150	-0.150	Amber - Significant activity underway with the support of external reviews. This has identified opportunities for Digital transformation. Linked in with main transformation programme to ensure opportunities are maximised	+0.250	+0.100	
40	Enforce prompt debt recovery and increase charges for costs	CP5	-0.150	-0.150	Completed - The award of costs is a matter for the Magistrates at each court hearing. However, only by exception will they vary from the level already agreed by us with the Court Manager. The approach to the Court Manager has been made and the revised level agreed. The	-0.077	-	-

MTFS Section 1 Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets (some of the budget change items have been separated out since the publication of the MTFS)	Budget Consultation Reference	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn £m	Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m
					action is therefore complete but the financial benefits will accrue as we continue the regular recovery process during the year.			
41a	Other efficiencies and reductions across Corporate Services – School Subsidy (ICT)	CP6	-0.032	-0.032	Green	-0.010	-	-
41b	Other efficiencies and reductions across Corporate Services – Organisational Development	CP6	-0.100	-0.100	Completed			
41c	Other efficiencies and reductions across Corporate Services – Registration Services	CP6	-0.050	-0.050	Green			
41d	Other efficiencies and reductions across Corporate Services – School Subsidy	CP6	-0.018	0	Amber - Part of the £50k School Subsidy saving - Finance team to assist in identifying options.			
41e	Other efficiencies and reductions across Corporate Services	CP6	-0.010	0	Amber - Finance team to assist in identifying options.			
41f	Other efficiencies and reductions across Corporate Services – Printing	CP6	-0.050	-0.010	Amber - Finance team to assist in identifying options.			
41g	Other efficiencies and reductions across Corporate Services – Hybrid working / mileage	CP6	-0.050	0	Amber – Options being considered regarding reduced travel spend including ensuring efficient planning around meeting attendance and minimising unnecessary movements across the area. This			

MTFS Section 1 Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets (some of the budget change items have been separated out since the publication of the MTFS)	Budget Consultation Reference	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn £m	Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m
					maximises efficient use of time as well for teams.			
42	Pension Costs Adjustment		-0.378	-0.378	Completed	-0.396	-	-
43	Mitigation of reduction in the Dedicated Schools Grant		+0.136	+0.136	Completed	-	-	-
44	Pay Inflation		+1.446	+1.446	Amber – NJC national negotiations have commenced. There are risks that the national offer is above the 3% allowed for within the MTFS and the proposals from staff side would add further affordability risks.	+0.893	+0.915	+0.915
45	Legal Services Capacity		+0.455	+0.455	Completed	-	-	-
46	ICT Review 1		+0.450	+0.450	Green	-2.199	-	-
47	Workforce Strategy Review	NEW	TBC	0	Amber - There are no savings attributed to this HLBC in 2024/2025. Opportunities to explore workforce options are being considered alongside transformation work. Any savings are likely to be realised in 2025/26 at the earliest			
48	Parish Compacts – it is recommended that this item is removed.	NEW	TBC	0	Red - An extension of parish compacts would provide a budget for every parish council and require a CEC			

MTFS Section 1 Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets (some of the budget change items have been separated out since the publication of the MTFS)	Budget Consultation Reference	2024/25 MTFS £m	2024/25 Forecast Outturn £m	Progress 2024/25 (RAG rating and commentary)	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m
					post to manage it. That is not affordable as a result of previous MTFS efficiencies meaning growth of £150k would be needed. Given we are implementing savings in this area this year through the Reduce cost of street cleansing and Green Spaces Maintenance Review items. The recommendation is for this item to be removed from the MTFS as not deliverable.			

3. Capital Programme

Corporate Policy								CAPITAL					
CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 - 2027/28													
Scheme Description	Total Approved Budget £000	Forecast Expenditure					Total Forecast Budget 2024-28 £000	Forecast Funding					Total Funding £000
		Prior Years £000	Forecast Budget 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £000		Grants £000	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	
Committed Schemes													
ICT Services													
Accelerate Digital	1,690	0	890	800	0	0	1,690	0	0	0	0	1,690	1,690
**Care Act Phase 2	6,314	4,956	1,358	0	0	0	1,358	0	0	0	0	1,358	1,358
Digital Customer Enablement	3,113	2,400	713	0	0	0	713	0	0	0	0	713	713
**ICT Device Replacement	1,912	912	1,000	0	0	0	1,000	0	0	0	0	1,000	1,000
ICT Hybrid Model	1,552	581	971	0	0	0	971	0	0	0	0	971	971
**IADM (Information Assurance and Data Management)	19,465	16,784	1,281	1,400	0	0	2,681	0	0	0	0	2,681	2,681
Infrastructure Investment Programme (IIP)	36,370	31,740	1,996	1,804	830	0	4,630	0	0	0	0	4,630	4,630
Vendor Management	1,006	906	100	0	0	0	100	0	0	0	0	100	100
Total ICT Services Schemes	71,423	58,279	8,310	4,004	830	0	13,144	0	0	0	0	13,144	13,144
Finance & Customer Services													
**Core Financials	11,317	9,514	808	698	297	0	1,803	0	0	0	0	1,803	1,803
**Strategic Capital Projects	15,588	11,430	1,261	1,500	1,397	0	4,158	0	0	0	0	4,158	4,158
**Vendor Management - Phase 2	320	19	0	301	0	0	301	0	0	0	0	301	301
Total Finance & Customer Services Schemes	27,224	20,963	2,069	2,499	1,694	0	6,261	0	0	0	0	6,261	6,261
Total Committed Schemes	98,647	79,242	10,379	6,503	2,524	0	19,405	0	0	0	0	19,405	19,405
Total Corporate Policy Schemes	98,647	79,242	10,379	6,503	2,524	0	19,405	0	0	0	0	19,405	19,405

Note: the schemes marked ** can not proceed until the Capital Programme Review has been completed. Any urgent requests to continue prior to the reviews completion will require approval from the Chair of the Finance Sub Committee and the S.151 Officer.

4. Earmarked Reserves

Name of Reserve	Opening Balance 1 April 2023 £000	Forecast Movement in Reserves 2023/24 £000	Opening Balance 1 April 2024 £000	Forecast Movement in Reserves 2024/25 £000	Transfer to General Fund Reserve £000	Estimated Final Balance 31 March 2025 £000	Notes
Directorate							
Corporate Directorate	1,356	(421)	935	0	(935)	0	To support a number of widespread projects within the Corporate Directorate. Future forecasts to be reviewed.
Finance and Customer Services							
Collection Fund Management	17,819	(10,284)	7,535	(6,300)	(1,235)	0	To manage cash flow implications as part of the Business Rates Retention Scheme. Includes liabilities that will not be paid until future years.
Capital Financing Reserve	12,886	(12,886)	0	0	0	0	To provide for financing of capital schemes, other projects and initiatives.
MTFS Reserve	5,147	(4,761)	386	355	(741)	0	To support the financial strategy and risk management.
Section 151 Revenue Grants	558	(558)	0	0	0	0	Unspent specific use grant carried forward into 2023/24.
Governance and Compliance							
Insurance Reserve	4,976	0	4,976	0	(4,976)	0	To settle insurance claims and manage excess costs. Forecasts to be reviewed by service, but reserve cannot be given up.
Elections General	640	(640)	0	0	0	0	To provide funds for Election costs every 4 years. Anticipate reserve will be required in early 2024, but will be held until 2024/25 if election is delayed.
Brexit Funding	13	0	13	0	(13)	0	Residual balance to be reviewed.
Human Resources							
HR (CARE4CE Review, Culture Change, Pay realignment, Learning Mgt System)	59	0	59	0	(59)	0	To fund HR expenditure in relation to the Care4CE review, culture change programme, pay realignment and the Learning Management System.
Pay Structure (M Grade Review)	306	(306)	0	0	0	0	This scheme has now come to an end and the balance can be returned to General Fund.
Policy and Change							
Brighter Future Transformation Programme	1,789	(1,299)	490	(20)	(470)	0	To fund the Council's four year transformation programme and its five outcomes of Culture; Estates and ICT systems; Customer Experience, Commercial Approach and Governance.
CORPORATE POLICY TOTAL	45,549	(31,155)	14,394	(5,965)	(8,429)	0	

Appendix B - Financial Reporting Timetable

Report	Financial Cycle	Committee	When
Companies Financial Statements 2022/23	Reporting	Audit and Governance (completed)	May 2024
Service Budgets 2024/25	Planning	All Service Committees	June 2024
Local Government Pension Scheme and Cheshire Pension Fund update June 2024	Reporting	Finance Sub Committee / Pension Committee	June 2024 / TBC
Medium Term Financial Strategy Assumptions and Reporting Cycle for 2025-29	Planning	Finance Sub Committee	June 2024
Financial Management Code - compliance with the Code	Reporting	Finance Sub Committee	June 2024
Financial Outturn 2023/24	Reporting	All Committees / Council	June 2024 July 2024 (Council)
Draft Statement of Accounts 2023/24	Reporting	Audit and Governance	July 2024
Companies Draft Statements of Accounts 2023/24	Reporting	Audit and Governance	July 2024
First Financial Review 2024/25	Monitoring	All Committees / Council	September / October 2024 October 2024 (Council)
Companies First Financial Review 2024/25	Monitoring	Finance Sub Shareholder Working Group	TBC
Medium Term Financial Planning Assumptions	Planning	Finance Sub Committee	September 2024

Appendix B - Financial Reporting Timetable

Report	Financial Cycle	Committee	When
Final Statement of Accounts 2023/24	Reporting	Audit and Governance / Council	September 2024 October 2024 (Council)
Audit of Accounts 2023/24 - report from A&G Committee to Council on main items from the external auditors report	Reporting	Audit and Governance / Council	September 2024 October 2024 (Council)
Companies Audited Financial Statements 2023/24	Reporting	Audit and Governance / Council	September 2024 October 2024 (Council)
Local Government Pension Scheme and Cheshire Pension Fund update September 2024	Monitoring	Finance Sub Committee / Pension Committee	September 2024 / TBC
Medium Term Financial Strategy Consultation for 2025/26-2028/29 - launch	Planning	Corporate Policy Committee	October 2024
Financial Management Code - interim update	Monitoring	Finance Sub Committee	November 2024
Second Financial Review 2024/25	Monitoring	All Committees / Council	November 2024 December 2024 (Council)
Companies Second Financial Review 2024/25	Monitoring	Finance Sub Shareholder Working Group	TBC
Medium Term Financial Strategy Consultation 2025/26-2028/29 - committees to review their respective Service proposals	Planning	All Committees	November 2024

Appendix B - Financial Reporting Timetable

Report	Financial Cycle	Committee	When
Council Tax Base 2025/26	Reporting	Corporate Policy Committee / Council	November 2024 December 2024 (Council)
Third Financial Review 2023/24	Monitoring	All Committees / Council	January / February 2025 February 2025 (Council)
Medium Term Financial Strategy Consultation 2024/25 to 2027/28 plus Provisional Settlement	Planning	All Committees	January / February 2025
MTFS Strategies - Treasury Mgt, Investment, Capital and Reserves	Planning	Finance Sub Committee / Council	January 2025 February 2025 (Council)
Local Government Pension Scheme and Cheshire Pension Fund update December 2024	Monitoring	Finance Sub Committee / Pension Committee	January 2025 / TBC
Companies Third Financial Review 2024/25	Monitoring	Finance Sub Shareholder Working Group	TBC
Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25-2027/28 - including any supplementary updates	Reporting	Corporate Policy Committee / Council	February 2025
Local Government Pension Scheme and Cheshire Pension Fund update March 2025	Monitoring	Finance Sub Committee / Pension Committee	March 2025 / TBC
Service Budgets 2025/26	Planning	Finance Sub Committee	March 2025

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Corporate Policy Committee**13 June 2024****Appointments to Sub-Committees,
Working Groups, Panels, Boards and
Joint Committees****Report of: David Brown, Director of Governance and Compliance****Report Reference No: CP/08/24-25****Ward(s) Affected: No specific wards.****Purpose of Report**

- 1 This report seeks approval from the Corporate Policy Committee to appoint the bodies referred to in the report and to nominate members to them.

Executive Summary

- 2 The Council, at its annual meeting on 15 May 2024, approved the political representation on its main committees. The appointment of certain sub-committees, working groups, panels and boards is a matter for the relevant service committees. This report concerns those bodies which fall to be appointed by the Corporate Policy Committee or by the committee in conjunction with other service committees. Where political proportionality is applicable, the agreed conventions and methods of calculation have been applied.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Corporate Policy Committee

1. Appoints the sub-committees, working groups, panels, boards and joint committees for 2024-25 as set out within the report and the member appointments to them.

2. Agree that a sub-committee be appointed (Electoral and Polling District Review Sub-Committee) with the same roles and responsibilities as the existing Electoral Review Sub Committee, to make recommendations to the Corporate Policy Committee in respect of all matters relating to the Cheshire East Council Electoral Review and also to formally determine all matters relating to the Cheshire East Council Polling District Review, without any further reference to the Corporate Policy Committee.
3. Where appropriate, agree to submit member nominations to the above bodies to the Head of Democratic Services and Governance; and
4. Note the terms of reference of the bodies referred to in the report.

Background

A. Bodies which report to the Corporate Policy Committee

Constitution Working Group

- 3 The Constitution Working Group has been set up to review the Constitution and make recommendations to the Corporate Policy Committee and Council. The terms of reference are set out in the Appendix for information.
- 4 The working groups membership of 6 has the following composition: 2 Conservative: 2 Labour: 2 Independent Group.
- 5 The Corporate Policy Committee is asked to appoint a Constitution Working Group for the current municipal year, with nominations being submitted to the Head of Democratic Services and Governance.

Staffing Appeals Sub-Committee

- 6 The Staffing Appeals Sub-Committee deals with various staffing-related appeals, such as appeals against dismissal and grievances. The terms of reference are set out in the Appendix for information.
- 7 The membership of this Sub-Committee comprises 3 members appointed on an ad hoc basis, drawn from a pool of 10. Whilst the Sub-Committee itself does not need to be proportionate, the pool of 10 has previously been selected on a politically proportionate basis. The Committee may wish to continue with this approach.
- 8 It is proposed that nominations to the pool of members for the Staffing Appeals Sub-Committee be submitted to the Head of Democratic Services and Governance on the following basis:

4 Conservative

4 Labour

2 Independent

General Appeals Sub-Committee

- 9 The General Appeals Sub-Committee deals with a range of appeals, such as school transport appeals. The terms of reference are set out in the Appendix for information.
- 10 The membership of this Sub-Committee comprises 5 members appointed on an ad hoc basis, drawn from a pool of 10. Whilst the Sub-Committee itself does not need to be proportionate, the pool of 10 has previously been selected on a politically proportionate basis. The Committee may wish to continue with this approach.
- 11 It is proposed that nominations to the pool of members for the General Appeals Sub-Committee be submitted to the Head of Democratic Services and Governance on the following basis:

4 Conservative

4 Labour

2 Independent

Shared Services Joint Committee

- 12 The Shared Services Committee is a joint committee of Cheshire East Council and Cheshire West and Chester Council. It oversees the management of those services which are provided on a Cheshire-wide basis to ensure effective delivery of such services and to provide strategic direction. The terms of reference are set out in the Appendix for information.
- 13 Although this is a joint committee of two councils rather than a sub-committee of the Corporate Policy Committee, it does report to the Corporate Policy Committee (and to its counterpart in Cheshire West and Chester) and it falls to this Committee to appoint the nominees from Cheshire East. Each council appoints three of its elected members as its nominated members of the Joint Committee. The Corporate Policy Committee has previously appointed one member each from the Conservative, Labour and Independent Groups, with the Independent Group also nominating a named reserve.
- 14 It is proposed that nominations to the Shared Services Joint Committee be submitted to the Head of Democratic Services and Governance in accordance with the following:

1 Conservative

1 Labour

1 Independent

Electoral and Polling District Review Sub-Committee

15 The existing Electoral Review Sub-Committee is entering the final stages of its work relating to the Boundary Commission's review of Cheshire East Council's electoral arrangements, which will determine the Council's membership, boundaries, warding, number of members per ward etc from May 2027. The Commission will soon publish its proposals for the Council's electoral arrangements, having received the Council's submission and other representations on the above matters. Following publication of the Commission's proposals, the Council will have the opportunity to respond, and the Sub-Committee will need to continue its work for that purpose.

16 The recommendations of this report therefore ask the Corporate Policy Committee to re-appoint a Sub-Committee with the powers previously delegated to the Electoral Review Sub-Committee. The existing role of the Sub Committee can be seen in the report which was made to the Corporate Policy Committee in July 2023 which can be found [here](#). The July 2023 resolution of the Corporate Policy Committee is set out below:

17 **"RESOLVED** (unanimously)

"That

1. "a sub-committee be appointed (the Electoral Review Sub-Committee) to make recommendations to the Corporate Policy Committee in respect of all matters relating to the Cheshire East Council Electoral Review.

2. "The Sub-Committee comprise 7 members, on a politically proportionate basis as set out in the report, with an open invitation to a member of the Liberal Democrat Group to attend meetings of the Sub-Committee on an informal non-voting basis, and to contribute to the Sub-Committee's debates";

18 However, legislation requires the Council to undertake a review of its Polling Districts by January 2025. This is an entirely separate piece of work to the Commission's review of the Council's other electoral arrangements. Further information is contained in guidance prepared by the Electoral Commission:

[Reviews of polling districts, polling places and polling stations | Electoral Commission](#)

- 19 The Polling District review is expected to be relatively “light-touch”, addressing a small number of polling issues, such as the identification of new polling stations and the allocation of Electoral Registers to new polling stations.
- 20 It is expected that a more fundamental Borough-wide review of Polling Districts will need to be undertaken when the Boundary Commission publishes its final recommendations to Parliament on the Cheshire East Electoral Review. It would not be appropriate to undertake a full Borough-wide review of Polling Districts until the Boundary Commission’s work is complete.
- 21 The existing Electoral Review Sub-Committee is ideally placed to undertake the Polling District Review, having the relevant expertise amongst its members following the detailed work which they carried out on the boundaries as part of its work to date. But its terms of reference need to be expanded to include the work which must be done on the Polling District Review.
- 22 Given that the Polling District Review is very limited in terms of the number of polling districts to be reviewed, and the proposed light-touch nature of the review, it is recommended that the proposed Sub-Committee be empowered to formally determine all matters relating to the Polling District Review without any further reference to the Corporate Policy Committee.
- 23 The existing Electoral Review Sub-Committee comprises 7 members, on a political proportionate basis of 3 Conservative members, 3 Labour members and one Independent member, observing the Council’s conventions on calculation. This size of Sub-Committee worked very well for the purposes of the Sub-Committee’s work, and it is recommended that the same number of members and political composition be observed for the new Sub-Committee.

B. Other Bodies to which the Corporate Policy Committee is required to make appointments

Joint Member Scrutiny Task Group

- 24 Cheshire East Council and Cheshire West and Chester Council have agreed to establish a Joint Member Scrutiny Task Group to provide advice and assurance to decision makers on the transition to a new model for ICT delivery. The Joint Task Group’s advice and recommendations would be considered by the relevant scrutiny bodies

and shared with the Shared Services Joint Committee. The terms of reference are set out in the Appendix for information.

25 It is proposed that 3 Members from each of Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester Councils would be appointed.

26 It is proposed that nominations to the Joint Member Scrutiny Task Group be submitted to the Head of Democratic Services and Governance in accordance with the following:

1 Conservative

1 Labour

1 Independent

Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Board

27 Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Board is a joint board to which this Council appoints three councillors as voting members. The lead service committee in respect of this Board is the Adults and Health Committee, and the three Council nominees to the Board will be formally nominated by the Adults and Health Committee, the Corporate Policy Committee, and the Children and Families Committee. There are no specific criteria which apply to the appointments.

28 The current Terms of Reference are set out in the Appendix to this report for information.

29 It is proposed that the Corporate Policy Committee agree to the nomination of 1 Member to the Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Board, and that the nominee be notified to the Head of Democratic Services and Governance.

Joint Extra Care Housing Management Board

30 The Joint Extra Care Housing Management Board is a joint board of Cheshire East Council and Cheshire West and Chester Council. It is responsible for providing strategic guidance, making strategic decisions and reviewing performance in relation to extra care housing provision, except where matters are reserved to the respective authorities. The terms of reference are set out in the Appendix for information.

31 The Joint Extra Care Housing Management Board comprises three elected members from each authority. The Corporate Policy Committee, Adults and Health Committee and Finance Sub-Committee are each required to appoint one member to the Board. There are no specific criteria which apply to the appointments.

- 32 It is proposed that the Corporate Policy Committee agree to the nomination of 1 Member to the Joint Extra Care Housing Management Board, and that the nominee be notified to the Head of Democratic Services and Governance.

Cheshire East Health and Care Partnership Board

- 33 The Adults and Health Committee, at its meeting on 18 July 2022, agreed the terms of reference for a Cheshire East Health and Care Partnership Board. The terms of reference provide for the establishment of a Cheshire East Place Partnership Board to enable the delivery of integrated population health and care services in Cheshire East. A link to the Board's terms of reference is provided [here](#).
- 34 In approving the terms of reference of the Board, the Adults and Health Committee asked the Corporate Policy Committee to appoint the membership from Cheshire East. The Terms of Reference provide for the appointment of 3 elected members from Cheshire East Council. The Health and Care Partnership Board has been set up as a partnership rather than as a formal joint committee. Therefore, rules of political proportionality do not apply.
- 35 The Corporate Policy Committee, on 15 June 2023 , agreed to appoint Councillors Arthur Moran, Jill Rhodes and Janet Clowes to the Cheshire East Health and Care Partnership Board on the basis that those members were members of the Adults and Health Committee, which would help to ensure that the views of that Committee were taken forward to the Partnership Board.
- 36 The Committee is asked to agree the appointment of 3 members to the Cheshire East Health and Care Partnership Board, and that the nominees be notified to the Head of Democratic Services and Governance.

C. Appointments to Outside Organisations

Tatton Park Board

- 37 In July 2023, the Corporate Policy Committee agreed the appointments to outside organisations, including the Tatton Park Board. The Committee resolved that the appointments made would run until May 2027.
- 38 The Corporate Policy Committee appointed the following representatives onto the Tatton Park Board on a 3:3:1 political proportionality:

Cllr Tony Dean, Cllr Mark Goldsmith, Cllr Nick Mannion, Cllr Hannah Moss, Cllr Kate Hague, Cllr John Place and Cllr Jill Rhodes.

39 Following the change of Group membership of Cllr Moss, there is now a vacancy on the Tatton Park Board.

40 Councillor Mark Goldsmith has also requested to standdown from his position on the Tatton Park Board as the Independent Group representative.

41 The Committee is asked to approve the replacement Conservative Group and Independent Group nominations to the Tatton Park Board to represent this outside organisation until May 2027.

Manchester Airport Consultative Committee

42 Councillor Nick Mannion has requested to standdown from his position on the Manchester Airport Consultative Committee.

43 The committee is asked to approve a replacement member to represent this outside organisation until May 2027.

Mental Health Partnership Board

44 The Corporate Policy Committee appointed the following representatives onto the Mental Health Partnership Board as representatives of the Adults and Health Committee and Children and Families Committee at its meeting in July 2023.

45 Cllr Nicola Cook and Cllr Dawn Clark.

46 Following the changes of committee membership in May 2024, the Committee is asked to approve the 2x replacement nominations to the Mental Health Partnership Board.

Safeguarding Adults Board

47 The Corporate Policy Committee appointed the following representative onto the Safeguarding Adults Board as a representative of the Adults and Health Committee at its meeting in July 2023.

48 Cllr Dawn Clark

49 Following the changes of committee membership in May 2024, the Committee is asked to approve the replacement nomination to the Safeguarding Adults Board.

Consultation and Engagement

50 There has been consultation with Group Leaders and Administrators in relation to the political representation of these bodies.

Reasons for Recommendations

51 In accordance with the Constitution, the Corporate Policy Committee is responsible for the appointment of the bodies referred to in this report.

Other Options Considered

52	Option	Impact	Risk
	Do nothing	The Council's Constitution requires these bodies to be appointed in line with the legislation referenced in this report. Not appointing to these bodies would negatively affect the Council's ability to make decisions in an open and transparent manner.	Failure to comply with the Council's Constitution and the legislation referenced in this report could leave the Council open to legal challenge.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 53 The Committee has power to appoint informal working groups, panels or task groups with defined terms of reference and timeframes.
- 54 In addition, the Committee has power to appoint representatives to serve on outside bodies and organisations.
- 55 The Committee also has power and/or has historically been asked to nominate members to each of the sub-committees particularly where they fall within the remit of the Committee.
- 56 The Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, made pursuant to the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, make provisions in respect of the political group representation on a local authority's committees in relation to the overall political composition of the Council. The legislation applies to the decision-

making committees and sub-committees of the Council and requires that, where proportionality applies, and seats are allocated to different political groups, the authority must abide by the following principles, so far as is reasonably practicable:

- Not all of the seats can be allocated to the same political Group (i.e., there are no single group committees).
- The majority of the seats on the body are to be allocated to a political Group with a majority membership of the authority.
- The total number of seats on all ordinary committees and sub committees allocated to each Political Group bears the same proportion to the proportion on the full Council.
- The number of seats on each ordinary committee allocated to each Political Group bears the same proportion to the proportion on full Council.
- The proposals contained in this report meet the requirements of the legislation.

57 The 1990 Regulations require Political Group Leaders to notify the Proper Officer of the Groups' nominations to the bodies in question.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

58 There are no financial implications that require an amendment to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

Policy

59 There are no direct policy implications.

An open and enabling organisation

Ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision making

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

60 There are no direct equality, diversity and inclusion implications.

Human Resources

61 There are no direct human resources implications.

Risk Management

62 Failure to comply with the Act and Regulations when appointing its committee memberships would leave the Council open to legal challenge.

Rural Communities

63 There are no direct implications for rural communities.

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

64 There are no direct implications for children and young people.

Public Health

65 There are no direct implications for public health.

Climate Change

66 There are no direct implications for climate change.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Brian Reed Head of Democratic Services and Governance Brian.reed@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Terms of reference of bodies to which the Corporate Policy Committee makes appointments.
Background Papers:	None.

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Appendix 1

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF BODIES TO WHICH THE CORPORATE POLICY COMMITTEE MAKES APPOINTMENTS

Constitution Working Group

Membership: No more than 8 Councillors

Functions

The Constitution Working Group will make recommendations to the Corporate Policy Committee and Council on:

- 1 the Council's administrative business, including electoral matters; administrative boundaries and support for Councillors; Committees.
- 2 determining policies and conventions in relation to the political management of the Council, including political balance and party groups for the purpose of Councillors' duties.
- 3 reviewing the Council's Constitution and recommending any changes to the Monitoring Officer (where not significant), or Corporate Policy Committee and Council.
- 4 recommending to Council or Corporate Policy Committee, as appropriate, the appointment of Councillors to Committees and Sub-Committees (including any co-opted Members).
- 5 overseeing and monitoring the Councillors' Allowances budget and keeping under review the scheme for the payment of allowances.
- 6 making recommendations to the Council on civic issues, including those affecting the Mayoralty, Honorary Freemen and Aldermen, nationally significant events and the Council's flag flying policy and civic regalia.

Staffing Appeals Sub Committee

Membership: 3 Councillors, established on an ad hoc basis in consultation with the Chair of the Corporate Policy Committee drawn from a pool of 10.

The requirement for political balance under section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 is waived in relation to the sub-committee.

Before a Councillor can attend a meeting and participate in the business of the meeting, the determination of an application or an appeal by any individual or body, the Councillor must attend a suitable training course dealing with the quasi-judicial nature of the role of the Sub-Committee.

Functions

To consider appeals from officers in the following circumstances:

- 1 Appeals against dismissal.

- 2 Appeals against grievances.
- 3 Appeals against policy (but only the first appeal where the appeals are based on the same issues/circumstances).

General Appeals Sub-Committee

Membership: 5 Councillors drawn from a pool of 10.

The requirement for political balance under section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 is waived in relation to the sub-committee.

Before a Councillor can attend a meeting and participate in the business of the meeting, the determination of an application or an appeal by any individual or body, the Councillor must attend a suitable training course dealing with the quasi-judicial nature of the role of the Sub-Committee.

Functions

The Sub-Committee is responsible for:

1. hearing and determining appeals lodged under the various Marriage and Civil Partnership Acts.
2. hearing and determining any appeals lodged with the Council for determination, as authorised under all relevant education legislation, excluding those duties falling to the Independent Appeals Panel (schools' admissions and exclusions).
3. hearing and determining any appeals lodged with the Council in respect of school transport or school organisation.
4. hearing and determining appeals from bus contractors in accordance with contract procedures.
5. hearing and determining any appeals lodged with the Council as Social Services Authority, and as authorised under all relevant social services legislation.
6. hearing and determining any other appeals (other than staffing matters).

Shared Services Joint Committee

- 1 The Joint Committee's role is to oversee the management of those services which are provided on a Cheshire wide basis on behalf of Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council and Cheshire East Borough Council, to ensure effective delivery of such services and to provide strategic direction.
- 2 The Joint Committee is specifically responsible for:
 - 2.1 Ensuring that service strategies and the resources and budgets required to deliver the service strategies are in place and overseeing the implementation of the service strategies.
 - 2.2 Ensuring that adequate risk management and audit processes are in place for each shared service.
 - 2.3 Overseeing changes and projects and changes to shared services.

- 2.4 Report on the performance of the five service areas (Civil Contingencies and Emergency Planning, Farms Estate, Archaeology Planning Advisory and Cheshire Rural Touring Arts Network)
 - 2.5 Overseeing and developing ICT, TSC and Archives.
 - 2.6 Agreeing the basis for apportioning cost between the two councils and the amount to be apportioned.
 - 2.7 Resolving issues that have been referred to the Joint Committee.
 - 2.8 Reviewing the Shared Services Outturn and Performance Report, which will take a backwards look and a forward look, on an annual basis and by exception as appropriate, and initiating additional or remedial action as appropriate.
 - 2.9 Agreeing business cases for proposed changes and overseeing the progress of the subsequent work.
 - 2.10 Ensuring that there are robust plans for any disaggregation of services and that there is a smooth transition into the separate arrangements. The following matters are reserved to the councils:
 - 2.11 Approving the budget for the specified functions.
 - 2.12 The delivery of service business plans via client and service manager
- Constitution of the Joint Committee
- 3 Each of the Councils shall appoint three Members (being elected Members of that Council) as its nominated members of the Joint Committee; the Members appointed shall have full voting rights.
 - 4 Each Council may nominate one or more substitute Members to attend any meeting in place of an appointed Member from that Council, subject to notification being given to the Lawyer and Secretary to the Joint Committee before the start of the meeting. The Member appointed as a substitute shall have full voting rights where the Member for whom they are substituting does not attend. If a Council's nominated Members attend a meeting of the Joint Committee, any named substitute may also attend as an observer but shall not be entitled to vote.
 - 5 5 Each Member of the Joint Committee shall comply with the Code of Conduct of their Council when acting as a Member of the Joint Committee.
 - 6 6 Each of the Councils may remove any of its nominated Members or substitute Members of the Joint Committee and appoint a different Member or substitute to the Joint Committee by giving written notice to the Lawyer and Secretary to the Joint Committee.
 - 7 7 Each Council shall have three votes. These shall be exercised by the nominated Members who are elected Members of the Council. In the absence of a Council's nominated Member, a vote may be exercised by the named substitute who is an elected Member of the Council.

- 8 Each Member or the Joint Committee shall serve upon the Joint Committee for as long as he or she is appointed to the Joint Committee by the relevant Council, but a Member shall cease to be a Member of the Joint Committee if he or she ceases to be a Member of the Council appointing him or her or if the relevant Council removes him or her as a Member of the Joint Committee.
- 9 Any casual vacancies howsoever arising shall be filled by the Council from which the vacancy arises by notice in writing sent to the Lawyer and Secretary to the Joint Committee.
- 10 Meetings of the Joint Committee shall be held at the offices of the Member appointed as the Chair.
- 11 The Council hosting the first Meeting shall appoint one of its nominated Members as Chair and that Member shall remain Chair until the first meeting taking place after the elapse of one year from the time of his or her appointment unless he or she ceases to be a Member of the Joint Committee. On the expiry of the first Chair's term of office, the Council which did not appoint the first Chair shall appoint one of its nominated Members as Chair for a period of one year from the date of his or her appointment. The same procedure shall be followed for the appointment of Chair in subsequent years. 1
- 12 2 The Council which has not appointed the Chair of the Joint Committee In any year shall appoint one of its nominated Members as Vice-Chair.

Joint Scrutiny Member Task Group

Draft terms of reference as reported to the Corporate Policy Committee in March 2023:

To provide further advice and assurance to decision makers on the transition to of a new model for ICT delivery.

Key areas of focus are likely to include the following:

- Implementation progress and assurance on key milestones
- Management of risks and issues
- Effective use of resources
- Ensuring operational disruption is minimised
- Putting in place strong foundations for the launch and development of the new model.

The Joint Task Group's advice and recommendations would be considered by the relevant scrutiny bodies and shared with the Shared Service Joint Committee. Subject to discussion with the proposed task group, it is suggested the group would meet a minimum of three meetings each year.

Membership: 3 Members from each Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester Councils, to be appointed after the local elections on 4 May 2023. It is recommended that the Group meetings are not open to the public and reports/meeting contents are not published to allow for in-depth discussions. Public reports will be brought to the Shared Services Joint Committee and each Council's decision-making body throughout the programme.

Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Board

1. The full name of the Board shall be the Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Board. (CEHWB)
2. The CEHWB was established in April 2013.
3. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 and subsequent regulations provide the statutory framework for Health and Wellbeing Boards (HWB).
4. For the avoidance of doubt, except where specifically disapplied by these Terms of Reference, the Council Procedure Rules (as set out in its Constitution) will apply.

Purpose

- To work in partnership to make a positive difference to the health and wellbeing of the residents of Cheshire East through an evidence-based focus on improved outcomes and reducing health inequalities.
- To prepare and keep up to date the Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs) and Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS), which is a duty of local authorities and integrated care boards.
- To lead integrated working between health and social care commissioners, including providing advice, assistance or other support to encourage arrangements under section 75 of the National Health Service Act 2006 (i.e., lead commissioning, pooled budgets and/or integrated provision) in connection with the provision of health and social care services.
- To be a forum that enables member organisations of the Board to hold each other to account for their responsibilities for improving the health of the population
- To assist in fostering good working relationships between commissioners of health-related services and the CEHWB itself.
- To assist in fostering good working relationships between commissioners and providers of health-related services (such as housing and many other local government services) and commissioners of health and social care services
- To undertake any other functions that may be delegated to it by the Council - such delegated functions need not be confined to public health and social care.
- To provide advice assistance and support for the purpose of encouraging the making of arrangements under section 75 of the National Health Service Act 2006 in connection with the provision of such services.

Roles and Responsibilities

5. To work with the Council and NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board (ICB) effectively to ensure the delivery of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
 6. To work within the CEHWB to build a collaborative partnership to key decision making that embeds health and wellbeing challenge, issue resolution and provides strategic system leadership.
 7. To participate in CEHWB discussions to reflect the views of their partner organisations, being sufficiently briefed to be able to make recommendations about future policy developments and service delivery.
 8. To champion the work of the CEHWB in their wider work and networks and in all individual community engagement activities.
 9. To ensure that there are communication mechanisms in place within partner organisations to enable information about the CEHWB's priorities and recommendations to be effectively disseminated.
 10. To share any changes to strategy, policy, and the system consequences of such on budgets and service delivery within their own partner organisations with the CEHWB to consider wider system implications. Accountability
 11. The CEHWB carries no formal delegated authority from any of the individual statutory bodies.
 12. Members of the CEHWB have responsibility and accountability for their individual duties and their role on the CEHWB.
 13. The CEHWB will discharge its responsibilities by means of recommendations to the relevant partner organisations, which will act in accordance with their respective powers and duties.
 14. The Council's Statutory Members will ensure that they keep Committee Chairs and the wider Council advised of the work of the CEHWB.
 15. The CEHWB may report and be accountable to Full Council and to the Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Partnership by ensuring access to meeting minutes and presenting papers as required.
 16. The CEHWB will not exercise scrutiny duties around health or adult social care services directly. This will remain the role of the Cheshire East Scrutiny Committee. Decisions taken and work progressed by the CEHWB will be subject to scrutiny by the Scrutiny Committee.
 17. The CEHWB will provide information to the public through publications, local media, and wider public activities by publishing the minutes of its meetings on the Council's website. The CEHWB is supported by an Engagement and Communications Network across HWB organisations to ensure this function can operate successfully.
- Membership

18. The membership of the CEHWB will comprise the following:

Members:

- Three councillors from Cheshire East Council*1 (representing the Administration)
- The Director of Adult Social Services*
- The Director of Childrens and Families*
- The Director of Public Health*
- A local Healthwatch representative*
- Two representatives from NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board*
- The Chair of the Cheshire East Place Health and Care Partnership
- The Executive Director of Place • A Police and Crime Commissioner representative
- A Fire and Rescue Service representative
- A representative of CVS Cheshire East
- An additional representative from Children and Families
- A councillor from Cheshire East representing the main opposition group
- A representative of housing providers
- A representative of local businesses

The Councillor membership of the CEHWB will be determined by Cheshire East Council.

19. The Statutory Members will keep under review the Membership of the CEHWB and may appoint such additional persons to be members of the Board as it thinks appropriate (as set out in the Health and Social Care Act 2012 198 (8)). All Members of the Board will be voting members.

20. The length of the appointment of additional members will be determined by the Health and Wellbeing Board. They will assist the CEHWB in achieving the priorities agreed within the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

21. Each Member has the power to nominate a single named substitute. If a Substitute Member be required, advance notice of not less than 2 working days should be given to the Council whenever practicable. The Substitute Members shall have the same powers and responsibilities as the Members. Frequency of Meetings

22. There will be no fewer than four meetings per year, usually once every three months.

23. Additional meetings of the CEHWB may be convened with the agreement of the Chairman. Agenda and Notice of Meetings

24. Any agenda items or reports to be tabled at the meeting should be submitted to the Council's Democratic Services no later than seven working days in advance of the next meeting. Generally, no business will be conducted that is not on the agenda.

25. Any member of the Board may request the Chairman to deal with an item of business which the member believes is urgent and requires a decision of the Board. The Chair's ruling of whether the requested item is considered / tabled or not at the meeting will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

26. Meetings of the Board shall be open to the press and public and the agenda, reports and minutes will be available for inspection at the Council's offices and on its website at least five working days in advance of each meeting. This excludes items of business containing confidential information or information that is exempt from publication in accordance with Part 5A and schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

Election of Chairman

27. The CEHWB shall elect the Chairman and Vice Chairman at its first meeting in the Municipal year. The appointment will be by a simple majority of those present and voting.

28. For the avoidance of doubt, in the event of a tie when a vote is taken, the Chairman will have a casting vote.

Quorum

29. Any full meeting of the CEHWB shall be quorate if there is representation of any three of the following members: NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB, the Cheshire East Health and Care Partnership, Local Health Watch, a Councillor and an Officer of Cheshire East Council.

30. Failure to achieve a quorum within fifteen minutes of the scheduled start of the meeting, or should the meeting become inquorate after it has started, shall mean that the meeting will proceed as an informal meeting but that any decisions shall require appropriate ratification at the next quorate meeting.

Procedure at Meetings

31. In accordance with the Council's Committee Procedure Rules, meetings will include a Public Question Time Session.

32. The Council's Committee Procedure Rules will apply in respect of formal meetings subject to the following:

33. The CEHWB will also hold development/informal sessions throughout the year where all members are expected to attend and partake as the agenda suggests.

34. With the agreement of the CEHWB, working groups (non-decision making) and/or sub committees (decision-making) can be set up to consider distinct areas of work. These will be responsible for arranging the frequency and venue of their meetings. The CEHWB will approve the membership.

35. Any working group or subcommittee recommendations will be made to the CEHWB who will consider them in accordance with these terms of reference and their relevance to the priorities within the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy and its delivery plan.

36. Whenever possible decisions will be reached by consensus or failing that a simple majority vote by those members entitled to vote.

Expenses

37. The partnership organisations are responsible for meeting the expenses of their own representatives.

Conflicts of Interest

8. All members of the Board are required to uphold the Nolan Principles and all other relevant NHS or Council Code of Conduct requirements which are applicable to them. This includes the requirement to register and disclose pecuniary, registerable and other non-registerable interests at meetings where appropriate.

Conduct of Members at Meetings

39. CEHWB members will agree to adhere to the principles and behaviours set out in the Appendix to these terms of reference when carrying out their duties as a CEHWB member.

Review

40. These terms of reference will be reviewed every two years at the first meeting of the CEHWB in the Municipal year.

41. Any amendments to these terms of reference shall only be made by the Council, on the recommendation of the Corporate Policy Committee and the CEHWB.

Appendix - Health and Wellbeing Board Principles and Behaviours

The Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Board Partners shall work together to achieve the objectives of the Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Strategy and The Cheshire East Place Partnership Five Year Plan. The Board shall:

(a) Collaborate and work together on an inclusive and supportive basis, with optimal use of their individual and collective strengths and capabilities.

(b) Engage in discussion, direction setting and, where appropriate, collective agreement, on the basis that all the Partners will participate where agreed proposals affect the strategic direction of the Health and Wellbeing Board and/or of Services, and in establishing the direction, culture and tone of the work and meetings of the Board.

(c) Act in the spirit of partnership in discussion, direction setting and, where appropriate, collective agreement making.

(d) Always focus upon improvement to provide excellent Services and outcomes for the Cheshire east population.

(e) Be accountable to each other through the Board by, where appropriate, taking on, managing and accounting to each other in respect of their financial and operational performance.

(f) Communicate openly about major concerns, issues or opportunities relating to the Board.

(g) Act in a way that is best for the delivery of activity to drive forward the Five-Year Plan, and shall do so in a timely manner and respond accordingly to requests for support promptly.

(h) Work with stakeholders effectively, following the principles of co- design and co-production.

Joint Extra Care Housing Management Board

The Joint Extra Care Housing Management Board was established by Cheshire East Council and Cheshire West and Chester Council with the following terms of reference:

The Joint Extra Care Housing Management Board shall be responsible for providing strategic guidance, making strategic decisions, and reviewing performance in relation to extra care housing provision (except where matters are reserved to the respective authorities).

The Joint Extra Care Housing Management Board will function as a joint committee and be subject to all of the usual rules relating to public meetings. The Constitution of the Joint Extra Care Housing Management Board states that each Council shall appoint three Members and that nominated substitutes shall be allowed to attend any meeting in the place of an appointed member, subject to prior notification being given to the Lawyer and Secretary to the Joint Extra Care Housing Management Board. This nomination should be made to Democratic Services at Cheshire East Council.

Mental Health Partnership Board

Vision	We will strive to ensure good Mental Health and Wellbeing for people who live in the borough of Cheshire East
Purpose	<p>The Cheshire East Mental Health Partnership Board will work with key partners to ensure that services are in place to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote good mental health and wellbeing. • respond effectively and efficiently to meeting the needs of people experiencing mental ill health and or distress and their carers. • support people through their recovery to achieve their maximum potential to lead active lives. • Link in and tackle the wider determinants of mental health including social Isolation and loneliness
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To monitor progress and actions against agreed priorities within the NHS Long Term Plan and the Cheshire East All Age Mental Health Strategy and address these as themes at each meeting on an agreed cycle.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To work collaboratively with residents (children, young people and adults) with the joint aim of improved mental health service provision across the borough. • To implement action plans against the strategic priority areas that would benefit from a partnership approach, identifying lead organisations and related outcomes. • To promote the development of good quality service provision and equity of access across Cheshire East. • Inform and influence local groups, meetings and policies that will have a positive impact on people's mental health and wellbeing.
Reporting Arrangements	The board will report on the progress to the Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Board
Frequency of Meetings	<p>The Mental Health Partnership Board will meet on a bi-monthly basis virtually by MS Teams. We will look at the potential of face-to-face meetings over time.</p> <p>The board will also look to organise and deliver meetings with wider stakeholders.</p>
Chairing and Membership	<p>Chairing</p> <p>The Mental Health Partnership Board will be chaired by someone working in either the voluntary sector or statutory services.</p> <p>The remit of chair will entail the chairing of 6 meetings per year and finalising meeting agendas.</p> <p>The Chair function will be appointed and voted on by group members on annual basis.</p> <p>The chair will be appointed by the group and will be reviewed on an annual basis.</p> <p>A deputy chair will also be appointed.</p> <p>Membership</p> <p>All members will endeavour to attend all meetings or send an agreed substitute with delegated responsibilities to participate in the decision-making process. Where neither the member nor substitute member are able to attend, apologies to be sent in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>Lived experience and carer representatives. Cheshire and Wirral Partnership (Adults and Childrens) Cheshire East Council (Adults and Childrens) Cheshire East Young Person Representative(s) Cheshire and Merseyside ICB (Adults and Childrens)</p>

	<p>Cheshire Police Voluntary Sector Lead Members from Cheshire East Council Housing Crisis Providers</p> <p>Co-ordination of meetings and administration will be undertaken by Cheshire East Council who will circulate the agenda and minutes.</p>
Meetings	<p>All members to prepare for the meetings by reading through the agenda and papers and preparing written reports as appropriate.</p> <p>A record shall be kept of every Mental Health Partnership Board meeting including.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main points of discussion • Action log – including owner, completion date and status. The action log will be looked at, at the beginning of each meeting.
Terms of Reference Review	<p>The terms of reference will be reviewed annually.</p> <p>Date of next review – August 2023</p>

Safeguarding Adults Board

Strategic Objectives

- 1) To seek assurance from partner agencies that there is effective leadership, partnership working and governance for safeguarding adults at risk
- 2) To listen to people who have been subject to abuse or neglect, and to seek assurance that people are able to be supported in the way that they want, are involved in decisions, and can achieve the best outcomes.
- 3) To promote the understanding of safeguarding in communities, by raising awareness and promoting well-being with the aim of preventing abuse and neglect from happening in the first place
- 4) To be assured of the safety and wellbeing of anyone who has been subject to abuse or neglect, and that action has been taken against those responsible
- 5) To learn lessons and identify and monitor the implementation of changes that prevent similar abuse or neglect happening to other people.

The key responsibilities of the Board are to:

- Make sure that organisations work together in the best way to actively and successfully promote the wellbeing, security and safety of adults at risk in Cheshire East, holding partners to account.
- Provide effective strategic leadership in the development of safeguarding policy and practice across all partner agencies, and consistent with statutory requirements and best practice guidance.
- Monitor the outcomes and effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements.
- Use data and intelligence to identify risks and act on them.
- To co-ordinate all adult safeguarding activity
- Respond collectively to regional and national issues.

- **Membership**

In order to operate effective safeguarding arrangements, there are a range of relevant partners who must co-operate with each other. These include three statutory partners:

The Local Authority
Integrated Care Board
The Police

Non-Statutory partners –

NHS Trusts and Foundation Trusts
Probation Services
Prison
Community Sector
Housing Providers
Healthwatch
Care Quality Commission
Ambulance Service
Fire Service
Elected member for Cheshire East Council

Tatton Park Board

TERMS OF REFERENCE

- To have oversight of the strategic management and business performance of Tatton Park under the terms of the lease with the National Trust and in line with the agreed objectives for its management.
- To advise on and develop with the Manager of Tatton Park the Business Plan that drives the strategic management of the park, including the future development of service provision.

- To advise the Council in establishing its policies, protocols, regulations, and priorities, to ensure it can realise Tatton Park's potential in contributing to the visitor economy and communities of Cheshire East.
- To advise and make recommendation to the Executive or Council, as appropriate, regarding the strategic management of Tatton Park and any matters requiring Committee approval.
- To ensure that the governance arrangements for Tatton Park are 'fit for purpose' and to make recommendations to the relevant committee regarding any changes required to the governance or to the delegated authority to be vested in the Board or with the Manager of Tatton Park.
- To co-opt others to the Board to assist and support its work in the management of Tatton Park

MEMBERSHIP (updated 1st April 2024)

Tatton Park Board members:

Cllr N Mannion (Chairman)

Cllr J Rhodes (Vice Chair)

Cllr T Dean

Cllr M Goldsmith

Cllr K Hague

Cllr J Place

Vacancy

Other representation as determined or required by the Board from time to time, such as a representative of the National Trust and Tatton Park Charitable Trust.

Manchester Airport Consultative Committee

Terms of reference can be found [here](#).

Corporate Policy Committee Work Programme 2024-25

Report Reference	Corporate Policy Committee	Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Consultation	Equality Impact Assessment	Part of Budget and Policy Framework	Corporate Plan Priority	Exempt Item
CP/04/24-25	TBC	Update on DMA Report	To update committee on progress from the DMA review	Head of HR	No	No	No	Open	No
CP/12/24-25	TBC	Establishment of Independent Improvement Panel	Following the recommendations of the LGA Peer Review to appoint an independent improvement panel	Director of Governance and Compliance	No	No	No	Open	No
CP/26/24-25	TBC	Workforce Terms and Conditions	A shaping report for Committee on review of terms and conditions, to seek permission to explore further	Head of HR	TBC	No	No	Open; Fair	No
CP/07/24-25	03/10/24	Amendments to the Constitution	To give consideration to changes to the petitions scheme and other constitutional changes	Director of Governance and Compliance	Yes	No	No	Open	No
CP/14/24-25	03/10/24	Medium Term Financial Strategy Consultation for 2025/26-2028/29 (Corporate Policy Committee)	To agree the Pre Budget-Consultation survey and material for the four years 2025-2029. The consultation will run from October to December 2024 and will allow stakeholders and residents to engagement in the budget for the coming four years.	Director of Finance and Customer Services	No	No	Yes	Open	No
CP/15/24-25	03/10/24	First Financial Review of 2024/25 (Corporate Policy Committee)	To note and comment on the First Financial Review and Performance position of 2024/25, including progress on policy proposals and material variances from the MTFS and (if necessary) approve Supplementary Estimates and Virements.	Director of Finance and Customer Services	No	No	Yes	Open	No
CP/24/24-25	03/10/24	Revised Statement of Licencing Policy	In accordance with section 5 of the Licensing Act 2003 the Council must adopt a statement of policy dealing with licensing matters. This policy forms part of the Council's Policy and Budget framework and falls under Corporate Policy Committee to make a recommendation to full Council (the final adoption is reserved to full Council by the relevant legislation).	Executive Director, Place	No	No	Yes	Open	No

Corporate Policy Committee Work Programme 2024-25

CP/13/24-25	28/11/24	Council Tax Base 2025/26 (Corporate Policy Committee)	This report notifies of the Council Tax Base for Cheshire East and identifies any changes to the calculation of the tax base for 2025/26, so that they can recommend the amount calculated to Council. In accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 1992 Cheshire East Council is required to agree its tax base before 31st January 2025.	Director of Finance and Customer Services	No	No	Yes	Open	No
CP/17/24-25	28/11/24	Second Financial Review of 2024/25 (Corporate Policy Committee)	To note and comment on the Second Financial Review and Performance position of 2024/25, including progress on policy proposals and material variances from the MTFS and (if necessary) approve Supplementary Estimates and Virements.	Director of Finance and Customer Services	No	No	Yes	Open	No
CP/21/24-25	28/11/24	Medium Term Financial Strategy Consultation 2025/26 - 2028/29 (Corporate Policy Committee)	All Committees were being asked to provide feedback in relation to their financial responsibilities as identified within the Constitution and linked to the budget alignment approved by the Finance Sub-Committee in March 2024. Responses to the consultation would be reported to the Corporate Policy Committee to support that Committee in making recommendations to Council on changes to the current financial strategy.	Director of Finance and Customer Services	No	No	Yes	Open	No
CP/16/24-25	06/02/25	Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/26-2028/29 (Corporate Policy Committee)	To recommend the Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2025 to 2029 to Council for approval. The report will incorporate the Council's Priorities, Budget, Policy Proposals and Capital Programme. The report will also include the Capital, Treasury Management, Investment and Reserves Strategies.	Director of Finance and Customer Services	No	No	Yes	Open	No
CP/18/24-25	06/02/25	Third Financial Review of 2024/25 (Corporate Policy Committee)	To note and comment on the Third Financial Review and Performance position of 2024/25, including progress on policy proposals and material variances from the MTFS and (if necessary) approve Supplementary Estimates and Virements.	Director of Finance and Customer Services	No	No	Yes	Open	No

Corporate Policy Committee Work Programme 2024-25

CP/23/24-25	06/02/25	Medium Term Financial Strategy Consultation 2025/26 - 2028/29 Provisional Settlement Update (Corporate Policy Committee)	All Committees were being asked to provide feedback in relation to their financial responsibilities as identified within the Constitution and linked to the budget alignment approved by the Finance Sub-Committee in March 2024. Responses to the consultation would be reported to the Corporate Policy Committee to support that Committee in making recommendations to Council on changes to the current financial strategy.	Director of Finance and Customer Services	No	No	Yes	Open	No
CP/22/24-25	20/03/25	Service Budgets 2025/26 (Corporate Policy Committee)	The purpose of this report is to set out the allocation of approved budgets for 2025/26 for services under the Committee's remit, as determined by Finance Sub Committee	Director of Finance and Customer Services	No	No	Yes	Open	No

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CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Finance Sub-Committee**
held on Friday, 22nd March, 2024 in Committee Suite 1, 2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor N Mannion (Chair)
Councillor L Anderson (Vice-Chair)

Councillors D Brown, J Clowes, B Drake, R Kain, D Clark (for Cllr Wilson) and
S Edgar (for Cllr O'Leary)

OFFICERS

Alex Thompson, Director of Finance and Customer Services
David Brown, Director of Governance and Compliance
Paul Mountford, Democratic Services
Lianne Halliday, Head of Procurement
Deborah Upton, Senior Governance Lawyer
Richard Doran, Green Infrastructure Manager

APOLOGIES

Councillors C O'Leary and F Wilson

56 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair, Councillor N Mannion, declared a pecuniary interest in an item relating to Tatton Park Enterprises Ltd Contract Extension as a member of the Tatton Park Board.

Councillor L Anderson declared for the record that she had recently resigned as a Director of Orbitas.

57 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meetings held on 11th and 31st January 2024 be approved as a correct record.

58 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

There were no public speakers.

59 SERVICE BUDGETS 2024/25 (FINANCE SUB-COMMITTEE)

The Sub-Committee considered a report on the allocation of the approved budgets to each of the service committees, and the financial reporting cycle for 2024/25.

The Director of Finance and Customer Services advised as follows in response to members' questions and comments:

- Where there was a budget overspend or underperformance, officers would provide the relevant commentary and analysis, and highlight areas for decision.
- A standard format would be adopted for all service committees to ensure a consistent approach to managing budgets.
- A RAG rating would be provided for each policy change proposal; with red and amber ratings highlighting where decisions were required. The Director would consider the feasibility of incorporating RAG ratings into tables for committee reports.
- The chairs and/or lead officers of relevant service committees could be asked to attend Finance Sub-Committee meetings to discuss budget activity, mitigation and forecasts. This would be necessary if mitigation was not being contained within the individual committee as this could impact on General Reserves which were the responsibility of the Finance Sub-Committee.
- A planner view could be provided to assist members in understanding the interdependencies between committees.
- A report on Council Tax and Business Rates collection would be brought to the Sub-Committee's meeting in June 2024.

RESOLVED (unanimously)

That the Sub-Committee

1. approves the allocation of the revenue and capital budgets, budget change items and earmarked reserves to the following committees in accordance with the approved MTFS, as set out in Appendix A to the report:
 - Adults & Health
 - Children & Families
 - Corporate Policy
 - Economy & Growth
 - Environment & Communities
 - Finance Sub-Committee
 - Highways & Transport
2. approves that a report on the progress on delivery of the approved budget policy change items is included as a standing agenda item for each service committee meeting during the 2024/25 reporting year; and
3. notes the draft financial reporting timetable for 2024/25 set out in Appendix B.

60 CIPFA FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT CODE (FM CODE) PROGRESS UPDATE

The Sub-Committee considered an update report on the Council's progress in implementing the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Financial Management Code.

RESOLVED (unanimously)

That the Sub-Committee

1. notes the contents of the report and the self-assessment against the principles of the CIPFA FM Code;
2. notes the current re-assessment position in Appendix 2 – Cheshire East Council's current level of compliance with the CIPFA Financial Management Code Framework; and
3. agrees that two informal sessions be held in May/June for Finance Sub-Committee members to review the draft self-assessment, and a report be submitted to the June 2024 meeting of the Sub-Committee relating to the approval of the self-assessment and action/improvement planning.

61 CHESHIRE & WARRINGTON LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP LTD - APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES

The Sub-Committee considered a report on appointments to the new Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee and related bodies.

Officers advised that the primary role of the Finance Sub-Committee would be to have oversight of the investment decisions by Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington.

RESOLVED

That the Sub-Committee

1. (by majority) agrees to appoint the Leader to be the Owner Member of the Joint Committee (Part One);
2. (by majority) agrees to appoint the Deputy Leader to be a member of the Joint Committee (Part Two) and to be the substitute for the Owner Member;
3. (by majority) agrees to appoint the Chair of the Finance Sub-Committee, or in his absence the Chair of the Environment and Communities Committee, to be the substitute member for the Joint Committee (Part Two);

4. notes that the Corporate Policy Committee will make the appointment to the director of Alderley Park Holdings Ltd;
5. agrees to appoint the Executive Director Place to the Cheshire & Warrington Development Fund (General Partner) Ltd;
6. (by majority) agrees to recommend to the Joint Committee that the Joint Committee fulfil the function of the Investment Committee; and
7. (unanimously) agrees that members of the Finance Sub-Committee should receive a briefing as soon as possible on all investments involving Cheshire East Council, including those of the LEP partnership, with a report back to the Sub-Committee's meeting in June 2024 to determine how the Sub-Committee's shareholder function is best carried out.

62 WORK PROGRAMME

The Sub-Committee noted the items currently scheduled for its next meeting in June, to which the following would now be added:

- CIPFA Financial Management Code - approval of the self-assessment and action/improvement planning
- Wholly-owned Companies
- The Finance Sub-Committee's oversight of its holdings
- Budget oversight report
- Council Tax and Business Rates collection

With regard to budget oversight, it was noted that the service committees would be receiving their first reports for the 2025 budget at their June meetings. The Finance Sub-Committee's meeting in June was currently scheduled for 11th June, before two of the service committees were due to meet. It was therefore suggested that the Sub-Committee's meeting be moved to a later date in June so that it was able to receive details of all the service committee budget proposals.

Looking further ahead, the Sub-Committee would receive a report on the transformation programme at its September meeting. This would provide an additional dimension to the budget planning process.

The work programme for 2024-25 would be presented for approval to the Committee's meeting in June.

RESOLVED

That

1. the work programme be noted; and

2. officers, in consultation with the Chair, identify a suitable alternative date for the Sub-Committee's meeting in June.

63 **PROCUREMENT PIPELINE**

The Sub-Committee considered an update report on the pipeline of procurement activity, the contracts awarded this fiscal year, and the number of cases where, and reasons why, procurement activity has required the use of waivers.

The detailed waiver and non-adherence referred to in the report would be considered in Part 2 of the meeting.

RESOLVED (unanimously)

That the Sub-Committee

1. approves the 1 pipeline project in Appendix 1 column H as business as usual;
2. notes the reason for 1 waiver approved between 1st January 2024 and 29th February 2024 (6 in total in 2023/24);
3. notes the reason for 1 non-adherence between 1st January 2024 and 29th February 2024 (1 in total in 2023/24);
4. notes the contracts awarded since April 2023, Appendix 2; and
5. notes the update on the public procurement legislation, Public Contract Regulations 2023.

64 **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED (unanimously)

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the final item on the agenda pursuant to Section 100(A)4 of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 and the public interest would not be served in publishing the information.

(At this point, the Sub-Committee adjourned for a 10 minute break.)

65 **PROCUREMENT PIPELINE**

The Sub-Committee considered details of the waiver and non-adherence referred to in the Procurement Pipeline report.

RESOLVED

That the details of the waiver and non-adherence referred to in the Procurement Pipeline report be noted.

66 TATTON PARK ENTERPRISES LTD CONTRACT EXTENSION

The Chair, Councillor N Mannion, declared a pecuniary interest in this item as a member of the Tatton Park Board and left the meeting prior to its consideration, vacating the chair. The Vice-Chair, Councillor L Anderson, chaired the meeting in Councillor Mannion's absence.

The Sub-Committee considered a proposal to extend the contract for catering provision at Tatton Park to Tatton Park Enterprises Ltd (TPE Ltd) for a period of 24 months effective from the 16th April 2024 to the 15th April 2026.

RESOLVED (unanimously)

That the Sub-Committee approves that the contract with Tatton Park Enterprises Ltd for the catering provision at Tatton Park be extended for a further two years from the 16th April 2024 to the 15th April 2026.

At the conclusion of this item, Councillor Mannion was invited to return to the meeting and resumed the chair.

67 PROGRESS UPDATE ON ANSA REVIEW

The Sub-Committee received a presentation summarising the findings of a recent review of Ansa.

RESOLVED

That the outcome of the recent review of Ansa be noted.

68 COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITY - ANSA

The Sub-Committee considered a due diligence report in relation to a proposed commercial opportunity for Ansa.

RESOLVED (by majority)

That the Finance Sub-Committee approves the proposal that Ansa Environmental Services Ltd enter into the contract with a third-party Housing Association for a period of 4 years with the option to extend the contract for a further 2 years (by individual extensions of 1 year each).

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 1.50 pm

Councillor N Mannion (Chair)

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**URGENT DECISION MADE BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE ON BEHALF OF COUNCIL****COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 1.76**

Contact Officer: Brian Reed

Email: Brian.reed@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Contact Number: 07973754722

The Constitution provides for Urgent Decisions taken outside of meetings. The definition of an Urgent Decision is set out in Council Procedure Rule 1.75, which states:

"A decision will be urgent in the case of: civil emergency, natural or man-made disaster; matter of serious public health; matters regarding safeguarding of people; or where the Council is at risk of serious reputational damage; loss or claims; or any other matters where the Chief Executive or in his/her absence the Chief Finance Officer has declared that an urgent decision is required to protect the interests of the Council."

The Constitution provides that, if a decision would normally be required to be made by full Council and has to be decided before the next meeting of the Council, the decision may be made by the Chief Executive or in his/her absence the Deputy Chief Executive (or in their absence the Chief Executive's nominee) in consultation with Group Leaders and the Mayor (or in his/her absence the Deputy Mayor) subject to the following requirements being met:

- The decision-maker is satisfied the matter is urgent and cannot await the next meeting of the Council, or an urgently convened Council meeting.
- The decision is reported for information to the next available meeting of the Council.
- The provisions of the legislation are complied with.
- Advice has been taken from the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer.
- All members of the Council are notified of the decision taken by electronic means.

Member Engagement

The Matter was raised with the Carbon Members Advisory Panel on 7th March 2024. This is a cross party member group who are provided with regular updates across the carbon programme, and who provide an input into decisions being considered.

Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Grant

The proposed decision will allow the council access to Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme phase 3C grant funding of £1,449,274 to fund carbon reduction measures for Municipal Building Crewe, Knutsford Leisure Centre, Nantwich Library and Congleton Library.

Phase 3C of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme opened on 10th October 2023. Cheshire East has already received grant funding totalling £14.8 million for projects in phase 1, 2 and 3 of the scheme, which are currently complete or underway.

Government states with regard to the scheme “Reflecting the importance of the public sector's role in meeting the Government's commitment to Net Zero by 2050, the Net Zero Strategy and Heat and Buildings Strategy have confirmed that Phase 3 of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme will receive £1.425 billion of funding over the period 2022/23 to 2024/25”.

Purpose of the grant

In October 2023 Cheshire East Council put forward a bid for £1,449,274.00 to fund energy efficiency measures to four council buildings, Crewe Municipal Building, Knutsford Leisure centre, Nantwich Library and Congelton Library; including roof insulation, photovoltaic panels, low energy demand lighting and air source heat pumps.

The multi-year application provides for the projects to be fully developed in 2024/25 and the capital works carried out in 2025/26. There is a required match funding element of £223,000 which will not be required until the end of the project and will only be required to match such grant funding as the council chooses to spend.

It is a requirement of the grant that all measures have a demonstrable carbon benefit and all equipment to be replaced is nearing end of life. The grant will therefore provide funding towards low carbon replacement of old equipment.

Legal considerations

The grant is being made available by Salix Finance, enabling monies having been received by Salix Finance from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. The Legal Team have reviewed the grant terms, which are drawn in a way that is standard to government funding of this nature.

Specific attention is drawn to the following:

- Payment of the Grant monies will only be made in respect of Eligible Expenditure in accordance with Project Programme (specific items).

- Salix Finance may reduce, withhold or suspend and/or require repayment of all/part of the Grant (“Misuse Sanction”) under a clause which sets out standard provisions which are in the main look to police misuse of funding. Attention is drawn to particular provisions which allow the Misuse Sanction to be applied if:

- i) the Grant is used for purposes other than that for which the Grant was awarded, project is delivered negligently or not in accordance with programme; or

- ii) delivery of project doesn't start within six weeks of project start date, without reasonable explanation

- It should be noted that if the Council accepts the Grant, it is deemed to warrant “that since the date of its last accounts, there has been no material change in its financial position or prospects that may adversely affect the Council's ability to deliver the project in accordance with the Project Programme/Grant Application/Agreement”. If there are any concerns regarding the viability of the project, then the Council may wish to consider disclosure as against this warranty, though the corollary of making such a disclosure is likely to be the withdrawal of the offer. The Council in essence needs to be confident that it has sufficient funding to deliver the project,

Cheshire East Grant:

£1,449,274

In order to draw-down the funding, the Council will need to complete the individual projects by 31/03/2026 and provide match funding for each project. Cheshire East has a track record of achieving this for grants already received for phase 1 and 2 and is on track to deliver projects under phase 3 administered under the same terms.

The money will be spent as part of the Council's facilities capital budget in 2025 – 2026.

The reasons for urgency are as follows:

To formally accept the grant, an officer must be authorised to sign the offer agreement within 10 business days of receipt of the formal offer documentation.

The required decision would normally be made by Full Council, given the quantum of grant in question.

Relevant documentation is appended to this decision.

The documentation must be signed and returned to SALIX acting for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy by 31st March 2024, or the funding will be at risk.

Advice has been taken from the following Officers:

- (1) Section S151 Officer (Director of Finance and Customer Services)
- (2) Deputy Monitoring Officer

Their comments have been taken into consideration in producing this decision form. This decision is subject to the relevant provisions of the Council's Constitution.

DECISION

To accept £1,449,274 from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Grant from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) for further decarbonisation of Council buildings.

That a supplementary capital estimate be made for the 2024-26 Financial years, this to be funded from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Grant.

To authorise the Director of Growth and Enterprise to sign the grant offer agreement with Salix Finance on behalf of the Council and direct that he does the same.

Signature of Chief Executive:

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rob Polkinghorne', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Chief Executive

Date: 26 March 2024

OPEN

Corporate Policy Committee

13 June 2024

Strategic Risk Register – Assurance Report Q4 2023/24

**Report of: David Brown, Director of Governance and Compliance,
Monitoring Officer**

Report Reference No: CP/01/24-25

Ward(s) Affected: All

Purpose of Report

- 1 One of the responsibilities of the Corporate Policy Committee is to have a co-ordinating role across all other committees and exercising a corporate view of outcomes, performance, budget monitoring and risk management. Reporting on the Strategic Risk Register supports effective risk management, is central to good governance and supports the efficient delivery of the council's corporate plan objectives.
- 2 This report provides an update on the activity of the council's Strategic Risk Register for Quarter 4 2023/24; January to March 2024. This report also includes the equivalent level risk registers for the Council's wholly owned companies; Orbitas, Tatton Park Enterprises and ANSA.

Executive Summary

- 3 This report provides the Corporate Policy Committee with an update on the activity of the Strategic Risk Register for Quarter 4 2023/24 with the Strategic Risk Register set out in detail in Appendix A, and the wholly owned company registers set out in Appendix B, C and D.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corporate Policy Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the position of the Council's Strategic Risk Register and those of the wholly owned companies for Quarter 4 2023/24, in respect of the content, description, scoring and risk management activity outlined.

Background

- 4 Risks included on the Strategic Risk Register are those which materially threaten the organisation's ability to achieve its strategic goals, in this case our corporate objectives in the Corporate Plan. This could be in the form of an individual threat to a specific objective, or the compound effect of a threat across several areas.
- 5 Items on the Strategic Risk Register are "owned" by members of the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and are reviewed on a quarterly basis. Co-ordination and administration of the Strategic Risk Register and the Risk Management Framework is undertaken by the Head of Audit and Risk Management.
- 6 The content of the Strategic Risk Register has been updated in preparing this assurance report for the Corporate Policy Committee. Members of the Corporate Leadership Team have assessed their risks as at the end of Quarter 4 2023/24. The newly established Risk and Assurance Board will be involved in the production of this report.
- 7 Revisions to the register are made on an on-going basis to ensure that the scope and detail of the individual risks, and the overall coverage of the register is reflective of the current threats to the organisation achieving its strategic objectives and maintaining business as usual service delivery. Where items are removed from the Strategic Risk Register, they continue to be considered at operational levels, and can be escalated back for inclusion based on the risk owner's judgement as at that time.
- 8 Full details of the Council's individual strategic risks are provided in Appendix A. The content of this covering report relations to the key changes in risks from Quarter 3 to Quarter 4.

Summary of Quarter 4 review

- 9 Drivers and causes of uncertainty, primarily the financial position of the organisation remain much the same as Quarter 3 with no change in the two highest rated risks from last quarter; the Dedicated School Grant Deficit and Failure to Achieve the MTFs. In addition, the risk relating to the Carbon Neutral project has been increased, also to the highest possible rating. All three of those risks, and many other in the register, directly relate to the resources/demand imbalance currently faced by the Council. The organisation continues to experience elevated levels of challenge and risk as a result of the current financial situation.
- 10 The risk relating to capital projects being managed by the Place directorate has seen an increase in the net score this quarter. The risk shows how the impact of inflation in construction projects.

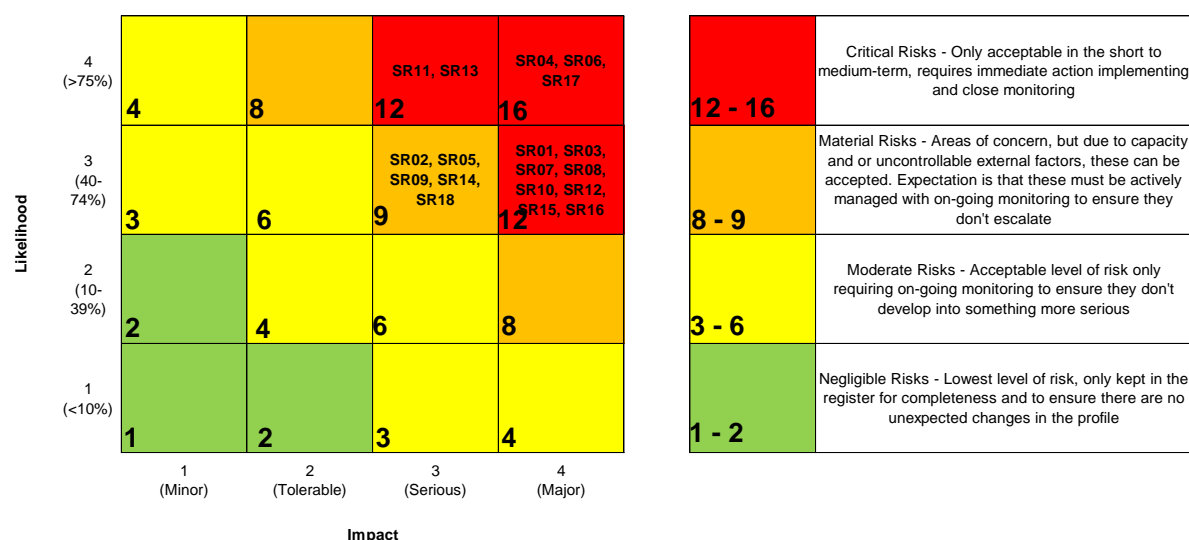
- 11 As set out in the Quarter 3 report, the JTAI improvement plan risk has been replaced with a broader, longer-term risk focusing on the protection of vulnerable children.
- 12 Table 1 shows the position of the Strategic Risk Register after the Quarter 4 assessments: with the gross, net and target score for each risk. The table is organised by highest to lowest net risk for Q4.
- 13 Table 2 shows the position of the Strategic Risk Register based on the Q4 assessments against the previous quarter.
- 14 The heat map below the tables (Chart 1) shows the concentration of critical and material rated risks. All risk now sit in the top, righthand quadrant.
- 15 As requested by Corporate Policy Committee the strategic risk registers of the Council's Wholly Owned Companies are included in Part 2 of this report. Full details are included in Appendix B, C and D.

Table 1 – Strategic Risk Register, highest net score to lowest

Ref	Risk	Q4 Gross	Q4 Net	Q4 Target
SR17	CEC Carbon Neutral Status	16	16	16
SR04	Dedicated School Grant Deficit	16	16	16
SR06	Failure to Achieve the MTFS	16	16	9
SR01	Increased Demand for Adult's Services	16	12	9
SR03	Complexity and Demand for Children's Services	16	12	12
SR07	Leadership Capacity	16	12	9
SR08	Ability to Achieve Organisation Change	16	12	8
SR10	Failure to Manage the Consequences of Policy Uncertainty and National Policy Frameworks	12	12	8
SR12	Stakeholder Expectation & Communication	16	12	9
SR13	Information Security and Cyber Threat	16	12	12
SR15	Capital Projects – Place	16	12	8
SR16	Failure of the Local Economy	16	12	12
SR02	Fragility and failure in the Social Care Market	16	9	9
SR05	Failure to Protect Vulnerable Children	16	9	6
SR09	Recruitment & Retention	16	9	9
SR11	Failure to Adhere to Agreed Governance Processes	16	9	6
SR14	Business Continuity	12	9	6
SR18	Local Planning Authority Modernisation Plan	12	9	6

Table 2 – Strategic Risks Direction of Travel

Ref	Risk	Q1 Net	Q2 Net	Q3 Net	Q4 Net	Direction of Travel (Q3-Q4)
SR01	Increased Demand for Adult's Services	12	12	12	12	↔
SR02	Fragility and failure in the Social Care Market	9	9	9	9	↔
SR03	Complexity and Demand for Children's Services	N/A	12	12	12	↔
SR04	Dedicated School Grant Deficit	N/A	16	16	16	↔
SR05	Failure to Protect Vulnerable Children	N/A	N/A	N/A	9	NEW
SR06	Failure to Achieve the MTFS	N/A	16	16	16	↔
SR07	Leadership Capacity	N/A	12	12	12	↔
SR08	Ability to Achieve Organisation Change	N/A	12	12	12	↔
SR09	Recruitment & Retention	N/A	9	9	9	↔
SR10	Failure to Manage the Consequences of Policy Uncertainty and National Policy Frameworks	12	12	12	12	↔
SR11	Failure to Adhere to Agreed Governance Processes	9	9	9	9	↔
SR12	Stakeholder Expectation & Communication	12	12	12	12	↔
SR13	Information Security and Cyber Threat	12	12	12	12	↔
SR14	Business Continuity	9	9	9	9	↔
SR15	Capital Projects - Place	8	8	8	12	↑
SR16	Failure of the Local Economy	12	12	12	12	↔
SR17	Climate Change (CEC Carbon Neutral Status)	9	9	12	16	↑
SR18	Local Planning Authority Modernisation Plan	9	9	9	9	↔

Chart 1 – Strategic Risks Heat Map**Risks Updates by Service Committee****Adults and Health Committee**

- 16 Increased Demand for Adults Services:** Increased efforts from our First Point of Contact teams has seen the number of referrals going on to full assessment remain static demonstrating our work towards 'prevent, reduce, delay' having a positive impact on demand. However, the referrals progressing to assessment continue to evidence higher complexity and need. The demand and complexity of young people moving from Childrens' services is resulting in increased pressure on the Preparing for Adulthood team and an increase in financial pressure on services. There is no change to the risk rating or description. The Quality, Performance and Authorisation Board meets three times a week and continues efforts to reduce spend where possible and safe to do so. Fee increases from providers continues to be the biggest pressure on the services.
- 17 Fragility and failure in the Social Care Market;** No change to the risk score or description at this time. As predicted in Q3 we are seeing an increase in the number of providers requesting uplifts as a result of the increase in the national living wage. However, it is too early to assess the impact on the market and whether packages of care will be handed back. Fees have been uplifted for packages of care on the Complex framework to £18.52 per hour and there has been a substantial uplift in the rate paid for waking nights, equivalent to £18.52 per hour. The Council has also purchased a fee analysis tool called "Care Cubed" which will provide greater insight into the true cost of delivering care to inform negotiations with individual care providers. This will start to be rolled out in Q1 2024/25.

Children and Families Committee

- 18 **Complexity and Demand for Children's Services;** No change to the net rating, it remains 12, a material risk, equal to the target score. Cheshire East Council received an Ofsted inspection of Children's Services during February and March 2024. We are currently developing a new improvement plan to respond to the findings from the inspection; Children and Families Committee received a report on the findings and improvement plans on 3 June 2024. The delivery and impact of this will be evaluated through an independently chaired monthly Improvement and Impact Board. Additional growth to address budget pressures within services has been agreed in the MTFs for 2024/25, including £10.8m to address placement costs for children.
- 19 We have implemented Family Hubs, bringing council, health and community services together – improving access and reach of services, supporting earlier intervention, and improving partnership working. Over the past 12 months the council has opened five family hubs across the borough, including a SEND Centre of Excellence, as well as a new digital offer so families can also access advice and information online.
- 20 **Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Deficit:** Cheshire East submitted detailed plans to the Government on 12 January 2024 as part of the department for education's (DfE) Safety Valve programme. The plans set out how the council proposed to reform services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and achieve a balanced and sustainable dedicated schools grant budget. The Safety Valve programme is in place to provide additional support, including financial support, to councils as they work to reform support and services for children with SEND, to improve sustainability and affordability.
- 21 In March 2024 Ministers advised that they are currently unable to enter into an agreement with Cheshire East as its Safety Valve submission included an ask which was significantly above the level which the Department could reasonably afford in comparison to other agreements. Ministers recognise that the DSG deficit as forecasted poses a substantial risk to Cheshire East and propose to work with us over the coming months, alongside colleagues from DLUHC, to seek an appropriate solution.
- 22 The DSG management plan is in place to monitor the impact of demand to SEND services on financial pressures and monitor the delivery and impact of mitigations that have been put in place. A revised DSG management plan for 2024/25 to 2030/31 was approved by the Children and Families Committee on 29 April 2024. The committee also received an update on the Safety Valve submission. With significant and

challenging mitigations, we are now forecasting an in year balanced position by year 7. Additional growth has been agreed in the MTFS budget for 2024/25, including £0.5m to support transformation for SEND, and £0.9m for school transport, reflecting increased demand and increasing costs of fuel and contracts.

- 23 **Failure to Protect Vulnerable Children;** This risk previously related to the JTAI improvement plan where a number of recommendations were made and required to protect children at risk of exploitation. As previously reported, all actions were met through the improvement plan which had DfE oversight throughout. The scope of the risk has transitioned to taking an ongoing view of how well the council is protecting its vulnerable children.
- 24 Contextual Safeguarding has remained a partnership priority throughout 2023/2024. There is audit activity underway and an impact report is being developed to understand the progress made against the exploitation strategy. Any recommendations will be actioned across the partnership.
- 25 As this update covers the period of January to March 2024, it is noted that the outcome of the ILACS Ofsted inspection was published in May. The gross, net and target scores have been set to reflect the new scope of the risk and the outcome of the above activity will be addressed in the Q1 24/25 update of the register.

Corporate Policy Committee

- 26 **Failure to achieve the MTFS;** No change to the risk ratings. At the time of writing, provisional outturn figures for 2023/24 show a slightly smaller overspend than was forecast in the Third Financial Review, overall, with a greater adverse variance in Adult Social Care spending being more than offset by favourable variances across other Services. The outturn position is being analysed, particularly to understand the effects of one-off 'windfall' events/ savings, as distinct from any further cost pressures (or reductions) which will continue to have an effect in the 2024/25 year, and so vary our forecasts going forward.
- 27 The smaller overspend, whilst helpful, provides little comfort, as all things being equal the prospects for the future remain very challenging. The Council has received notification from Government of the potential to utilise 'Exceptional Financial Support' – of up to £11.6m relating to 2023/24 items, and up to £6m in respect of 2024/25 – but as expected this is only in the form of capitalisation direction (which will cost us to deploy, in the form of premium interest rates).

- 28 The Transformation Programme noted as required in the MTFS is underway, with consultants being appointed recently; work has commenced and in the coming weeks they will help us develop a plan to shape our transformation and improvement journey. This plan must be submitted to DLUHC by 27 August as part of the criteria for final approval of Exceptional Financial Support. Our plan needs to present a version of Cheshire East Council that spends £100m less over the next four years.
- 29 **Leadership Capacity;** Director of Finance and Customer Services resigned from the organisation in January 2024 and left in May 2024. A recruitment exercise for an interim has been carried out successfully and an interim will be taking up post on 29 April 2024. The LGA has undertaken a “Decision Making Accountability” exercise to examine current senior management roles to help ensure a stable senior management structure is in place. This will provide recommendations for a revised organisational structure which is effective at making decisions, with clear accountabilities and roles, and that are efficient in their use of management resources. This will be actioned in the next quarter.
- 30 A series of development sessions for CLT and WLC has been developed, with the first of these sessions being held on 12th April. Additional sessions for CLT and WLC will continue through the next quarter. Recruitment to a number of key senior interim roles has also begun and includes the director of Policy and change and the Executive Director Corporate Services.
- 31 **Ability to Achieve Organisation Change;** No change to the risk rating or description at this time. Focus on the initial steps need to transform the council including:
 2. Confirmation of exceptional financial support, subject to a transformation plan being established
 3. Transformation Approach for the council approved by Corporate Policy Committee
 4. Established of 4 management boards including the transformation board which meets weekly
 5. Procurement, appointment and start on site of the council’s transformation partner
 6. Various engagement sessions with the wider leadership community of the council around the scale and pace of the required change
- 32 **Recruitment and Retention;** No change to the risk ratings at this time, the same market pressures exist, although work is now underway to secure a more stable senior management structure. A recruitment

process review has also been completed in this quarter and a number of further key actions identified. A new recruitment process checklist has been developed and will be available to support all hiring managers with the recruitment process. Additional improvements will also be introduced in the next quarter. A consultation exercise as part of the office rationalisation programme has been completed, and identified the number of staff that will be most affected by work base changes. Ongoing support to staff to ensure a smooth transition to the new workplace.

- 33 Workplace charters will be developed to support future ways of working. Pulse staff survey workshops have been put in place to explore the feedback from staff in the survey carried out in November 2023. Directorate specific action plans have been developed to address directorate specific issues. A review of agency staff across the council has been completed with a reduction in the number of agency staff from 234 in quarter 3 to 196 at the end of quarter 4. Ongoing monitoring of agency staff is now overseen by CEBERT to ensure a more permanent stable resource is in place.
- 34 **Failure to Manage the Consequences of Policy Uncertainty and National Policy Frameworks;** Details of the Oflog reporting are still to be confirmed and the risk's actions will be updated once the final details have been agreed. Preparations for the May elections have gone well, with no material issues to report. The additional voting reform administrative burden is being managed but is a new process and as such carries some additional risk. Productivity plan action updated, not an area of concern.
- 35 There is uncertainty around the future shape of devolution within England due to the upcoming general election and possible change of government. The election may also impact on progress of the transition plan, due to the pre-election period. However overall, no change to the risk in Q3 review.
- 36 **Failure to Adhere to Agreed Governance Processes;** The risk has not changed in score or description during Q4. The process of identifying internal control issues continues, however it is acknowledged that the time taken to resolve issues needs to be improved. Director of Finance and Customer Service (Section 151 Officer) left in May, the immediate risk mitigated by the appointment of the interim Chief Finance Officer, pending permanent recruitment. The introduction of the management Boards should help cross organisation working and reduce the risk of siloed decision making.
- 37 The LGA Corporate Peer Challenge took place at the end of March. Initial feedback has been provided, but formal reporting on this will take

place by the end of July and an action plan and a response will be prepared by the end of August. If needed, the impact of the Corporate Peer Challenge findings will be reflected in the next update to the strategic risk register.

- 38 **Stakeholder Expectation & Communication:** No change to the risk ratings at this time. Coverage and public/media interest in the council through Q4 included:

7. Budget setting and council tax
8. In-year financial position
9. Exceptional financial support
10. Poynton Pool planning application
11. New Chief Executive
12. Leisure Services review
13. Garden waste subscriptions
14. Parking review
15. Potholes and road maintenance
16. Planning enforcement
17. Active travel schemes
18. Springfield special school extension

- 39 Consultation activity has continued to feature as part of committee decisions and consultation reports are routinely referenced as part of the decision-making evidence. There are further opportunities to embed consultation practice into the decision-making process more consistently across the organisation and the varying decisions that committees determine. Work on this is progressing. This will help stakeholders to have greater clarity about how consultation can be, and is, used to inform decision-making.

- 40 The council undertook extensive consultation and engagement activity to support the annual budget setting process. Consultation responses were used to influence and inform councillors' decision making when approving the Budget.

- 41 **Information Security and Cyber Threat;** There continues to be significant threats from state sponsored activity, particularly in this election year on Government both central and Local and the support service such as NHS. Several organisations have already fell victim causing substantial loss of services and data. Therefore, there is no change to the risk rating at this time. Activity to manage this risk during the quarter has included:

- a) Identity Management – projects are continuing to ensure that identities are protected through increased monitoring and

controls. Access from locations outside of the UK are automatically blocked reducing the attack surface.

- b) Application Management – work is ongoing to ensure that MFA and SSO is applied to applications that are cloud hosted.
- c) Data Security – continued enhancement of the existing security controls to ensure that the latest threats are mitigated and protected. Work is continuing to strengthen the resilience capabilities of data storage and protection. Work has progressed to refresh the Cyber Incident Response Plan and associated workbooks to ensure that the Council is best equipped should an incident occur.
- d) Data Quality – Continuation of the MDM projects across several data fields to ensure that the councils' solutions have the correct data embedded with them, updated seamlessly across multiple systems. This is a key area to support any future drive to AI.
- e) Information Management – continuation of projects to deliver and improve the maturity of information both through its storage and use of information. This will enable both greater protection for that information but also enable efficiencies through accurate management information and improved compliance through controlled retention and ease and speed of access to critical information. This is a key area to support any future drive to AI.

- 42 **Business Continuity;** No material change to the risk, development activity for a SharePoint application has continued. Emergency Planning exercise planned for February based around a cyber security breach, the learnings from which will feed into the app development and inform further development of the organisation's business continuity approach.

Economy and Growth

- 43 **Capital Projects – Place;** Net score increased from 8 to 12. Middlewich Eastern Bypass has been delayed due to a delay in the decision from the Department for Transport (DfT), expressing concerns about value for money. More work is now required to evidence this and provide further value engineering; with the delay itself adding inflationary cost to the scheme. The value for money assessment is directly related to extreme construction inflation over the last two years.
- 44 The A500 Dualling scheme has been agreed to be rescoped following the cancellation of HS2 and the DfT have agreed to provide development funding to cover the cost of this.

- 45 **Failure of the Local Economy;** There is little change in the national economic position, the Office for National Statistics has reported marginal growth in GDP (0.1%) during February 2024 and has revised upwards growth levels in January 2024 to 0.3% from 0.2%. Locally, the cancellation of HS2 is still denting the confidence of businesses.

Environment and Communities Committee

- 46 **CEC's Carbon Neutral Status;** The corporate plan objective to be a carbon neutral council by 2025 was amended to 2027 by the February Full Council budget decision. Although this provided additional time and spread the capital spend, the business case still required significant progress this year to meet the 2027 target. The Council's capital review has paused the previously authorised key capital projects of procurement of the second solar farm, progressing our largest proposal for tree planting for the next planting season and continuing the next phase of Electric Vehicle transition. Without direction from the Capital Review to proceed, achievement of the new 2027 target of the program is at risk. Net and target scores both increased to the highest possible rating.
- 47 **Local Planning Authority Modernisation;** No change to overall risk ratings but some progress is being made on key areas, the ICT project remains the main concern. Further escalation has taken place with supplier and implementation of the planning system is now scheduled for July 2024 and Land Charges soon after. Concern also remains that all elements of the system may not be delivered along with escalating costs, hence legal intervention to seek appropriate compensation against original contract. Significant staff input from Service required for testing and training over Q1 2024/25.
- 48 A restructure timetable is now set with formal staff consultation to begin in April 2024. Completion of the structure (with the exception of new appointments to vacancies) should be complete by June 2024. The backlog of applications has reduced but stalled due to staff sickness and vacancies. Additional Capita support is in place on the back of Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities funding.
- 49 Validation checklists complete and awaiting adoption in May. Recommendations from the S106 audit are on track for completion by Q1 24/25. Other key customer improvements currently being reviewed to ensure customer expectations can be met given resource issues and competing demands from above priorities.

Highways and Transport Committee

- 50 The Highways and Transport Committee have no specific strategic risks at this time but this remains under on-going review.

Wholly Owned Company Risk Registers

- 51 See Appendix B, C and D (Part 2 item)

Emerging Issues

- 52 Whilst the Corporate Policy Committee will receive the Quarter 1 update at the 3rd of October 2024, meeting, there are emerging indications for that update.
- (a) The impact of the transformation project should begin to feed through into the strategic risks, by way of impact on scope, ratings and mitigating actions.
 - (b) The outcome of the iLACS Ofsted inspection will be addressed, most likely with the creation of a new risk focusing on successful delivery of an improvement plan, similar to the approach taken for JTAI.
 - (c) Clarification around the carbon neutral risk and its funding, and a more general indication upon if a sustainable MTFS is being delivered
 - (d) The impact of the General Election in terms of political direction and strategy upon local government.

Consultation and Engagement

- 53 Each risk included in on the Strategic Risk Register is “owned” by a member of the Council’s Corporate Leadership Team. At each quarter, the risk detail is updated through managers in their areas of responsibility, and the updated register is reviewed collectively by the Corporate Leadership Team.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 54 Risk management is central to facilitating good governance and the achievement of corporate objectives. As a publicly accountable body, the Council must demonstrate effective identification and management of the risks that threaten the achievement of its corporate objectives and the effectiveness of its operations.

Other Options Considered

- 55 No alternative options considered; this is an assurance update report to support the Committee in meeting its responsibilities under its Terms of Reference.

Implications and Comments

- 56 Monitoring Officer/Legal

There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report. This report provides assurance that the Council achieves its strategic aims and operates its business, under general principles of good governance, that it identifies risks which threaten its ability to be legally compliant and operates within the confines of the legislative framework.

- 57 Section 151 Officer/Finance

There is no direct impact upon the MTFS from the recommendations of this update report. Costs relating to implementing risk treatment plans are included within service budgets. The need to provide financial security against the impact of risks is considered on a case-by-case basis and either included within specific budgets within the MTFS or considered under the overall assessment of the required level of General Reserves as part of the Reserves Strategy. The risk to the Council of failing to achieve savings identified in the MTFS has been identified as an emerging risk.

- 58 Policy

Cheshire East Council has adopted the Risk Management Framework approved by Cabinet in June 2020. Risk management is integral to the overall management of the authority and, therefore, considerations regarding key policy implications and their effective implementation are considered within departmental risk registers and as part of the risk management framework.

An open and enabling organisation	A council which empowers and cares about people	A thriving and sustainable place
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- 59 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

There are no direct implications arising from the recommendations of this update report.

- 60 Human Resources

There are no direct implications arising from the recommendations of this update report.

61 Risk Management

This report relates to overall risk management and provides the Corporate Policy Committee with awareness of the most significant risks facing the Council, where strategic risks are emerging and assuring the Committee on how these are being managed.

62 Rural Communities

There are no direct implications arising from the recommendations of this update report.

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

There are no direct implications arising from the recommendations of this update report.

64 Public Health

There are no direct implications arising from the recommendations of this update report.

65 Climate Change

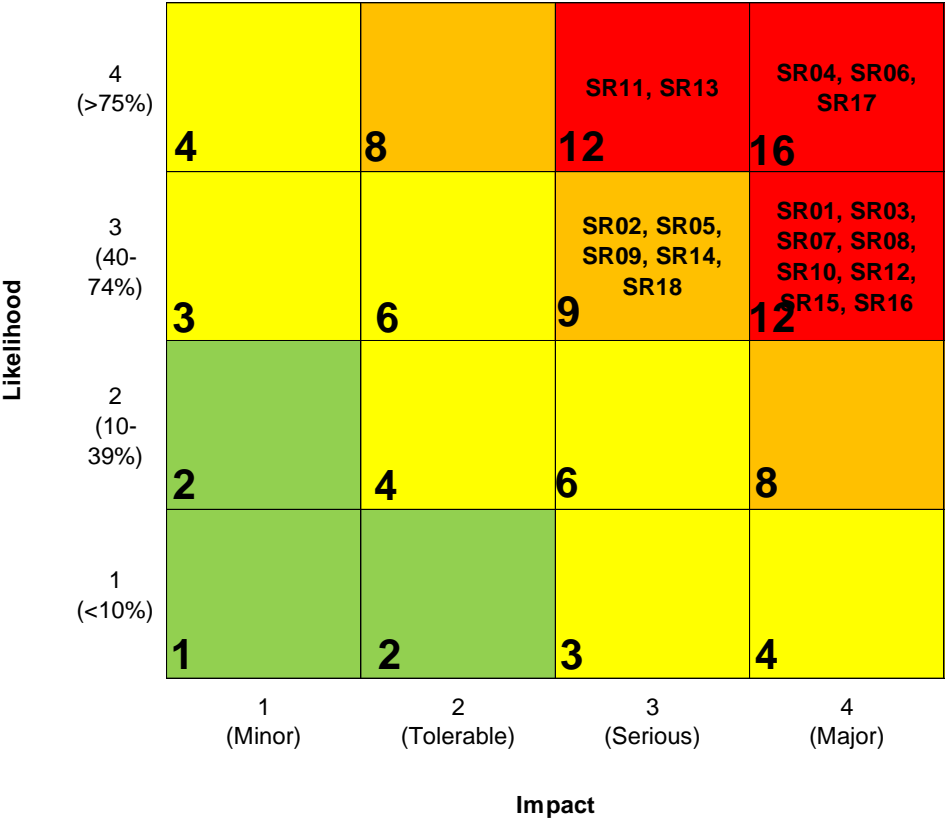
There are no direct implications arising from the recommendations of this update report.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Josie Griffiths, Head of Audit and Risk Management josie.griffiths@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	CPC Q4 Strategic Risk Assurance - Appendix A CPC Q4 ANSA Risk Assurance - Appendix B (PART 2) CPC Q4 Orbitas Risk Assurance - Appendix C (PART 2) CPC Q4 TPE Ltd Risk Assurance - Appendix D (PART 2)
Background Papers:	CPC Strategic Risk Register Q3 Report 21 March 2024

Strategic Risk Summary – Changes in Net Scores Q4 2023/24

Ref	Risk	Q3 Net	Q4 Net	Travel	Target
SR01	Increased Demand for Adult's Services	12	12	↔	9
SR02	Fragility and failure in the Social Care Market	9	9	↔	9
SR03	Complexity and Demand for Children's Services	12	12	↔	12
SR04	Dedicated School Grant Deficit	16	16	↔	16
SR05	Failure to Protect Vulnerable Children	-	9	NEW	6
SR06	Failure to Achieve the MTFs	16	16	↔	9
SR07	Leadership Capacity	12	12	↔	9
SR08	Ability to Achieve Organisation Change	12	12	↔	8
SR09	Recruitment & Retention	9	9	↔	9
SR10	Failure to Manage the Consequences of Policy Uncertainty and National Policy Frameworks	12	12	↔	8
SR11	Failure to Adhere to Agreed Governance Processes	9	9	↔	6
SR12	Stakeholder Expectation & Communication	12	12	↔	9
SR13	Information Security and Cyber Threat	12	12	↔	12
SR14	Business Continuity	9	9	↔	6
SR15	Capital Projects - Place	8	12	↑	8
SR16	Failure of the Local Economy	12	12	↔	12
SR17	CEC Carbon Neutral Status	12	16	↑	16
SR18	Local Planning Authority Modernisation Plan	9	9	↔	6

Strategic Risks Heat Map Q4 2023/24

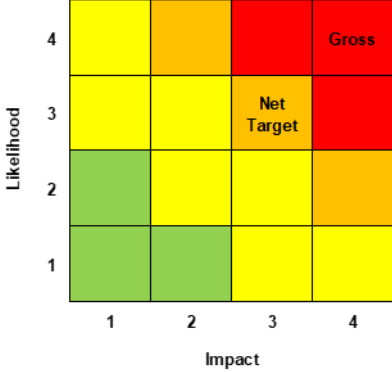


12 - 16	Critical Risks - Only acceptable in the short to medium-term, requires immediate action implementing and close monitoring
8 - 9	Material Risks - Areas of concern, but due to capacity and or uncontrollable external factors, these can be accepted. Expectation is that these must be actively managed with on-going monitoring to ensure they don't escalate
3 - 6	Moderate Risks - Acceptable level of risk only requiring on-going monitoring to ensure they don't develop into something more serious
1 - 2	Negligible Risks - Lowest level of risk, only kept in the register for completeness and to ensure there are no unexpected changes in the profile

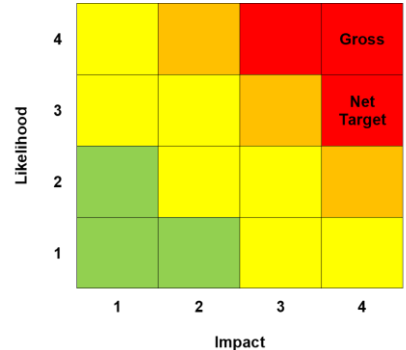
Individual Risk Details – Q4 2023/24

Risk Name: Increased Demand for Adult Services		Risk Owner: Executive Director of Adults, Health, and Integration
Risk Ref: SR01	Date updated: 9 th April 2024	Risk Manager: Director of Adult Social Care Operations
<p>Risk Description: An increase in demand for adult social services that cannot be met within the existing budget.</p> <p>There is currently a historically high demand for services from young adults right through to the elderly. This has been caused by an overall decrease in national adult health and wellbeing and other socio-economic factors. There has been an increase in responsibility and duties being transferred to LA i.e. RCRP.</p> <p>Detailed consequences; a failure in one area of social care, either internal or external to the council, has knock-on effects and increases pressure on other services. This can cause an on-going downwards trend in adult health and wellbeing. In addition, the council may fail in its duty of care and its objective of supporting its most vulnerable individuals. Specific failures that have been seen are a reduction in preventative measure and early intervention, which ultimately increase demand. Increased pressure on practitioners causes stress related issues and reduces the appeal of working in the sector.</p> <p>Detailed causes; due to the additional wellbeing pressures placed on residents, council staff, third-party providers and the NHS, the volume and complexity of demand for adult services has increased materially. As have political factors such as changes in legislation and resettlement agreements. Due to several different socio-economic factors recruitment and retention of staff is difficult resulting in increased use of agency staff. The increase in demand and complexity for services has not been recognised with increased established staffing, resulting in use of Agency Staff to fill the void.</p>		<p>Likelihood</p> <p>Impact</p>
Interdependencies (risks): Failure of Council Funding, Fragility in the social care market, Failure of the local economy, Organisational capacity and demand		Lead Service Committee: Adults and Health Committee
<p>Key Mitigating Controls (Existing):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of market engagement events, keeping providers / people informed of preventative change resulting from the People Live Well, for Longer Transformation Programme. • Contracts and Quality Monitoring Policy Framework, monitoring the user outcomes that partners are delivering. This helps to inform the managed decommissioning of services, in an effort to reduce service disruption. Maintaining a provider risk register with the Care Quality Commission to ensure market oversight. A standard set of fit for the future contracts, designed to ensure quality outcomes for users and ensure provider's business models remain sustainable as demand changes. • Monthly quality monitoring partnership forum that reports to relevant DMTs and the Safeguarding Board. Attendees include the Police, Safeguarding, Care Quality Commission, ASC operations, Legal, CCG's and ASC lead commissioner. • People Helping People programme, working collaboratively with partners and local volunteers to channel community-based support, reducing demand on adult social care. The sourcing/brokerage team support the co-ordination of these services, helping vulnerable people to access non-council support where appropriate. • Direct payment scheme, allowing users identify and manage their own care support. • The preventative policy framework standardises the approach to prevention across adult social care "front door. When appropriate, directing users to approved community solutions, which can provide non-traditional benefits to those individuals and help maintain their independence. 		

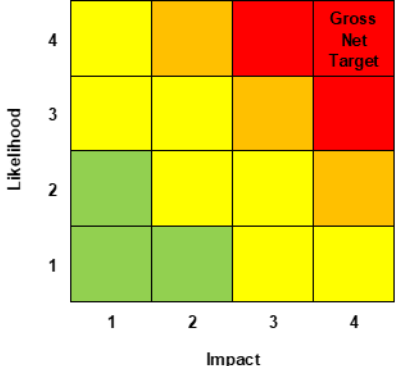
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual financial and resource planning by ASC services, considering expected demand, funding, the local social care market and other socio-economic trends. • Regular service/team meetings to disseminate information and discuss operational issues. • Involvement in the North West regional and local programme of work pertaining to health and care staff recruitment, retention, and selection – resulting in a robust career path being developed with key partners and in being clear pertaining to local strategy. • Collaborative working with other services, such Public Health, where objectives align and communication is required to delivery value for money. Utilisation of Public Health JSNA and wider regional data sets inform future planning. The joint commissioning management monthly working group seeks to ensure ASC is working effectively and efficiently with other Children and Family services. • Engagement with the Integrated Care Partnership, including health partners. • Regular ASC reporting to CLT and Adult and Health Committee on performance, expenditure/budget and demand. On-going management of services, based on performance, expenditure/budget and demand management information. Trend analysis used to help predict future demand. • Engagement with service users, collaboration with Healthwatch and other independent organisations to help drive service improvements and cost savings. • Business continuity assessments and resiliency preparation, both internally and with key partners. • Implementing recommendations of independent review. All care plans presented to Senior Leasers board for authorisation of spend. • Tighter controls on hospital discharge will impact relationship with ICB colleagues. • 3 times weekly Quality, Performance and Authorisation Board to review every request for care, since the start of this regime over 2000 cases have been reviewed to ensure that the package of care is effective and efficient. • Weekly Extended leadership meeting to review budget, spend and activity. 	
Actions (Monitoring):	Target Date for Completion:
Implementation of Impower Consulting review (Weekly CEBERT meetings)	Q4 2023/24
<p>Comments this quarter: Increased efforts from our First Point of Contact teams has seen the number of referrals going on to full assessment remain static demonstrating our work towards 'prevent, reduce, delay' having a positive impact on demand. However, the referrals progressing to assessment continue to evidence higher complexity and need. The demand and complexity of young people moving from children Services is resulting on increases pressure on the Preparing for Adulthood team and the increase in financial pressure on the services. There is no change to the risk rating or description. Continued efforts from the 3 times weekly Quality, Performance and Authorisation Board is attempting to reduce spend where possible. Fee increases from providers continues to be the biggest pressure on the services.</p>	
<p>Timescale for managing risk to an acceptable level: The outcomes from the work commissioned with Impower is being actioned via HLBC, we are monitoring all support and care plans and calls for services on a 3x per week basis, Director is monitoring approx 150 cases per week. Demand is constant especially for those who are 90+ yrs, and for those with dementia. Cost of individual care packages remains very high with an increasing number £2000 per week.</p>	

Risk Name: Fragility and Failure in the Social Care Market		Risk Owner: Executive Director of Adults, Health and Integration
Risk Ref: SR02	Date updated: 5 th April 2024	Risk Manager: Director of Commissioning
<p>Risk Description: A failure of the local social care market.</p> <p>Increases in the volume and complexity in demand and financial pressures have caused weaknesses in the national social care market which have yet to be resolved.</p> <p>Detailed consequences; the council is unable to deliver a robust adult social care package without the use of third-party providers, without these outsourced services the overall social adult care package would fail and the council would not be able to achieve its objective of people living well and for longer. If the Council is unable to increase fees for providers it will impact on the sustainability of some care providers and result in some packages of care being handed back to the Council or notices served on care home residents. This could lead to a need to increase the use of care providers who have not been through a formal tendering process which in some cases could result in higher costs and/or poorer quality. While due diligence is undertaken for these providers, some providers do not fully co-operate with this process. It will also bring challenges in managing budgets in 2024/25.</p> <p>Detailed causes: the major risk going forward is the financial impacts on providers resulting from the 9.8% uplift in National Living Wage from April 2024 and high rates of inflation. The current financial position of the local authority precludes it from uplifting care fees for all care contracts in 2024/25.</p>		
Interdependencies (risks): Failure to Achieve the MTFs, Business Continuity, Failure of the Local Economy		Lead Service Committee: Adults and Health Committee
<p>Key Mitigating Controls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contracts and Quality Monitoring Policy Framework, monitoring the user outcomes that partners are delivering. This helps to inform the managed decommissioning of services, in an effort to reduce service disruption. Maintaining a provider risk register with the Care Quality Commissioning to ensure market oversight. A standard set of fit for the future contracts, designed to ensure quality outcomes for users and ensure provider's business models remain sustainable as demand changes. Increasing the robustness of due diligence on care providers who have not been through a formal tendering process. Comprehensive cost of care exercise to be undertaken with all care providers to ensure that care packages are sustainable and available resources are distributed fairly. Delivery of market engagement events, keeping providers / people informed of preventative change resulting from the People Live Well, for Longer Transformation Programme. The preventative policy framework standardises the approach to prevention across adult social care "front door. When appropriate, directing users to approved community solutions, which can provide non-traditional benefits to those individuals and help maintain their independence. Annual financial and resource planning by ASC services, considering expected demand, funding, the local social care market, and other socio-economic trends. Development and publication of the Market Sustainability Plan. Completion and submission of the Cheshire East Market Availability and Capacity Plan to DHSC. Involvement in the North West regional and local programme of work pertaining to health and care staff recruitment, retention, and selection – resulting in a robust career path being developed with key partners and in being clear pertaining to local strategy. Update of the joint Market Position Statement with ICS to ensure that care providers receive timely information about commissioning intentions. Regular ASC reporting to CLT and Adult and Health Committee on performance, expenditure/budget and demand. On-going management of services, based on performance, expenditure/budget and demand management information. Trend analysis used to help predict future demand. 		

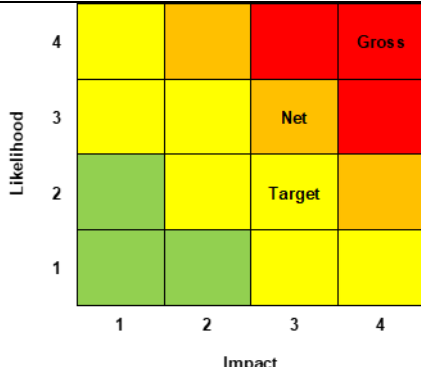
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement with service users, collaboration with Healthwatch and other independent organisations to help drive service improvements and cost savings. Business continuity assessments and resiliency preparation, both internally and with key partners. The Council is working with skills for care to see what support it can give to the market in terms of recruitment and retention and build knowledge. Providers have access to recruiting staff from abroad if there isn't a sufficient supply available locally. Development of a Workforce Strategy for the external care workforce. Investigation and investment into new health and care technologies. Use of new technologies to be driven by considering performance, capacity, and value for more against more traditional methods. A Joint CEC/ICB Market Oversight Group meets daily to ensure that the Council is obtaining best value for care home placements and making best use of block booked care home beds. A Transfer of Care Hub has been set up in both hospitals with key staff from CEC and Hospital Trusts co-located to improve joint working and ease pressures on hospital discharge. Commissioners undertake Market Engagement activities with Care at home Providers to Coproduce new models of care. Joint working with 'Skills for Care' to encourage individuals to take up employment within the care sector. 'Hidden Carer's' initiative launched through Carer's Hub to help identify and support carers not known to the system. Low level support for the British Red Cross who respond to crisis situations in the community. A tool called Care Cubed has been commissioned to assess the actual cost of delivering care for individual care providers and benchmark against market prices. 	
Actions (Monitoring):	Target Date for Completion:
Develop engagement with community groups and 3rd sector (VCFSE Project Group, monthly and Commissioning SMT, weekly)	December 2023
Commissioning of Care Cubes (Monthly DMT)	March 2024
Comments this quarter: No change to the risk at this time. As predicted in Q3 we are seeing an increase in the number of providers requesting uplifts as a result of the increase in National Living Wage. However, it is too early to assess the impact on the market and whether packages of care will be handed back. Fees have been uplifted for packages of care on the Complex framework to £18.52 per hour and there has been a substantial uplift in the rate paid for waking nights equivalent to £18.52 per hour. The Council has also purchased a fee analysis tool called Care Cubed which will provide greater insight into the true cost of delivering care to inform negotiations with individual care providers. This will start to be rolled out in Q1 2024/25.	
Timescale for managing risk to an acceptable level: N/A (Net score is equal to target). To a certain extent the risk is outside the Council's control as there is a reduced pool of people who wish to work in Social Care.	

Risk Name: Complexity and Demand for Children's Services		Risk Owner: Executive Director of Children's Services
Risk Ref: SR03	Date updated: 16 th April 2024	Risk Manager: Children's Services Directorate Leadership Team
<p>Risk Description: That Cheshire East's local social, economic and demographic factors, including the impact of the pandemic, lead to an increase in the level and/or complexity of need and demand for children's services, which the council cannot meet effectively. This risk would mean that we would not achieve the council's desired outcomes for children and young people as set out in the council's Corporate Plan.</p> <p>The service received growth through the MTFS to help address the pressures but the challenge to deliver to budget and achieve the required savings remains present. Significant action is still required to deliver savings to live within the budget as all indications are that demand, complexity and cost will continue to increase.</p>		
Interdependencies (risks): Increased Demand for Adult Services, Insufficient and Non-Compliance with Financial Processes, Organisation Capacity and Demand, Failure to Achieve the MTFS, Failure of the Local Economy		Lead Service Committee: Children and Families Committee
<p>Key Mitigating Controls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The service has received growth through the MTFS in 2023/24 to help address the pressures. This includes growth for children's social care in response to the demand. Additional growth to address budget pressures within services has been agreed in the MTFS for 2024/25, including £10.8m to address placement costs for children. Extensive activity is taking place to manage and reduce costs. A fundamental review and realignment exercise for children's services will be carried out to future-proof services to deliver differently for less as part of our integrated children's services 4-year strategy. We are closely monitoring the demand to services and the reasons that are driving demand so that we can be responsive and mitigate any risks to service delivery. Performance is monitored by services. We have a range of support available to families through early help and prevention services, including council, partner, voluntary, community, faith sector and commissioned services. These services support families and help prevent needs from escalating and requiring higher level intervention. Our approach is to ensure only the right children come into care; this is right for children and young people and will also reduce demand to Children's Social Care services, however this is a challenging landscape. Increased demand for placements has increased costs. We will continue to look to identify options for children to live within their family networks where this is the best outcome for them. We have been successful in gaining DfE funding for innovation and supporting family networks which will increase opportunities for children to remain living in their families. We are continuing to support children and young people who are most vulnerable through the Household Support Fund and the Holiday Activity Fund. Vouchers worth £4m were distributed on behalf of the Department of Work and Pensions over 2023/24 to support the most vulnerable households across the county with food, utilities, housing costs, and other essentials. A workforce strategy has been developed for children's social care to support recruitment and retention as we know the quality and stability of our workforce is critical in offering strong support and enduring relationships to children and their families. We have implemented Family Hubs, bringing council, health and community services together – improving access and reach of services, supporting earlier intervention, and improving partnership working. Over the past 12 months the council has opened five family hubs across the borough, including a SEND Centre of Excellence, as well as a new digital offer so families can also access advice and information online. 		

Actions (Monitoring):	Target Date for Completion:
A fundamental review and realignment exercise for children's services will be carried out to future-proof services to deliver differently for less as part of our integrated children's services 4-year strategy (Progress will be monitored through the MTFS arrangements)	March 2027
Expanding our in-house residential provision to offer more local and cost-effective homes for children and young people (Children's social care senior leadership team to monitor progress)	June 2024
Develop and deliver a new improvement plan to respond to the Ofsted ILACS inspection findings (Progress on the improvement plan will be monitored on a monthly basis by the independently chaired Improvement and Impact Board)	June 2024
Develop a Corporate Parents Working Group to drive improved outcomes	May 2024
<p>Comments this quarter: No change to the net rating, it remains 12, a material risk, equal to the target score.</p> <p>Cheshire East Council received an Ofsted inspection of Children's Services during February and March 2024. We are currently developing a new improvement plan to respond to the findings from the inspection. The delivery and impact of this will be evaluated through an independently chaired monthly Improvement and Impact Board.</p> <p>Additional growth to address budget pressures within services has been agreed in the MTFS for 2024/25, including £10.8m to address placement costs for children.</p> <p>We have implemented Family Hubs, bringing council, health and community services together – improving access and reach of services, supporting earlier intervention, and improving partnership working. Over the past 12 months the council has opened five family hubs across the borough, including a SEND Centre of Excellence, as well as a new digital offer so families can also access advice and information online.</p> <p>Timescale for managing risk to an acceptable level: March 2026. The integrated children's services strategy is a 4-year plan. We aim to see an incremental reduction in the risk as we implement our strategy with aim to be at a low level of risk by 2026.</p>	

Risk Name: Dedicated School Grant Deficit		Risk Owner: Executive Director of Children's Services
Risk Ref: SR04	Date updated: 29 th April 2024	Risk Manager: Children's Services Directorate Leadership Team
<p>Risk Description: That the deficit held in the dedicated schools grant (DSG) continues to rise and/or is not recoverable.</p> <p>The DSG reserve deficit is forecast to be £89.6m based on a grant of £56.1m at the end of 2023/24. The final outturn position for 2023/2024 is currently being finalised as part of the closure of accounts for 2023/24. The mitigated cumulative forecast reserve deficit identified through the Safety Valve programme is £285m. This is in part as a result of the growth in the number of pupils with an education, health and care plan greatly exceeding the funding and insufficient local placement options. This is a national issue and local authorities are required to hold a negative reserve for this purpose which is in place until March 2026. This position is unaffordable and unsustainable. The arrangements beyond March 2026 are not confirmed by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). This risk continues to be a feature of ongoing liaison with the Department for Education and the DLUHC.</p> <p>Without significant changes to funding the DSG reserve deficit is not recoverable. Significant action is required to deliver savings to live within the budget as all indications are that demand, complexity and cost will continue to increase.</p>		
Interdependencies (risks): Increased Demand for Adult Services, Insufficient and Non-Compliance with Financial Processes, Organisation Capacity and Demand, Failure to Achieve the MTFS, Failure of the Local Economy		Lead Service Committee: Children and Families Committee
<p>Key Mitigating Controls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 7 September 2023, we accepted an invitation from the Department for Education to start negotiations to join their Safety Valve programme, which would provide more help from the government to balance our budget. The aim of the Safety Valve programme is to agree a package of reform to improve the performance of local authorities' high needs systems and ensure this is delivered in a sustainable way, for the benefit of children and young people, whilst bringing DSG deficits under control. We submitted detailed plans to the government in January 2024. In March 2024 Ministers advised that they are currently unable to enter into an agreement with Cheshire East as Cheshire East's Safety Valve submission included an ask of the Department which is significantly above the level which the Department could reasonably afford in comparison to other agreements. Ministers recognise that the DSG deficit as forecasted poses a substantial risk to Cheshire East, and propose to work with us over the coming months, alongside colleagues from DLUHC, to seek an appropriate solution. The DSG management plan is in place to monitor the impact of demand to SEND services on financial pressures and monitor the delivery and impact of mitigations that have been put in place. A revised DSG management plan for 2024/25 to 2030/31 was approved by the Children and Families Committee on 29 April 2024. The committee also received an update on the Safety Valve submission. The council has updated the SEN sufficiency statement for 2023/24 to 2025/26, and the SEND strategy, which were received and agreed alongside the DSG management plan for 2023/24 to 2027/28 by the Children and Families Committee in September 2023. The SEN sufficiency statement sets out the additional provision needed over the next three years. The SEND strategy has been refreshed to include priority actions relating to the mitigations with the revisited DSG management plan 2024-2031. The service has received growth through the MTFS in 2023/24 to help address the pressures. This includes growth for school transport, Educational Psychology and SEND services in response to the demand in these areas. Additional growth has been agreed in the MTFS budget for 2024/25, including £0.5m to support transformation for SEND, and £0.9m for school transport, reflecting increased demand and increasing costs of fuel and contracts. There is significant capital investment in local SEND provision to meets children's needs more locally but also reduce dependency on high-cost independent school placements. We are embedding a graduated approach and inclusion across all schools and settings and strengthening SEN support. 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We participated in the DfE's delivering better value (DBV) programme to support the council to achieve a more sustainable financial position in relation to SEND. This identified two priority areas of cultural change that will make the biggest difference on managing demand – inclusive practice and transition. Cheshire East has been awarded £1 million to support the delivery of this transformational change. These areas have been incorporated within our SEND Strategy. A fundamental review and realignment exercise for children's services will be carried out to future-proof services to deliver differently for less as part of our integrated children's services 4-year strategy. We have a range of support available to families through early help and prevention services, including council, partner, voluntary, community, faith sector and commissioned services. These services support families and help prevent needs from escalating and requiring higher level intervention. 	
Actions (Monitoring):	Target Date for Completion:
A fundamental review and realignment exercise for children's services will be carried out to future-proof services to deliver differently for less as part of our integrated children's services 4-year strategy. (Progress will be monitored through the MTFS arrangements)	March 2027
Delivery of the delivering better value implementation plan (Children's services senior leadership team)	March 2025
Continue to increase SEND provision in Cheshire East (Reviewed quarterly)	September 2024
Embed the graduated approach and inclusion across all schools and settings and strengthen SEN support (Reviewed quarterly)	September 2025
Implement the Safety Valve plan (Quarterly by the DfE if accepted onto the programme. If not accepted the plan will be monitored internally through a CEX lead board with member involvement).	March 2031
<p>Comments this quarter: Cheshire East submitted detailed plans to the Government on 12 January 2024 as part of the department for education's (DfE) Safety Valve programme. The plans set out how the council proposed to reform services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and achieve a balanced and sustainable dedicated schools grant budget. The Safety Valve programme is in place to provide additional support, including financial support, to councils as they work to reform support and services for children with SEND, to improve sustainability and affordability.</p> <p>In March 2024 Ministers advised that they are currently unable to enter into an agreement with Cheshire East as Cheshire East's Safety Valve submission included an ask of the Department which is significantly above the level which the Department could reasonably afford in comparison to other agreements. Ministers recognise that the DSG deficit as forecasted poses a substantial risk to Cheshire East, and propose to work with us over the coming months, alongside colleagues from DLUHC, to seek an appropriate solution.</p> <p>The DSG management plan is in place to monitor the impact of demand to SEND services on financial pressures and monitor the delivery and impact of mitigations that have been put in place. A revised DSG management plan for 2024/25 to 2030/31 was approved by the Children and Families Committee on 29 April 2024. The committee also received an update on the Safety Valve submission. With significant and challenging mitigations we are now forecasting an in year balanced position by year 7. Additional growth has been agreed in the MTFS budget for 2024/25, including £0.5m to support transformation for SEND, and £0.9m for school transport, reflecting increased demand and increasing costs of fuel and contracts.</p> <p>Timescale for managing risk to an acceptable level: March 2025. We aim to see an incremental reduction in the risk as we implement our plan. By the end of March 2025, we aim for the risk to be reduced to a score of 12, then to see this continue to reduce over the following years with aim to be at an acceptable level of risk by 2026.</p>	

Risk Name: Failure to protect vulnerable children		Risk Owner: Executive Director of Children's Services	
Risk Ref: SR05	Date updated: 8 th May 2024	Risk Manager: Quality and Impact Board	
Risk Description: The risk, that as a part of the local safeguarding children's partnership, Cheshire East Council's children's services are unable to fulfil their responsibilities relating to the protection of vulnerable children at risk of criminal exploitation and child sexual abuse. To do this Cheshire East seeks to be an effective and collaborative partner in the partnership. Ofsted are responsible for conducting inspections into the quality of children's social care provided by Cheshire East and as the local authority responsible Cheshire East is continually looking to meet those expectations in an ever-changing and challenging environment.			
Interdependencies (risks): Increased Demand for Adult Services, Complexity and Demand for Children's Services		Lead Service Committee: Children and Families Committee	
Key Mitigating Controls: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Quarterly Quality and Impact board has oversight of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements. There are 3 Statutory Partners; Health, Local Authority and Police. The Statutory Partners form the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership. Working Together 2023 outlines the responsibility of the Statutory Partners to involve other agencies.• An Executive Board is in place which consists of the Chief Executive of the council, Chief Constable and Chief Nurse, which scrutinises partnership progress against the improvement plan.• Ofsted regularly inspect the Local Authority and the partnership arrangements.• The partnership ensures awareness within all agencies by providing regular training focused on exploitation. The training facilitates communication, increased knowledge and understanding and working together.• We have an Exploitation Strategy, practice guidance, and training for frontline practitioners. This all ensures there is a clear partnership approach to supporting children and young people at risk of exploitation.• There is a shared understanding of the children and young people who are at risk of exploitation across the partnership.• There are regular multi agency audit of practice are completed for children at risk of exploitation to evaluate the impact of changes on quality of practice.• Committee will have oversight through the annual report and any inspection reports.• Quarterly reports are developed through the Learning and Improvement sub group and the CS/SOC Strategic group to provide the direct line of sight from practitioners to Executive members.• Voice of the child case study is presented at every Executive Board. This demonstrates the impact that services and intervention are making for the child.			
Actions (Monitoring):		Target Date for Completion	
CS SOC Impact report to be presented to the Quality and Impact board (Quality and Impact Board)		June 2024	
Consider the outcome of ILACS inspection (Quality and Impact Board)		June 2024	

Comments this quarter: This risk previously related to the JTAI improvement plan where a number of recommendations were made and required to protect children at risk of exploitation. As previously reported, all actions were met through the improvement plan which had DfE oversight throughout. The scope of the risk has transitioned to taking an ongoing view of how well the council is protecting its vulnerable children.

Contextual Safeguarding has remained a partnership priority throughout 2023/2024. There is audit activity underway and an impact report is being developed to understand the progress made against the exploitation strategy. Any recommendations will be actioned across the partnership.

As this update covers the period of January to March 2024, it is noted that the outcome of the ILACS Ofsted inspection is expected in May. The gross, net and target scores have been set to reflect the new scope of the risk and as the outcome of the above actions are awaited.

Timescale for managing risk to an acceptable level: TBC in the Q1 update.

Risk Name: Failure to Achieve the MTFS		Risk Owner: Director of Finance and Customer Services (s151 Officer)																																		
Risk Ref: SR06	Date updated: 10 th May 2024	Risk Manager: Head of Finance																																		
Risk Description: Failure to achieve approved changes and manage net spending within the MTFS agreed by Council within the expected timescales will undermine the Council's ability to manage its budget effectively in the current and future years. Potential impacts: Failure to achieve the agreed annual budget will reduce the Councils reserves and may endanger its medium-term financial stability, ultimately leading to reduction in the services it can provide to its residents, due to having to issue a Section 114 Notice. Poor management of specific grant funding can also result in the Council having to repay those monies. Drivers of likelihood: Key drivers of this risk are a lack of effective strategic and/ or operational management, and a lack of ability and/ or authority to implement change, along with global and national events adversely affecting levels of inflation and prices.		<table><tr><td rowspan="4">Likelihood</td><td>4</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>Gross Net</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td></td><td></td><td>Target</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td colspan="4">Impact</td></tr></table>		Likelihood	4				Gross Net	3			Target		2					1							1	2	3	4			Impact			
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Interdependencies (risks): all		Lead Service Committee: Corporate Policy Committee																																		
Key Mitigating Controls: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Financial planning arrangements include preparation by the Finance Team, in liaison with senior operational managers, of detailed financial forecasts, based on the best available information and including prudent assumptions based on professional judgement and external advice.Use of quality financial systems, with appropriate training and subsequent audit of their effectiveness to provide management and control of the Council's financesBalanced budget to put into effect the Council's service plans for the forthcoming year, matched by available funding and including a risk assessment of the adequacy of general reservesMTFS sets out how the Council will deliver the Council's Corporate PlanUse of a standard report format and report clearance process which ensures provision of relevant information on financial impact and risk exposure to the decision makers.Clear and effective communication of changes or updates to Finance and Contract Procedure Rules with the ConstitutionSources of specialist advice and guidanceBudget monitoring, comparing actual performance against approved budget, is undertaken throughout the financial year and presented to service committees, in the form of forward-looking forecast outturn reportsOutturn reporting and audit of statements supports in-year monitoring and future year planningRisk-based approach to the use of reserves, identifying appropriate reserve levels and ensuring that reserves are not depleted without first identifying a strategy to restore them to risk-assessed levels during the MTFS period.Where a residual deficit is forecast in a financial year, a number of actions will be explored including:-<ul style="list-style-type: none">use of any service or non-specific underspend to offset pressures elsewhere within the budgetaccessing external funding, ensuring compliance with any funding conditionsuse of reservesuse of general balancesTreasury Management Strategy to manage the Council's cash flows, including an investment strategy focused on the security of principal sums and a borrowing strategy to manage interest payable and other charges																																				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Capital Strategy that prioritises capital investment programmes, identifies the financial impact of investment in schemes and limits the amount of unsupported borrowing to be taken • Engagement with government departments related to financial models and consultation • Education and training for officers and Members, including financial management in local government, the CIPFA FM Code, and Finance and Contract Procedure rules • Reporting of status and action plan on CIPFA FM Code • Budget management regime implemented early in 2023/24 to track activities relating to delivery of approved budget changes • Spending management regime implemented in October 2023, to control and reduce spending on staffing and supplies and services; review fees and charges to customers; and approaches to charging costs to capital projects and using capital receipts 	
Actions (Monitoring):	Target Date for Completion:
Ongoing reporting of spending management effectiveness and latest forecasts to CEBERT (Weekly reporting and review by CEBERT/ CLT)	March 2024
Directly or via professional or political networks, liaise with Government departments on the severity of the many financial issues (Reporting to CLT, and to Members in the MTFS update)	February 2024
Preparation and approval of the 2024/25 annual budget (Quarterly Financial Reviews)	February 2024
<p>Comments this quarter: No change to the risk ratings. At the time of writing, provisional outturn figures for 2023/24 show a slightly smaller overspend than was forecast in the Third Financial Review, overall, with a greater adverse variance in Adult Social Care spending being more than offset by favourable variances across other Services. The outturn position is being analysed, particularly to understand the effects of one-off 'windfall' events/ savings, as distinct from any further cost pressures (or reductions) which will continue to have an effect in the 2024/25 year, and so vary our forecasts going forward.</p> <p>The smaller overspend, whilst helpful, provides little comfort, as all things being equal the prospects for the future remain very challenging. The Council has received notification from Government of the potential to utilise 'Exceptional Financial Support' – of up to £11.6m relating to 2023/24 items, and up to £6m in respect of 2024/25 – but as expected this is only in the form of capitalisation direction (which will cost us to deploy, in the form of premium interest rates).</p> <p>The Transformation Programme noted as required in the MTFS is underway, with consultants being appointed recently; work has commenced and in the coming weeks they will help us develop a plan to shape our transformation and improvement journey. This plan must be submitted to DLUHC by 27 August as part of the criteria for final approval of Exceptional Financial Support.</p> <p>Our plan needs to present a version of Cheshire East Council that spends £100m less over the next four years.</p>	
Timescale for managing risk to an acceptable level: March 2024	

Risk Name: Leadership Capacity		Risk Owner: Chief Executive																																		
Risk Ref: SR07	Date updated: 24 th April 2024	Risk Manager: Head of HR																																		
<p>Risk Description: There are a number of vacancies and temporary acting up arrangements in place across CEC’s leadership team are not functioning. These limit its capacity and prevents the team from operating as effectively as possible. Without the right capacity across the leadership team, the organisation is unable to flex and be respond to its challenges.</p> <p>Potential impacts: The impact may be a failure to achieve priorities, which is ever more critical in light of current financial challenges as well as the Council’s requirement to deliver a large-scale transformation programme. It could also be the case that priorities are delivered at higher cost than could otherwise be achieved. Without maintaining value for money throughout the organisation, overall amount of effectiveness is reduced.</p> <p>Drivers of likelihood: Reputational risk from Section 114 notice and impact on recruitment and retention. Failure to recruit and retain individuals for senior management positions. Failure to complete DMA exercise and implement a revised structure, Failure implement management development for the leadership team. Failure to communicate and motivate the wider workforce.</p>		<table><tr><td rowspan="4">Likelihood</td><td>4</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>Gross</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td></td><td></td><td>Target</td><td>Net</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td colspan="4">Impact</td></tr></table>		Likelihood	4				Gross	3			Target	Net	2					1							1	2	3	4			Impact			
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Interdependencies (risks): All other strategic and operational risks.		Lead Service Committee: Corporate Policy Committee																																		
<p>Key Mitigating Controls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Council Constitution and decision-making structure, including the Committee system and defined terms of reference.• Corporate Plan and Annual Service Business Plans.• Support from Governance functions.• Leadership team recruitment processes, including skills and experience requirements.• Leadership team performance management processes.• Organisation structure and internal reporting.• Workforce Strategy																																				
Actions (Monitoring):		Target Date for Completion:																																		
Undertake Decision Making Accountability (DMA) exercise from Heads of Service level to develop a revised organisational structure and implement new structure (Introduction of new populated structure)		TBC																																		
Leadership development programme for CLT and WLC (Evaluation of programme once completed and sessions delivered)		30/06/2024																																		
Interim arrangements for key posts (Interim recruitment exercise to a number of key posts)		31/05/2024																																		
<p>Comments this quarter: Director of Finance and Customer Services resigned from the organisation in January 2024 and will leave in May 2024. A recruitment exercise for an interim has been carried out successfully and an interim will take up post on 29 April 2024. The LGA has undertaken a DMA exercise to examine current senior management roles to help ensure a stable senior management structure is in place. This will provide recommendations for a revised organisational structure which is effective at making decisions, with clear accountabilities and roles, and that are efficient in their use of management resources. This will be actioned in the next quarter.</p> <p>A series of development sessions for CLT and WLC has been developed, with the first of these sessions being held on 12th April. Additional sessions for CLT and WLC will continue through the next quarter. Recruitment to a number of key senior interim roles has also begun and includes the director of Policy and change and the Executive Director Corporate Services.</p>																																				
Timescale for managing risk to an acceptable level: June 2024																																				

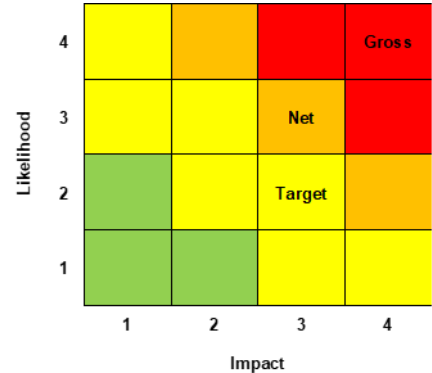
Risk Name: Ability to Achieve Organisation Change		Risk Owner: Chief Executive
Risk Ref: SR08	Date updated: 8 th May 2024	Risk Manager: Director of Transformation
<p>Risk Description: The risk that the council is unable to achieve organisational change due to a lack of resources and capacity to focus on transformation as people focus on the delivery of business as usual. Recently received advice from government commissioners advised that organisational change capacity is a key ingredient to support the council in delivering transformation to achieve medium to long term change that will support achievement of savings and also, in the event of a section 114 notice being issued, organisational change capacity is also essential to deliver necessary actions arising from interventions.</p> <p>Potential impacts: The council is required to deliver transformation activity at pace in order to balance the budget and avoid section 114. If a section 114 notice is issued and commissioners intervene, the council bears their costs. These costs are estimated at up to £200K per commissioner and there are usually 2-6 commissioners, for a period of up to 5 years. Therefore it is more prudent to ensure that there is capacity for organisational transformation to avoid more significant costs and reputational damage.</p> <p>Drivers of likelihood: A focus on delivery of frontline and statutory services and a de-prioritisation of corporate, enabling functions. A lack of clear governance and oversight of delivery of transformation. No clearly identified medium- and long-term transformation programme. Failure to recruit and retain individuals for senior management positions. Failure to identify and implement required change initiatives effectively and in a timely fashion. Failure to oversee efficient and effective operations, including dealing with poor performing individuals and to communicate and motivate the wider workforce.</p>		
<p>Interdependencies (risks): Recruitment and Retention, Failure to Achieve the MTFS</p>		
<p>Key Mitigating Controls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A “doing things differently” initial list of change proposals has been collated and is being discussed with members.• A weekly CEBERT meeting is in place with Senior Level Membership to review the activities required to meet budget savings targets.• A Bright Ideas scheme is in operation to enable the workforce to contribute their ideas for transformation.• A new Corporate Plan has been consulted on to clarify the vision and priorities for Cheshire East.• Appointment of a Delivery Partner to provide additional capacity and to produce the council transformation plan.• Formation and weekly meetings of the transformation board• Establishment of a core project team to support the next phase of transformation.		<p>Lead Service Committee: Corporate Policy Committee</p>
<p>Actions (Monitoring):</p> <p>Strategic CLT discussion planned on structure necessary to achieve transformation.</p> <p>Planned to replace Director of Policy and Change, with a Transformation Director, initially on secondment basis</p> <p>Medium to Long Term Transformation Plan to be developed.</p>		<p>Target Date for Completion:</p> <p>September 2024</p> <p>May 2024</p> <p>August 2024</p>
<p>Comments this quarter: No change to the risk rating at this time. Focus on the initial steps need to transform the council including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Confirmation of exceptional financial support, subject to a transformation plan being established.• Transformation Approach for the council approved by Corporate Policy Committee• Established of 4 management boards including the transformation boards which meets weekly.• Procurement, appointment and start on site of the council's transformation partner.• Various engagement sessions with the wider leadership community of the council around the scale and pace of the required change.		
<p>Timescale for managing risk to an acceptable level: August 2024</p>		

Risk Name: Recruitment and Retention		Risk Owner: Director of Finance & Customer Services																																		
Risk Ref: SR09	Date updated: 24 th April 2024	Risk Manager: Head of HR																																		
<p>Risk Description: Recruitment and retention of skilled and motivated staff is required to allow the organisation to deliver its Corporate Plan and its transformation programme. Achievement of the plan and programme requires operational changes which allow the council to adapt and improve.</p> <p>Impact of the risk occurring: High staff turnover and, or skills shortages, insufficient capacity within services. Failure to achieve annual budget and deliver the council's transformation programme and a detrimental impact upon the physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing of staff.</p> <p>Drivers of failure: National and local demographics alongside external factors led to increasing and changing demands on services. Increases to the cost of living also present risks to the resilience and wellbeing of our workforce and therefore the capacity to respond to demand. Outcome of Ofsted inspections as well as current financial challenges.</p>		<table><tr><td rowspan="4">Likelihood</td><td>4</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>Gross</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td></td><td></td><td>Net Target</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td colspan="4">Impact</td></tr></table>		Likelihood	4				Gross	3			Net Target		2					1							1	2	3	4			Impact			
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Interdependencies (risks): Business Continuity, Increased demand for Adults Services, Complexity and Demand for Children's Services		Lead Service Committee: Corporate Policy Committee																																		
<p>Key Mitigating Controls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workforce planning is in place via the Council's Workforce Strategy. This is a 4-year strategy with on-going review. Service Workforce Plans are also undertaken on a bi-annual basis to review and support workforce planning on a service-by-service level.• Benchmarking exercises and workforce metrics are used to identify potential issues and service workforce plans developed as above to mitigate. Work on the refinement of a workforce assessment for the Council has been completed and a monthly workforce dashboard available to identify potential issues. Focused apprenticeship levy funding, specific succession planning and talent management initiatives are used to support high priority areas. This is supported by the introduction of a manager dashboard on Learning Lounge that will help the identification of training and skills gaps.• HR Dashboards are provided to managers which offer up to date information on key HR Metrics so that managers can monitor performance.• A workforce assessment is also available, including further metrics at a service level. This data is updated twice a year to inform workforce planning.• Recruitment and retention programme has also delivered attendance at a programme of local and regional recruitment fairs, an end-to-end review of the recruitment process, improved recruitment advertising, an employee offer brochure, a review, and the planned implementation of additional employee benefits, a social work academy in Children's Services and the development of additional career pathways. The introduction of employee profile videos on social media and on Cheshire East Council's website to enhance the Council's profile have also been introduced. Further work will be undertaken to streamline the recruitment process to ensure improved efficiency and a better user experience.• Review of the provision of agency staff, including an audit of spending, to reduce reliance and transition to a more stable permanent workforce base with reduced costs has also been undertaken. The Council will implement the provisions of the Government proposal on capping the pay rates for agency social workers and have also engaged with the proposals for capping agency pay rates for Children's Social Workers as part of the Greater Manchester Pledge.• Analysis of exit interview and questionnaire data with the relevant Executive Director to support the retention of staff.• Wellbeing and engagement support, including delivery of EAP services, the introduction of 'In the Know' sessions for all staff, a revitalised recognition scheme, monthly organisation wide wellbeing updates for all staff, and the promotion of the government funded initiative Able Futures.• Senior manager support in the redesign and restructure of services to meet MTFS targets, including MARS to minimise the impact on the workforce. A workforce planning toolkit is now in place to support services in identifying skills gaps and identify actions to address any identified gaps.																																				
Actions (Monitoring):		Target Date for Completion:																																		

Introduction of a range of additional employee benefits, enhancing the existing offer (Monthly review by HRMT/Ongoing briefing to CLT on progress and implementation).	June 2024
Continued work on the implementation of social work academies across Children's Services and Adults, Health & Integration (Quarterly review by HRMT/Review with Children's and Adults, Health and Integration).	March 2024
Use Pulse Survey results to gauge employee satisfaction (Reviewed by HRMT and shared with CLT).	June 2024
Complete a transformation skills audit (Reviewed by HRMT monthly)	June 2024
<p>Comments this quarter: No change to the risk ratings at this time, the same market pressures exist, although work is now underway to secure a more stable senior management structure.</p> <p>A recruitment process review has also been completed in this quarter and a number of further key actions identified. A new recruitment process checklist has been developed and will be available to support all hiring managers with the recruitment process. Additional improvements will also be introduced in the next quarter.</p> <p>A consultation exercise as part of the office rationalisation programme has been completed, and identified the number of staff that will be most affected by work base changes. Ongoing support to staff to ensure a smooth transition to the new work place.</p> <p>Workplace charters will be developed to support future ways of working.</p> <p>Pulse staff survey workshops have been put in place to explore the feedback from staff in the survey carried out in November 2023. Directorate specific action plans have been developed to address directorate specific issues.</p> <p>A review of agency staff across the council has been completed with a reduction in the number of agency staff from 234 in quarter 3 to 196 at the end of quarter 4. Ongoing monitoring of agency staff is now overseen by CEBERT to ensure a more permanent stable resource is in place.</p> <p>Timescale for managing risk to an acceptable level: N/A</p>	

Risk Name: Failure to manage the Consequences of Policy Uncertainty and National Policy Frameworks		Risk Owner: Director of Governance & Compliance (Monitoring Officer)
Risk Ref: SR10	Date updated: 19 th April 2024	Risk Manager: Director of Governance and Compliance (Monitoring Officer)
<p>Risk Description: The risk that the council cannot adequately understand and react to national policy changes or effectively implement them. The scope of the risk covers all central and local government decisions which relate to the operations of local government.</p> <p>The Corporate Plan guides the council's decision-making, it informs what is considered a 'good' policy outcome and areas of priority. Political changes may result in stakeholders no longer being aligned with that current plan. Central government policy decisions can materially impact the council in many ways, while other risks might draw out specific changes and capture their direct impact, this risk brings together the total effect of political uncertainty for consideration.</p>		
Interdependencies (risks): Stakeholder Expectations and Communications, Failure to Achieve the MTFS, Failure to Adhere to Agreed Governance Processes		Lead Service Committee: Corporate Policy Committee
<p>Key Mitigating Controls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement with national government, consultations and requests for feedback Application for and funding agreement processes, governance process for ad hoc grants Engagement with political administration of CEBC Engagement with group leaders of CEBC parties Induction, on-going training and committee briefings for CEBC members Service Committee support and briefings for members and senior officers Corporate Plan and MTFS regular and ad hoc (post material changes) review process, including contingency planning Preparation for elections and promoting engagement in democracy. Forward planning for each committee's policy development and areas of political sensitivity The development and delivery of the Corporate Plan New member induction & training programme 		
Actions (Monitoring):		Target Date for Completion
A review of the Committee briefing process to increase flexibility to draw out impact on residents more clearly		2024/2025
Delivery of DLUHC Productivity Plans (DLUHC)		July 2024
Oflog reporting (Oflog)		TBC
<p>Comments this quarter: Details of the Oflog reporting are still to be confirmed, action will be updated once final detailed agreed. Preparations for the May elections have gone well, with no material issues to report. The additional voting reform administrative burden is being managed but is a new process and as such carries some additional risk. Productivity plan action updated, not an area of concern.</p>		

There is uncertainty around the future shape of devolution within England due to the upcoming election and possible change in government. The election may also impact on progress of the transition plan, due to the pre-election period. However overall, no change to the risk at this time.
Timescale for managing risk to an acceptable level: Controls that mitigate this risk are based on the current landscape and timetable for local and national elections. The ability to manage this risk is not completely within the council's gift.

Risk Name: Failure to Adhere to Agreed Governance Processes		Risk Owner: Director of Governance and Compliance (Monitoring Officer)
Risk Ref: SR11	Date updated: 19 th April 2024	Risk Manager: Director of Governance and Compliance (Monitoring Officer)
<p>Risk Description: The council is a complex public sector organisation with a broad range of objectives, some of which it is legally obligated to deliver, its goals for the borough are identified within its Corporate Plan. Formal reporting and decision-making within the council is, to a degree, prescribed by local authority regulation. The decision-making process at all levels, must comply with regulatory requirements while also delivering those stated goals.</p> <p>Detailed consequences: Robust governance requires clear aims and policy objectives and identified and delivered. Governance processes should facilitate the lawful delivery of those objectives and prevent the misapplication of resources in achieving other goals. Ultimately this can result in a reduction of living standards and physical health and mental wellbeing of residents. Failure to provide a reasonable level of service to residents at an appropriate cost, or to follow legal decision-making protocols, can result in increased regulatory scrutiny and reputational damage. Possible outcomes of which may be, public censure, financial penalties or direct central government intervention.</p> <p>Detailed causes: The volume and complexity of the council's services and objectives, coupled with finite resources and differing stakeholder views, make the application of the Corporate Plan into 'good' decision-making, a challenge. Examples of governance failures are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variations in interpretation and non-compliance with agreed process and internal controls. • Deviation from core objectives as result of prioritising presenting issues. • Failure to allocate limited resources in line with the requirements of agreed objectives. • Inadequate internal controls across the organisation or vertically with a directorate. 		
<p>Interdependencies (risks): Failure to Achieve the MTFs, Stakeholder Expectation & Communication, Leadership Capacity, Ability to Achieve Organisation Change, Failure to Manage the Consequences of Policy Uncertainty and National Policy Frameworks</p> <p>Key Mitigating Controls:</p> <p>Council's Constitution covers decision making processes, including finance and contract procedure rules. The Constitution is reviewed and amended on an on-going basis to ensure legal compliance and operational continuity. Following the adoption of the Committee system, mechanisms were put in place to capture Member's feedback and are reported to the (Constitution Working Group). The number, nature and terms of references of the Committees are assessed on an on-going basis, with refinements being implemented via full council decision.</p> <p>Constitution is a publicly available document; guidance on the use of the decision-making processes is provided by enabling services including Legal, Finance, Democratic Services, and Audit and Risk. Constitutional updates are overseen (recommended and administrated) by the Director of Governance and Compliance (also the Monitoring Officer) in response to regulatory changes and Full Council decisions.</p> <p>Administration of local, regional and national elections and monitoring of behaviour in the period of heightened sensitivity beforehand. During which time, appropriate adjustments are made to the publishing or reporting of controversial issues or anything that seeks to influence voters.</p> <p>Reports to Committees are developed and reviewed by senior officers and enabler sign off, briefings are arranged with Committee Members to address any further knowledge requirements ahead of the relevant meeting. All decisions are formally recorded in meeting minutes and administrated in line with delegated authorities as per the constitution.</p>		Lead Service Committee: Corporate Policy Committee

Schemes of delegation; local and financial are in place to provide clarity on responsibilities ensure separation of duties is in place where required and minimise the risk of inappropriate management override.

Assurance mechanisms on the organisations' compliance with it's decision-making processes are provided through the external audit (Statement of Accounts) and the work of the Internal Audit team. Internal Audit's assurance is achieved through the development and delivery of an annual plan and follow-up monitoring of agreed actions. There are other external inspections, such as Ofsted, which may examine elements of our decision-making processes through their work, although this is not usually the primary focus.

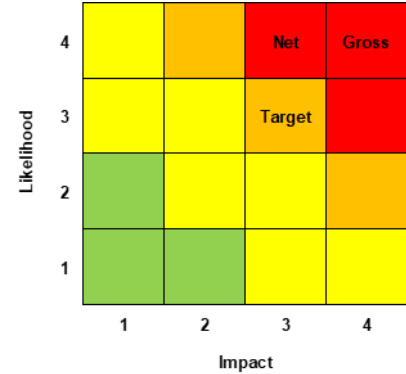
The organisation publishes an Annual Governance Statement identifying significant governance issues which have occurred, any known areas which may cause issues if not managed effectively and updates on issues previously identified.

Actions (Monitoring):	Target Date for Completion
Review of shared service governance arrangements with specific actions to be identified	2024/25

Comments this quarter: The risk has not changed in score or description during Q4. The process of identifying internal control issues continues, however it is acknowledged that the time take to resolve issues needs to be improved. Director of Finance and Customer Service (Section 151 Officer) left in May, the immediate risk mitigated by the appointment of the interim Chief Finance Officer, pending permanent recruitment. The introduction of the management Boards should help cross organisation working and reduce the risk of siloed decision making.

The LGA Corporate Peer Challenge took place at the end of March. Initial feedback has been provided, but formal reporting on this will take place by the end of July and an action plan and a response will be prepared by the end of August. If needed, the impact of the Corporate Peer Challenge findings will be reflected in the next update to the strategic risk register.

Timescale for managing risk to an acceptable level: TBC

Risk Name: Stakeholder Expectations and Communication		Risk Owner: Chief Executive
Risk Ref: SR12	Date updated: 29 th April 2024	Risk Manager: Head of Communications, Head of Business Change
<p>Risk Description: The risk that the council does not understand the expectations of its stakeholders and that its communication and engagement with those stakeholders does not result in their understanding of the council's actions, nor appropriate involvement and influence. The council has an obligation to provide as high a level of service to its residents as its funding will allow. This requires not only considering both the short and long-term but also the expectations of all of its stakeholders.</p> <p>Potential impacts: A lack of understand and poor communication and/or failure to effectively engage with stakeholders will cause damage to the council's reputation, if this is severe enough it may result in poor performance, increased complaints, regulatory inspection, challenge from central government, low morale, increased staff turnover and make the borough a less desirable place to live and work in.</p> <p>Potential drivers: To a certain degree the council cannot fully control the view that its stakeholders form. At times it will have to make decisions that are unpopular, this can be due to the context of these decisions not being effectively communicated, understood or just being disregarded by stakeholders. Management of this risk should be considered on the basis of the objective regard for and interest in the council its policies and its services (measured via surveys, media coverage, customer relations activity, etc.) and an assessment of the quality of its engagement (both listening and telling).</p>		
<p>Interdependencies: Increased Demand for Adult's Services, Complexity and Demand for Children's Services, Failure to Achieve the MTFS</p>		Lead Service Committee: Corporate Policy Committee
<p>Key Mitigating Controls:</p> <p>Communication & Media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective monitoring and reporting of organisational reputation and sentiment. • Weekly reputation reporting to senior managers. • Monitoring of social and traditional media. • Communications and media function advised at an early stage of all future demand and emerging issues to enable effective planning. • Providing a 24/7 emergency communications on call function. • Communications strategies for key projects and issues developed agreed and reviewed with senior stakeholders and decision makers. • Positive proactive communication across multiple channels to celebrate the council's successes and achievements, building positive reputation. • Comms programme planned and reviewed over short-term (daily) and long-term (monthly / annually), including review of council service plans, consultation and engagement programs. • Review communications business continuity, priorities and emergency / crisis comms protocols and plans. • Media relations protocol and approvals process. • Media training programme for key spokespersons. • Regular meetings with comms leads from public sector partner organisations to collaborate, share plans and intelligence. • Values and behaviours for officers and members are established and organisational culture is monitored and supported through a range of initiatives. • Ensure that information about the Council, its services and how to access them is easily available in a range of formats for a wide range of audiences. • Monitor public sector press (e.g. MJ and LGC) and maintain and develop relationships with these media outlets to maximise opportunities for positive coverage. 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and delivery of communication strategies to influence public awareness of and informedness about key universal services, inc: planning, highways, waste and recycling. Communications handling requirement for each service committee meeting agreed with lead officer(s). Quarterly 'Conversation with the Leader and Deputy Leader' videos. Regular internal communications to members and officers. Use performance management reports for council services and programmes to identify reputational opportunities and risks at an early stage. Continue to develop proactive direct comms to be issued via e-mail / SMS – we currently have 54,000 subscribers for 'push' notifications across a range of topics. 	
Consultation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that consultation is undertaken when proposals are still at a formative stage. Design consultation which gives sufficient reasons for any proposal or change to permit stakeholders to undertake intelligent consideration and response to the options. Consultation and engagement activity will be used as evidence when making decisions and adequate time will be given between the end of a consultation and a decision is made, to allow for consideration of and where required, a response to, the output of a consultation or engagement. Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) are completed, appropriate for the purpose of use and that they are signed off before any consultation can begin. Make it clear HOW consultation and engagement activity, EIA and other intelligence has been conscientiously taken into account when finalising the decision. Use the equality impact assessment toolkit, guidance, and template to provide clarity around what the equality impact assessment is and how it should be used. 	
Actions (Monitoring):	Target Date for Completion
Communication & Media	
Ensure alignment of annual communications programme and consultation and engagement programme (Quarterly)	30/04/2024 and then quarterly
Review annual business plans for communication requirements (Annually)	31/05/2024
Review of the Communications Strategy for Residents 2022-25 priorities in the context of financial position for 2024/5 and the new Cheshire East Plan, as It is being developed and once established. (Six monthly updates to CPC. Once revised Communications Strategy has been approved and adopted.)	Following update to the new Cheshire East plan
Provide communications support for implementation of MTFS proposals to ensure all stakeholders are well-informed about any changes to service and policy. (Annually)	Through 2024/25
Review use of social platforms and other digital communications and engagement channels in the context of changing technologies and cultures on those platforms. (Quarterly)	Q1 2024/25
Consultation:	
Delivery of Equality Impact assessment training to Equality champions (Annually)	2024/25
Undertake a residents survey linked to the Corporate Plan refresh (Biannually)	2025/26
Complete the service restructure to enable recruitment to vacant posts in the research and consultation team (TBC)	Q2 2024/25
Comments this quarter:	
Communication & Media: No change to the risk ratings at this time. Coverage and public/media interest in the council through Q4 included, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget setting and council tax In-year financial position Exceptional financial support Poynton Pool planning application New Chief Executive 	

- Leisure Services review
- Garden waste subscriptions
- Parking review
- Potholes and road maintenance
- Planning enforcement
- Active travel schemes
- Springfield special school extension

Consultation: No change to the scores this period. Consultation activity has continued to feature as part of committee decisions and consultation reports are routinely referenced as part of the decision-making evidence. There are further opportunities to embed consultation practice into the decision-making process more consistently across the organisation and the varying decisions that committees determine. Work on this is progressing. This will help stakeholders to have greater clarity about how consultation can be, and is, used to inform decision-making.

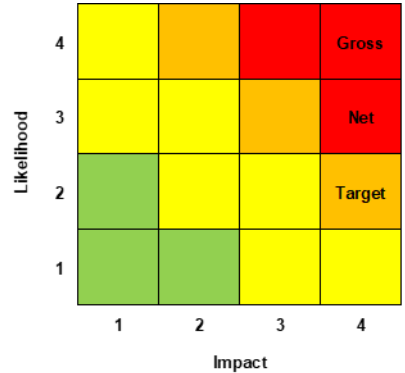
The council undertook extensive consultation and engagement activity to support the annual budget setting process. Consultation responses were used to influence and inform councillors' decision making when approving the Budget.

Timescale for managing risk to an acceptable level: Q2 2024/25

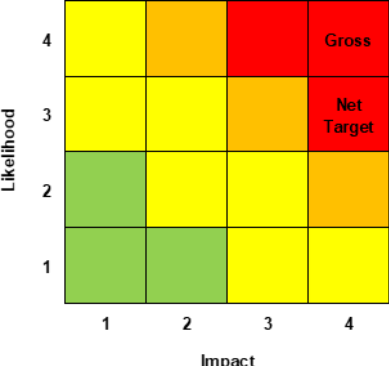
Risk Name: Information Security and Cyber Threat		Risk Owner: Head of Information Communication Technology and CIO
Risk Ref: SR13	Date Updated: 11 th April 2024	Risk Manager: ICT Programme Manager
Risk Description: (Cause) There is a risk that as the Council continues to move towards using new technology systems to reduce costs and fulfil communication, accessibility, and transaction requirements, (threat) it becomes increasingly vulnerable to a security breach, and, or loss of information, either maliciously or inadvertently from within the Council or from external attacks by cyber-criminals. (Impact) This could result in many negative impacts, such as loss of information, distress to individuals, legal, financial, and reputational damage to the Council, in addition to the possible penetration and crippling of the Council's IT systems preventing it from delivering its Corporate Outcomes.		
Interdependencies: This risk has interdependencies with corporate risk Business Continuity and Stakeholder Expectations and Communication. It also has links to the Financial Resilience risk, as funds for maintenance and replacement will be stretched, placing additional strain on assets and resilience of information security controls.		Lead Service Committee: Corporate Policy Committee
Key Mitigating Controls: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CIO is an advocate of and reports on Information Risk to the Corporate Leadership Team and the Audit and Governance Committee and makes the Annual Statement of Internal Control of Information Risk. The Council has a number of Information and Data Security policies which are published on the Centranet and help to protect from the Council from inappropriate and unauthorised access and communicates what to do in the case of an incident. Policies; Information Security Policy Overview, ICT Access Policy, ICT Communications and Operations Policy, ICT Computer, Telephone and Desk Use Policy, ICT Email and Messaging Policy, ICT Flexible and Mobile Device Policy, ICT Incident management Policy, ICT Infrastructure Policy, ICT Internet Policy, ICT Legal Responsibilities for Data Policy, ICT Personnel Standards for Information Security, ICT Protection Policy, ICT Removable Media Policy and ICT Software Policy. Policies review and guidance materials updated to strengthen advice to staff on how to manage various information types Progress on Information Risk and Information Security is monitored through the Information Security Steering Committee (ISSC), Strategic Information Governance Group (SIGG) and the IG Collaboration Group. The Council has an Incident Reporting process which has been communicated to staff, all incidents are scored and assessed by SIGG to ensure that the breaches are minimised, and future breaches are reduced. The Council complies with the Public Services Network PSN Code of Connection, NHS Data Security and Protection Toolkit, DWP's MOU and NHS Digital controls, work continues with the consolidation and enhancement of elements of the security estate to meet the ever-developing threat profiles. This includes third party IT hardware and software tests undertaken by accredited security vendors, these validate that the network and hardware are secure and robust, if any vulnerabilities are found then a mitigation plan is drawn up and actioned. The Council has an Information Asset Register which is reviewed on an annual basis and has been published on the open data portal. There is also an Information Assurance Data Management (IADM) programme of activity to increase awareness and maturity of information assurance and governance across the Council. The programme is tasked with guiding the organisation to manage its information in a compliant and efficient way. Data Classification has been rolled out to the organisation; this allows the categorisation of information so that appropriate controls can be employed to protect the information. 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council provides security and compliance e-learning modules (which are mandatory for all employees) on the Learning Lounge. This includes several modules of Data handling, Cyber Security, and Information Assurance. Work has begun on a new cyber e-learning package developed by NCSC. There are also several best practice guides on the Councils Lighthouse on the best ways to use technology and to protect information. These modules and best practice guides are updated regularly to reflect changes in working practices and as a response to additional threats. Controls are in place to restrict access to the data centres and network equipment and risk assessments of existing systems and networks are on-going. The Council's ICT Services have a strategic direction to move to a "Cloud First" principle, whilst this enables an evergreen environment which is always up to date, additional controls are needed to prevent compromise or inappropriate use and access. This includes contract compliance and monitoring to ensure ongoing protection of information. To support the strategic direction and architecture principles all technical solutions are reviewed at the Technical Design Authority to ensure correct alignment. In addition, the Council is moving to Zero Trust architecture, this is a direct result of increased threats posed to the working infrastructure. This shift is in line with the latest thinking and guidelines issued by the NCSC. In support of this a high-level business case for Infrastructure Investment of which Security & Compliance is an element was submitted and subsequently approved. This additional funding will be used to develop the necessary tools to start the implementation. 	
Actions (Monitoring):	Target Date for Completion:
Identity Management (Information Security Steering Committee (ISSC), Information Assurance and Data Management (IADM))	March 2025 (Multiyear project)
Application Management (Information Security Steering Committee (ISSC))	March 2025 (Multiyear project)
Data Security (Information Security Steering Committee (ISSC))	March 2025 (Multiyear project)
Data Quality (Information Assurance and Data Management (IADM))	March 2025 (Multiyear project)
Information Management (Information Assurance and Data Management (IADM))	March 2025 (Multiyear project)
<p>Comments this quarter: There continues to be significant threats from state sponsored activity, particularly in this election year on Government both central and Local and the support service such as NHS. Several organisations have already fell victim causing substantial loss of services and data. Therefore, there is no change to the risk rating at this time.</p> <p>Identity Management – projects are continuing to ensure that identities are protected through increased monitoring and controls. Access from locations outside of the UK are automatically blocked reducing the attack surface.</p> <p>Application Management – work is ongoing to ensure that MFA and SSO is applied to applications that are cloud hosted.</p> <p>Data Security – continued enhancement of the existing security controls to ensure that the latest threats are mitigated and protected. Work is continuing to strengthen the resilience capabilities of data storage and protection. Work has progressed to refresh the Cyber Incident Response Plan and associated workbooks to ensure that the Council is best equipped should an incident occur.</p> <p>Data Quality – Continuation of the MDM projects across several data fields to ensure that the councils' solutions have the correct data embedded with them, updated seamlessly across multiple systems. This is a key area to support any future drive to AI.</p> <p>Information Management – continuation of projects to deliver and improve the maturity of information both through its storage and use of information. This will enable both greater protection for that information but also enable efficiencies through accurate management information and improved compliance through controlled retention and ease and speed of access to critical information. This is a key area to support any future drive to AI.</p>	
Timescale for managing risk to an acceptable level: N/A	

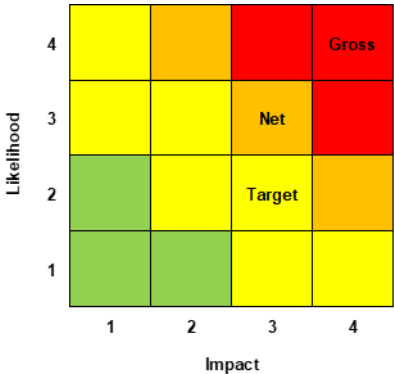
Risk Name: Business Continuity		Risk Owner: Director of Governance and Compliance (Monitoring Officer)
Risk Ref: SR14	Date updated: 2 nd February 2024	Risk Manager: Head of Audit & Risk
<p>Risk Description: Failure to maintain business continuity after an unusual or unexpected, disruptive event or events. The risk that, some or all, of the council's services, projects or initiatives are unable to resume operations within the expected timeframes after a disruption. A disruptive event, or multiple events, may occur either in isolation, or across the whole organisation.</p> <p>Detailed consequences: The council has a number of safeguarding obligations to its residents, a failure could result in it being unable to fulfil those obligations, and as such not protect them from mental or physical harm. Failures may also cause an unacceptable loss of local services.</p> <p>Detailed causes: The unavailability of staff, ICT systems, equipment or a suitable working environment are the most common causes of a material failure. Many different social, economic, environmental or public health factors can drive these causes to manifest themselves. Underlying this may also be a failure to reasonably allocate resources to eliminate single points of failure in these areas.</p>		
Interdependencies (risks): Information Security and Cyber Threat, Pandemic Virus, Fragility in the Social Care Market, Council Funding, Organisational Capacity & Demand		Lead Service Committee: Corporate Policy Committee
<p>Key Mitigating Controls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BC Plans held for each service area – clear format, identifying critical and serious priority activities with recovery time objectives. BC impact assessments undertaken across the organisation to understand challenges to service delivery ahead of known events, informing decision making and mitigation plans. High level course on Business Continuity Management has been added to the Council's Learning Lounge ICT Shared Service also have a Crisis Recovery Plan that has been updated to take account of lessons learned as a result of ICT outage incidents. This Crisis recovery plan overview contains key information for the ICT Shared Service disaster recovery Ongoing liaison with Emergency Planning Shared Service 		
Actions (Monitoring):		Target Date for Completion:
Review and refresh of the Business Continuity Framework (2-year review cycle)		May 2024
Development of SharePoint BC system (one off project)		Begins January 2024
Rollout and training for the SharePoint BC system (2-year review cycle)		Post SharePoint system development
Work with Emergency Planning on scenario exercises		Began March 2023 – on-going
<p>Comments this quarter: No material change to the risk, time with a system analyst has been booked in for January to develop the scope for the BCP SharePoint App. Emergency Planning exercise planned for February based around a cyber security breach, the learnings from which will feed into the app development and inform further development of the organisation's business continuity approach.</p>		
Timescale for managing risk to an acceptable level: Q4 2023/24		

Risk Name: Capital Projects - Place		Risk Owner: Executive Director of Place
Risk Ref: SR15	Date updated: 13 th May 2024	Risk Manager: Place Directors and Business Managers as relevant to
<p>Risk Description: Failure to deliver major capital projects.</p> <p>The council delivers a broad range of capital projects in support of the aims and objectives of its Corporate Plan. The range of projects includes transport infrastructure, town centre regeneration, refurbishment and improvement of existing council assets such as schools and leisure centres, and renewable energy generation.</p> <p>Impact: Without a robust system for managing the capital programme and individual projects, the stated objectives may not be delivered. Projects could also fail to deliver to the time, cost and quality parameters set out in business cases. This could have significant financial and reputational implications for the Council. Due to the nature of the projects and their large cost, delays can materially impact the ability to deliver future projects, thus negatively impacting the borough.</p> <p>Likelihood: The scale and complexity of the overall capital programme is challenging. Appropriate governance and controls are important to ensure resources and funding are prioritized effectively, and where required agree adjustments to the time, cost and quality parameters set out in the business case. Where appropriate, members are updated on significant changes to agreed objectives through briefings to the relevant committee.</p> <p>The broad range of partners and stakeholders for individual projects and interdependencies between projects are also significant challenges that require effective management.</p>		
Interdependencies (risks): Climate change, Infrastructure Investment, Economy, Council Funding		Lead Service Committee: Economy and Growth, Environment and Communities, Highways and Transport
<p>Key Mitigating Controls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Capital Strategy and overall Capital Programme is presented annually as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy at full Council. New projects and schemes are subject to the approval of detailed business cases in accordance with the Finance Procedure Rules The Assets Board provides strategic oversight of the Council's land and property assets including recommendations and reports on acquisition, disposal and development. The Capital Programme Board undertakes detailed appraisals of projects and business cases; undertakes gateway reviews and risk management reviews of major capital projects; and receives post project completion reports to assess benefit realisation and lessons learnt. Appropriate and proportionate governance has been established to oversee project delivery, including risk registers. This includes project boards to manage individual projects and thematic programme boards to provide additional strategic oversight and manage interdependencies, e.g. Carbon Neutral Programme Board, Leisure Investment programme Board, Place Board. This governance considers and makes practical decisions on the prioritisation of resources and funding including, where appropriate adjustments to agreed time, cost and quality parameters. The Place Board provides strategic oversight of all the major Crewe-centric and Macclesfield-centric projects, including strategic housing sites, to ensure individual projects are fully aligned to the overarching vision and delivery plan for each town. Financial monitoring undertaken quarterly, with summary data reported to Finance Sub-Committee and appropriate service committee. High level progress updates are reported to the appropriate service committee twice a year. More detailed progress reports on individual projects or programmes are provided on a periodic basis. Regular 121s between Executive Director and Directors which includes updates on key capital projects Capital review of all Scheme included in the MTFS underway to consider affordability. Some schemes delivery may be impacted depending on the outcome. 		

Actions (Monitoring):	Target Date for Completion:
A new module within the Unit4 ERP system will improve financial monitoring to provide more regular information on actual and forecast spend	Revenue module now in operation, capital module deployment ongoing – date TBC
<p>Comments this quarter: Middlewich eastern Bypass has been delayed due to a delay in the decision from the Department for Transport (DfT), expressing concerns about value for money. More work is now required to evidence this and provide further value engineering; with the delay itself adding inflationary cost to the scheme. The value for money assessment is directly related to extreme construction inflation over the last two years.</p> <p>The A500 Dualling scheme has been agreed to be rescope following the cancellation of HS2 and the DfT have agreed to provide development funding to cover the cost of this.</p>	
<p>Timescale for managing risk to an acceptable level: Major capital projects by their nature are high risk. The controls are designed to proactively manage risks and mitigate their impact if a risk is realised. It is not realistic to expect the risk to be managed any lower.</p>	

Risk Name: Failure of the Local Economy		Risk Owner: Executive Director of Place
Risk Ref: SR16	Date updated: 23 rd April 2024	Risk Manager: Director of Growth and Enterprise
Risk Description: Failure of the local economy The risk that the local economy does not realise the expected level of growth due to an inability to attract, grow and retain commercial enterprises, residents and visitors. The borough has a strong local economy, an above average Gross Value Added (GVA), some areas of deprivation and is reliant on a number of different industries. Consequences: The failure of enterprises reduces the local money supply, reducing the standard of living for residents and council income. Secondary effects can include a reduction in public health and the loss of highly trained or skilled individuals. Consequences and causes, over the medium to long-term can have a symbiotic relationship, creating either an upward or downwards spiral. An example of this is shops closing in a town centre, then reduced footfall resulting in further closures. Causes: The local economy is significantly driven by changes in the national economy, taxation and other government policies. However the failure to maintain parity, or offer benefits above other boroughs, can lead to a relatively larger economic downturn. As noted above poverty and deprivation, like other issues, can be both a consequence and cause causing a snowball effect.		
Interdependencies (risks): Capital Projects, HS2 Infrastructure Investment, Pandemic Virus, Climate Change		Lead Service Committee: Economy and Growth
Key Mitigating Controls: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cheshire East Business support hub has been launched. Business forum to engage and plan future support. Investment plans to support regeneration and development. Place marketing and inward investment. 		
Actions (Monitoring):		Target Date for Completion:
Launch of business support grants: (Quarterly returns to government) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repurposing our high street grants from Crewe town centre Decarbonisation grants for business New employment space grant 		March 2025
Comments this quarter: There is little change in the national economic position, the Office for National Statistics has reported marginal growth in GDP (0.1%) during February 2024 and has revised upwards growth levels in January 2024 to 0.3% from 0.2%. Locally, the cancellation of HS2 is still denting confidence of businesses.		
Timescale for managing risk to an acceptable level: N/A, net score is equal to target score.		

Risk Name: CEC Carbon Neutral Status		Risk Owner: Executive Director of Place
Risk Ref: SR17	Date updated: 24 th April 2024	Risk Manager: Head of Environmental Services
<p>Risk Description: Failure to achieve Carbon Neutral status for the Council by the 2027 milestone target due to requirement to secure statutory consents, seek viable and affordable solutions and other external market forces outside the Councils control.</p> <p>Likelihood is based on a number of external factors, partnerships and key outcomes being delivered in a timely manner.</p> <p>Impact will result in non-delivery of a key priority in the Council's Corporate Plan. It will also contribute to climate change temperature rise and severe weather events which could have an impact on public health and safety. It could also have financial implications with increased need for adaptation of key infrastructure for severe weather events across the borough.</p>		
Interdependencies (risks): Economy and World Events, Recruitment and Retention, Council funding, Capital Projects		Lead Service Committee: Environment and Communities
<p>Key Mitigating Controls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk is reviewed as part of the Brighter Futures Transformation Projects Board, operational board and member steering group • Carbon Neutral Program established with Program Board reviewing progress and risks monthly • Member Advisory group overseeing its delivery • Annual update on progress reported to relevant committee • Climate change is a key consideration as part of our statutory planning duties as an authority and within the development of local planning policy • Planned natural offset set at 10% more than required to reduce risk of non-delivery in any one project area 		
Actions (Monitoring):		Target Date for Completion:
Cheshire East Capital Spend Review (Awaiting outcome of the corporate capital review, progress paused on 2nd Solar farm, next phase of EV and next tree planting program until the review is complete)		1 st May 2024
<p>Comments this quarter: The corporate plan objective to be a carbon neutral council by 2025 was amended to 2027 by the February Full Council budget decision. Although this provided additional time and spread the capital spend the business case still required significant progress this year to meet the 2027 target. The Council capital review has paused the previously authorised key capital projects of procurement of the second solar farm, progressing our largest proposal for tree planting for the next planting season and continuing the next phase of Electric Vehicle transition. Without approval to proceed in the next few weeks will risk the new 2027 target of the program.</p>		
Timescale for managing risk to an acceptable level: TBC		

Risk Name: Local Planning Authority Modernisation Plan		Risk Owner: Executive Director of Place
Risk Ref: SR18	Date updated: 13 th May 2024	Risk Manager: Interim Director of Planning, Head of Planning
<p>Risk Description: Following the completion of the 'Local Planning Authority Review and Service Transformation' report and presentation to Environment & Communities Committee on 31 October 2022 a Modernisation Plan has been developed to achieve the transformation of the service. This Plan will carry forward the recommendations made, document actions and monitor progress. The recommendations are many and varied but failure to complete the actions of the Modernisation Plan will undermine the planned transformation of the service, perpetuating and potentially extending the issues identified and undermining the reputation of the organisation.</p> <p>Detailed consequences: Failure to achieve completion of the Modernisation Plan will undermine the performance of the Council in its Local Planning Authority role, result in non-compliance with statutory processes, and reputational damage to the Council. By not achieving the Modernisation Plan within agreed timescales, the potential for additional budget pressure increases.</p> <p>Detailed causes: Insufficient resource to ensure completion of priority actions in the required timescales (staff and skills) while also 'doing the day job', Interim Service Review Lead/Planning Director limited contract duration, supplier resource to deliver new ICT system, failure to engage with internal and external stakeholders to affect necessary changes, lack of oversight from the Planning Transformation Board/Steering Group.</p>		
Interdependencies (risks): Organisational Capacity and Demand, Reputation, Council Funding,		Lead Service Committee: Environment and Communities
<p>Key Mitigating Controls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment and Communities Report 31/10/2022; Local Planning Authority Review and Service Transformation Report and Modernisation Plan. Monitoring of progress against Modernisation Plan by Transformation Board and Environment and Communities Committee. Regular meetings of Interim Director of Planning and Head of Planning and team managers to review action logs and progress on key priorities. Steering Group established to review workstream and focus priorities feeding into Transformation Board. Internal Audit reports on Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 will inform the scope of a member/officer working group. IT System Project has its own Project Board attended by supplier. Weekly monitoring of resources / recruitment during manager's meetings. 		
Actions (Monitoring):		Target Date for Completion
IT System Project escalation due to breach of contract (Weekly team and fortnightly Project Board meetings or as needed)		Q1 2024/25
Staffing Restructure – JDQs awaiting evaluations (Regular meetings and updates)		Q1 2024/25
External support from Capita retained to assist with backlog. Backlog funding secured from DLUHC, intervention from senior officers on older applications (Continued monthly reporting on application backlog)		Q4 2023/24
Continued monitoring of resources – recruitment to critical posts ahead of restructure (Weekly manager meetings)		Q4 2023/24
<p>Comments this quarter: No change to overall risk ratings but some progress is being made on key areas, the ICT project remains the main concern. Further escalation has taken place with supplier and implementation of the planning system is now scheduled for July 2024 and Land Charges soon after. Concern also remains that all elements of the system may not be delivered along with escalating costs, hence legal intervention to seek appropriate compensation against original contract. Significant staff input from Service required for testing and training over Q1.</p>		

<p>Restructure timetable is now set with formal staff consultation to begin in April 2024. Completion of structure (with exception of new appointments to vacancies) should be complete by June.</p> <p>Backlog of applications has reduced but stalled due to staff sickness and vacancies. Additional Capita support is in place on back of DLUHC funding.</p> <p>Validation checklists complete and awaiting adoption in May. S106 audit recommendations are on track for completion by Q1 24/25. Other key customer improvements currently being reviewed to ensure customer expectations can be met given resource issues and competing demands from above priorities.</p> <p>Timescale for managing risk to an acceptable level: 3-12 months (depending on priority)</p>

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